

Your ref: Greater Cambridge Call for Sites, March 2025
E: [REDACTED]
Date: 07/03/2025

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA

Dear Sir/Madam

GREATER CAMBRIDGE LOCAL PLAN SITE SUBMISSIONS UPDATE 2025: LAND AT RECTORY FARM, HARSTON – NEW MATERIAL AVAILABLE

On behalf of our client, Jesus College, we have submitted the site at Land at Rectory Farm, Harston to the Greater Cambridge Call for Sites. This site has previously been submitted under the 2019 Call for Sites, however new information has come forward about the site since that time.

The site is located off the A10 to the south of Cambridge. The site is situated within the Cambridge Green Belt but well located for amenities both in Harston and the new adjoining Cambridge Discovery Campus which was approved last year (ref: 23/03080/OUT) for around 250,000 sq ft of innovation space and employing over 1000 new people. This site therefore offers an excellent opportunity for a rural exception housing site to meet the needs of new employees.

Dialogue with the Parish Council

Jesus College has been promoting Land at Rectory Farm, Harston through the draft Neighbourhood Plan and discussions with the Harston Parish Council. This culminated in a site visit in July 2024 held with Bidwells, the landowner (Jesus College) and Parish Council Members and South Cambridgeshire District Council ("SCDC") Housing Officers to discuss the availability, suitability and deliverability of the site for residential development. A note from this site visit is attached at **Appendix A**.

Harston Parish Council has stated that they are not looking to allocate specific sites within the Neighbourhood Plan, but would rather wish to rely on the considerations of the District Council regarding the development of the site before agreeing the allocation for Neighbourhood Plan purposes.

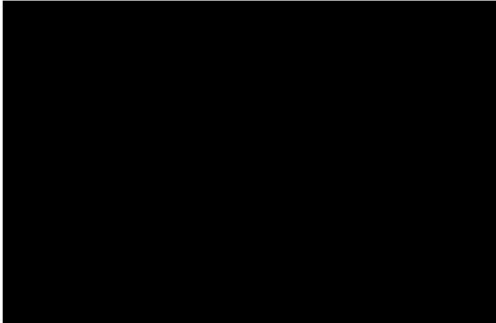
Representations made to the Neighbourhood Plan in June 2024 highlighted the ability of the site to meet affordable housing need for Harston. The current draft version of the Neighbourhood Plan is only proposing to allocate 16 dwellings, not all of which are definitely affordable, compared to the identified need of 42 affordable households in the Housing Needs Assessment and 32 affordable households in the Housing Needs Survey. Land at Rectory Farm, Harston could meet the need once identified through allocation of part of the available land. The full submission to the Neighbourhood Plan is included in **Appendix B**.



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Conclusion

There is therefore scope and opportunity for the allocation of an affordable housing site at Land at Rectory Farm, Harson in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. This representation has outlined new material since the last Call for Sites exercise in the form of discussions and a site visit with the Parish Council, leading to the conclusion that development at the site should be dealt with by the District Council, rather than the Parish Council.



Kind regards,



Enclosures Appendix A – Note of Site Visit

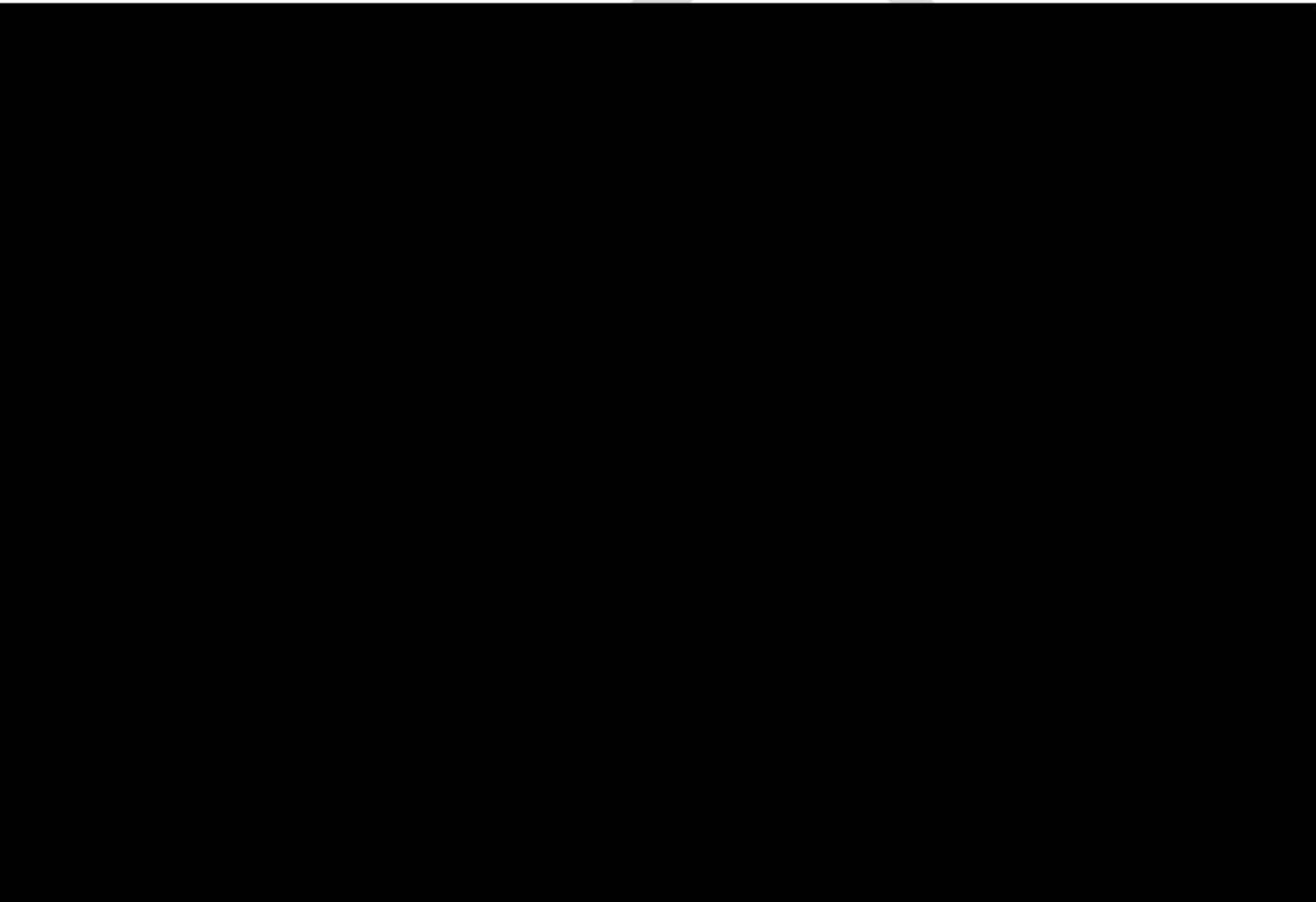
Appendix B – Submission to Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

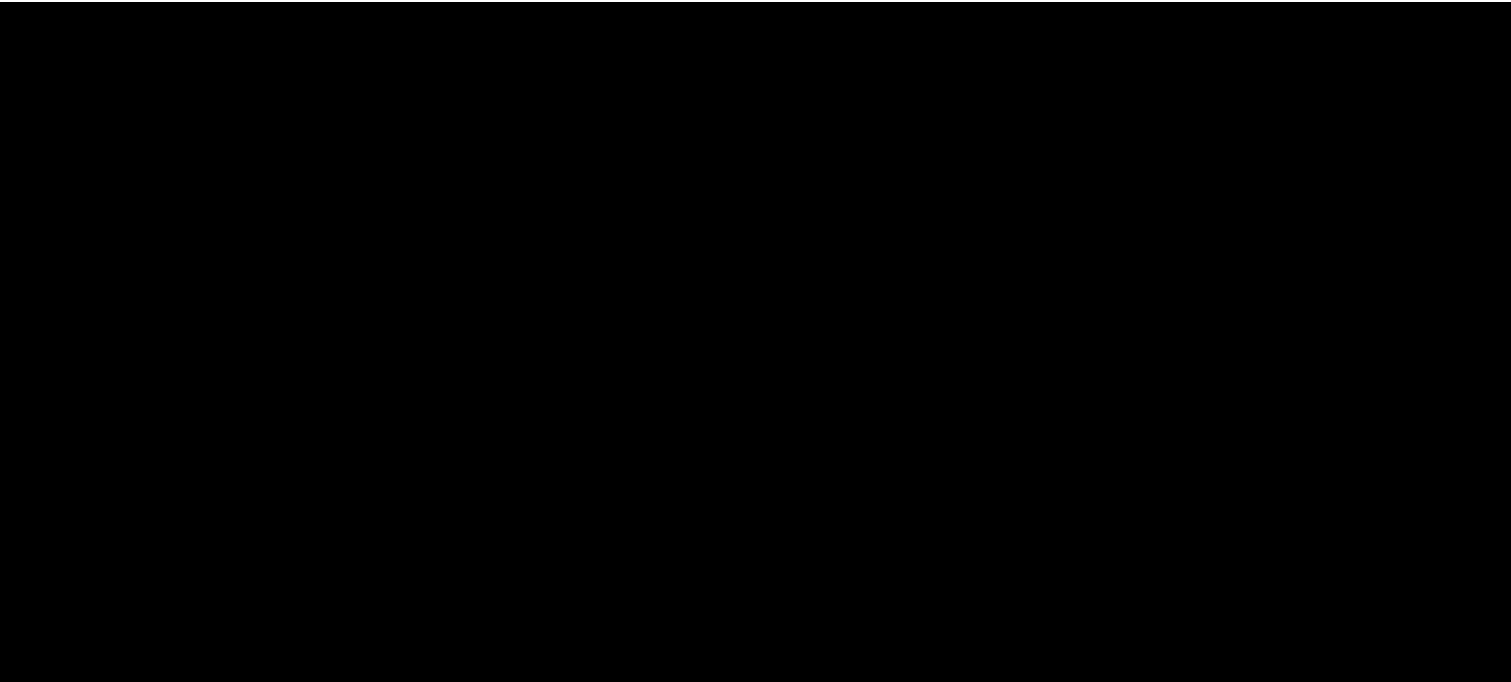
Appendix A – Note of Site Visit

NOTE OF SITE VISIT

Purpose of Meeting

To meet PC Members and SCDC Housing Officers to discuss availability and suitability of part of the site H10 (Neighbourhood Plan Reference) to assist in meeting the Affordable Housing Needs of Harston PC as a potential 'Exceptions Site'





Appendix B - Submission to Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

Harston Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
By email: [REDACTED]


BIDWELLS
Your ref: Reg 15 Consultation of Harston's Draft
Neighbourhood Plan
Our ref: JB86971
DD: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]
Date: 19/02/2025

Dear Steering Group

HARSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, REGULATION 15 CONSULTATION 2025

SITE H10-LAND SOUTH OF RECTORY FARM, HARSTON

This representation has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Jesus College in response to the Harston Neighbourhood Plan ("HNP") Regulation 15 public consultation. These representations relate to Land South of Rectory Farm, Harston ("the Site"), which is within the ownership of Jesus College.

Representations were made at Reg 14 stage in June 2024 which is appended to this representation for reference (**Appendix A**). Subsequently, a site visit was held with Bidwells, the landowner (Jesus College) and Parish Council Members and South Cambridgeshire District Council ("SCDC") Housing Officers to discuss the availability and suitability of part of the site H10 (Neighbourhood Plan Reference) to assist in meeting the Affordable Housing Needs of Harston Parish Council ("PC") via the HNP as a potential 'Exceptions Site'. A site meeting note from this visit is also appended (**Appendix B**).

Current Status of the Site

The purpose of this representation is to reaffirm the site is both available and deliverable for the provision of affordable housing through a rural exception site proposal. As discussed in the previous representation and as part of the site visit, Jesus College would like to consider and determine with the PC the number of affordable dwellings which might be needed to serve the plan period. This will help to understand the amount of land within the site which would be required with associated infrastructure, access points, open space and landscaping etc.

Concluding Comments

A shared vision for the Site is potentially achievable by means of a collaborative approach between the key stakeholders. The college would be open to ongoing discussions with the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group with respect to this site proposal to assist in meeting the affordable housing needs of the Parish. We acknowledge that the PC is liaising with the district council in terms of the relationship and individual responsibilities between the HNP and the forthcoming consultation on the Greater Cambridge Local Plan. If the PC requires any further information from Bidwells and/or Jesus College we would be happy to provide it. Furthermore, we would be happy to meet with you again to discuss any questions the PC may have in this matter.



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Kind regards



Enclosures

Appendix A – Reg 14 Representation for Land at Rectory Farm submitted 10th June 2024

Appendix B – Note from site visit on 1st July 2024

Appendix C – Site Location Plan

Appendix A - Reg 14 Representation for Land at Rectory Farm submitted 10th June 2024



BIDWELLS

Your ref: Reg 14 Consultation of Harston's Draft
Neighbourhood Plan
Our ref: JB86971
DD: [REDACTED]
E: [REDACTED]
Date: 10/06/2024

Harston Neighbourhood Plan Working Group
By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Steering Group

HARSTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION 2024

SITE H10-LAND SOUTH OF RECTORY FARM, HARSTON – REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF JESUS COLLEGE

These representations have been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Jesus College in response to the Harston Neighbourhood Plan ("HNP") Regulation 14 public consultation. These representations relate to Land South of Rectory Farm, Harston ("the Site"), which is within the ownership of Jesus College.

We have been in recent email correspondence with the Parish Council ("PC") to arrange to meet on site with members of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and local councillors to discuss how the site can positively contribute to the delivery of the HNP. However, as it has not been possible to arrange the site meeting in advance of the public consultation period closing date on 11 June, we are making representations to the Regulation 14 consultation.

Our representation is set out as follows:

- Background to the Site
- Planning for new homes in Harston
- Site assessment of Site H10
- Other Sites in the Site Options and Assessment report
- Concluding comments

Background to Land South of Rectory Farm

As shown by the attached Location Plan (**Appendix A**), the Site known as 'Land south of Rectory Farm, Harston' extends to circa 5.5 hectares and is located to the north-east of Harston village. The site is identified as Site H10 in the Site Options and Assessment technical report carried out by AECOM in February 2024.

The Site is situated on the edge of Harston village, outside the settlement boundary and within the Green Belt. The site comprises arable farmland and borders the A10 to the east, a small farm track and fields to the north, fields to the east and existing residential properties to the south. The south-eastern corner



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adjoins existing residential development along the A10. The site offers good access to community facilities and services in Harston including a village shop, open space and schools.

Jesus College would like to consider and determine with the PC the number of affordable dwellings which might be needed to serve the plan period which will help to understand the amount of land within the site which would be required with associated infrastructure, access points, open space and landscaping etc.

The Need for Affordable Homes in Harston

We are conscious that there is now a delay in the preparation of the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, and that the next consultation is scheduled to take place in the Autumn of 2025. However, we note updated jobs and housing evidence papers prepared on behalf of the Councils in late 2022 indicated higher growth figures for Greater Cambridge than was originally envisaged. In addition, central government has identified Cambridge and its hinterland as a key location for economic growth of national significance. How this will work its way into policy and planning practice remains to be seen, but there is a strong policy imperative for additional development to support the planned economic growth at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus as well as supporting other office and labs proposals which have been given permission locally. It is acknowledged there is an acute need for affordable housing locally and it is prudent that the PC is planning for this need as one of its priorities within the emerging HNP.

As you will be aware, planning permission has been granted for the proposed R&D facility Cambridge Discovery Campus at the former Hauxton Wastewater Treatment Plant to support the nearby Cambridge Biomedical Campus and add to the life science 'southern cluster' of Cambridge. This will comprise a 250,000 sq. ft. campus development along with a new Country Park and amenity building to potentially generate 1190 jobs locally. As shown in the attached Public Rights of Way Plan (**Appendix B**) there is good connectivity between site H10 and the Cambridge Discovery Campus, which could provide affordable housing for workers within active travel commuting distance.

The Housing Needs Assessment which forms part of the evidence base for the Neighbourhood Plan finds that ***'there is a high level of affordable housing need in the parish. Specifically, it finds that if the South Cambridgeshire's need for affordable housing were prorated to Harston, based on its current share of population, there would be a need for 86 affordable homes to rent over the period up to 2041 and a need for 21 affordable homes to buy'*** (HNP, Paragraph 10.4). Furthermore, ***'There are currently (March 2023) 42 households in need of affordable or social rented housing with a connection to the Harston village, according to South Cambridgeshire District Council's waiting list data'*** (HNP, Paragraph 10.5).

The Housing Needs Survey also demonstrates a significant level of support for affordable housing in principle, with some reservations regarding the use of greenfield sites and the increased traffic brought about by increased numbers of dwellings. The need is identified as 32 households, which is derived from the combination of the existing evidence from the housing register and the additional findings from the housing needs survey.

Chapter 10 of the Regulation 14 HNP deals with matters relating to housing and the built environment. Policy HAR 13 is targeted at addressing ***'Objective 10: Existing affordable housing needs will be addressed through the provision of affordable housing schemes targeted at meeting parish needs'***. Paragraph 10.7 states that the neighbourhood plan is very supportive of bringing affordable housing forward by means other than inclusion on large development sites, namely through rural exceptions housing schemes.

Jesus College supports Policy HAR 13 and is keen to help address the objective of allocating affordable housing needs and discussing how much of the Land South of Rectory Farm would be needed to deliver the number of homes required. Site H10 comprises 5.54 Hectares, which, at a density of 30 dwellings per hectare as stipulated by the Local Plan (Policy H/8), could deliver 166 dwellings over the plan period if the whole site was utilised. However, it is unlikely that there is such a need to serve the plan period and therefore it would be appropriate to understand the need and agree on how many dwellings the neighbourhood plan might require over this plan period.

Policy HAR 14 addresses the size, mix and tenure of new residential development with the aim of attracting young families to the parish and allow older residents to downsize, in terms of meeting Objective 11.

Site Assessment of Site H10

The site was initially put forward as part of the 'call for sites' evidence gathering in 2023, and then was considered as part of a Site Options and Assessment technical report carried out by AECOM in February 2024. The Site Options and Assessment report refers to the site as 'H10' and assesses the Site as **having low sensitivity to visual amenity and limited or no impact on heritage constraints. Due to the proximity of the site to the existing settlement boundary, the assessment states that:**

'The site could be a suitable location for rural exception housing if agreed with the landowner'.
(Harston Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment, AECOM : 64)

It goes on to state that:

'It must be noted that development of the full extent of the site may also result in a lack of separation with the nearby area of Hauxton and have an adverse impact on the rural character of the edge of Harston, therefore the southern portion would be better suited for rural exception housing.' (Harston Neighbourhood Plan Site Options and Assessment, AECOM : 64)

Methodology of the Site Options and Assessment report

Sites were identified from the 'call for sites' exercise and the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning HELAA which was published in 2021. Sites were then evaluated using a range of qualitative and quantitative information collected in a desktop study. A site visit was subsequently carried out on 13 October 2023 to assess physical factors such as access and current use alongside qualitative characteristics such as views and character. A red/amber/green rating was then given to each site based on the assessment and the relevant Planning Practice Guidance which tests whether a site is suitable, available and achievable. An indicative housing requirement for each site was calculated based on local plan policies, density of the surrounding area (30 dph) and any site specific factors.

Other Sites in the Site Options and Assessment report

In total, 16 sites were identified during the call for sites process and four were excluded due to their location in the greenbelt. Therefore, 11 sites were progressed for assessment.

Only one site is rated as 'suitable for development' - site H8 which is identified as suitable for infill housing in the Green Belt for 1 dwelling. A further four sites are rated amber, meaning that they 'may be appropriate for development if the identified issues can be resolved or constraints mitigated, or that a site is only suitable for partial allocation'. Sites H12, H14 and H15 can be developed under paragraph 154 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as they are previously developed land which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt. These sites would contribute an estimated 10,

6 and 2 dwellings respectively. Site H13 is not in the green belt and is estimated to have a capacity of 8 dwellings if the Settlement Boundary was adjusted to include the site.

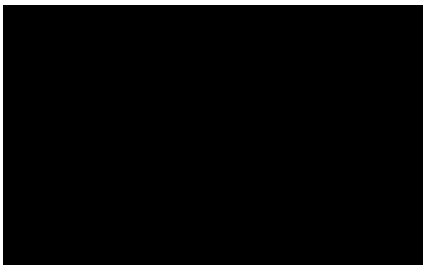
H12 is allocated in the draft HNP under Policy HAR27, which is aimed at addressing Objective 10 in relation to affordable housing need. H14 is allocated in the draft HNP under Policy HAR28, however there is no requirement for these dwellings to be affordable. Therefore HNP is only proposing to allocate 16 dwellings, not all of which are definitely affordable, compared to the identified need of 42 households in the Housing Needs Assessment and 32 households in the Housing Needs Survey as discussed above. As part of the conversations between Jesus College and Harston Parish Council, the actual need should be identified.

If the other sites labelled amber were also built out, this would take the total number of dwellings up to 26 dwellings which still falls short. Therefore the need for affordable housing is not due to be met over the plan period and Site H10 should be considered as a rural exception site to meet the need.

Concluding Comments

Jesus College supports Policy HAR 13 of the emerging Harston Neighbourhood Plan which aims to meet the affordable housing need via rural exception sites policy. In addition, Jesus College is keen to meet the PC on site to discuss the scale and appropriate quantum of housing and associated community infrastructure needed to deliver a successful development. A shared vision for the Site is potentially achievable by means of a collaborative approach between the key stakeholders. The College would also like to take this opportunity to wish the Parish Council well in its endeavour to adopt a workable and effective Neighbourhood Plan.

Kind regards



[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Enclosures

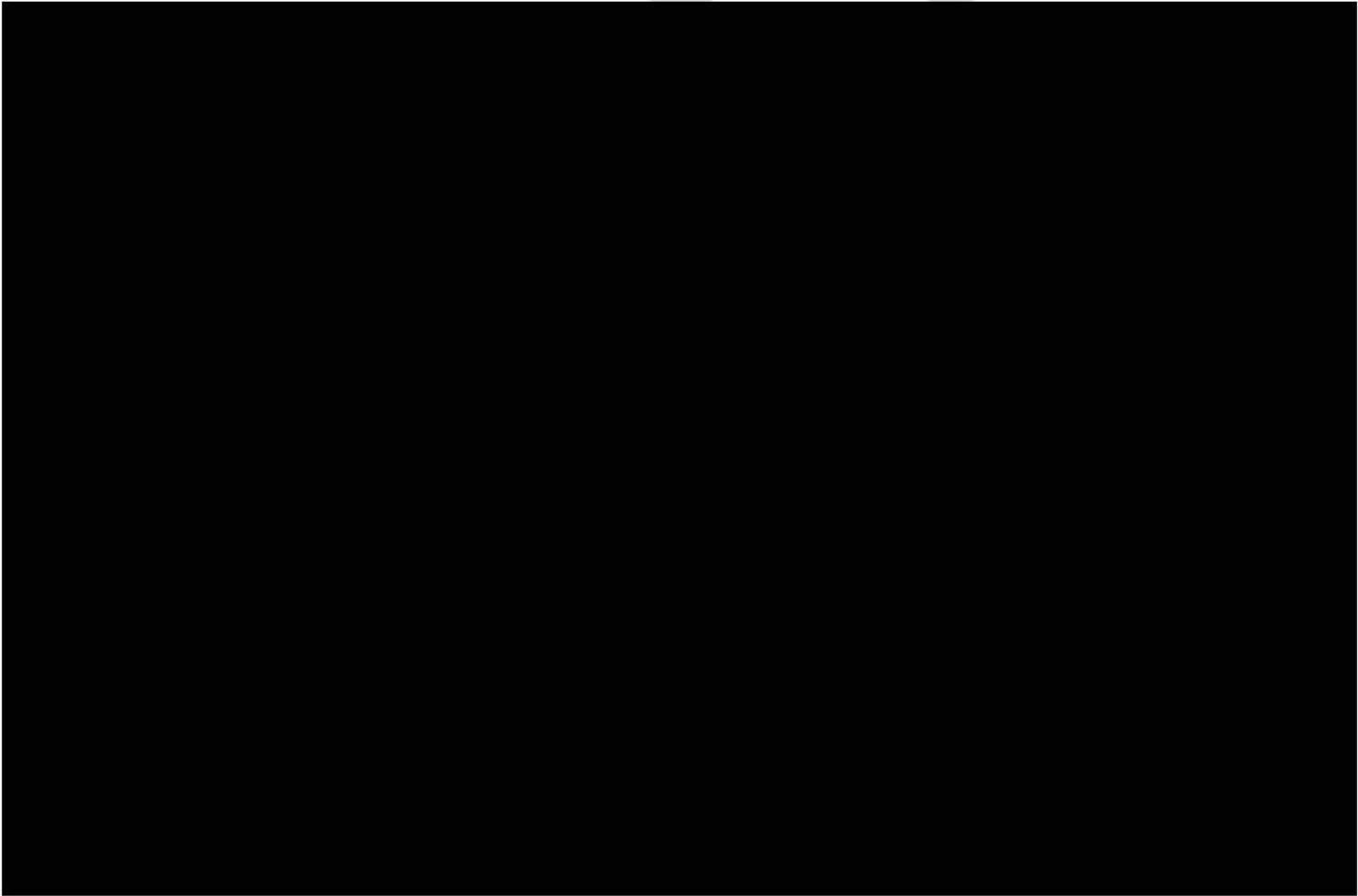
Appendix A – Site Location Plan

Appendix B - Note from site visit on 1st July 2024

NOTE OF SITE VISIT

Purpose of Meeting

To meet PC Members and SCDC Housing Officers to discuss availability and suitability of part of the site H10 (Neighbourhood Plan Reference) to assist in meeting the Affordable Housing Needs of Harston PC as a potential 'Exceptions Site'





Appendix C: Site Location Plan

H10

1. Site Details	
Site Reference / Name	H10
Site Address / Location	Land south of Rectory Farm
Gross Site Area (Hectares)	5.54
SHLAA/SHELAA Reference (if applicable)	N/A
Existing land use	Agriculture
Land use being considered	Housing
Development Capacity (Proposed by Landowner or SHLAA/HELAA)	Unknown
Site identification method / source	Call for Sites
Planning history	N/A
Neighbouring uses	Agriculture, Housing
	