

Call for Sites  
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne, Cambridge  
CB23 6EA

Date: 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026

Dear Planning Policy Department,

## Call for Sites Submission – Land at Sawston, Cambridgeshire

On behalf of Huawei (hereinafter 'our Client' / 'the Landowner'), please find enclosed a letter summarising the Call for Sites submission relating to landholdings in Sawston, Cambridgeshire (hereinafter 'the Site'). This letter has been submitted alongside the completed Call for Sites Form provided by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning and a Site Location Plan (provided at Appendix 1).

### The Site – Description and Planning Context

#### Description

The Site comprises over 500 acres / 202 hectares of land including Sawston Business Park, vacant agricultural buildings, agricultural land, and woodland. The Site is split in two parcels by the Cambridgeshire to London railway line.

The smaller parcel of land comprises agricultural land and woodland between the main highways network (A1301) and the railway.

The larger parcel is broadly defined by the railway line to the east; the River Cam to the northwest; Whittlesford Road and Shelford Road to the east; and North Road and the village of Whittlesford to the south. Within the central part of the Site is Sawston Business Park which comprises a collection of commercial buildings providing approximately 500,000 sq ft of floorspace. 376,000 sq ft is currently tenanted with the remaining floorspace being long-term vacant and dilapidated. To the south of the Business Park are a collection of vacant agricultural buildings, a farmhouse and several further former commercial buildings. The majority of the wider site comprises agricultural land and woodland.

The Site lies to the west of Sawston Village and to the north of Whittlesford Village. The highway network connects from the A1301 to Sawston (Cambridge Road), which also includes the main cycle route running from the village to Cambridge. The M11 is accessed in under 10 minutes by vehicles via A-roads.

The Site is in close proximity to two train stations, 2.4 miles to Whittlesford Parkway to the south and 2.1 miles to Shelford Station to the north.

The immediate surrounding area to the Site is predominantly agricultural land with two small villages. Cambridge is the nearest city and is located 6 miles to the north of the Site.

The majority of the Site is located within the Green Belt with Sawston Business Park inset from the Green Belt. Large areas of the Site are located within Flood Zone 1 with areas also situated within Flood Zones 2 and 3.

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## Planning Policy Context

The Landowner is aware that Greater Cambridge Shared Planning is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan and welcomes the opportunity to submit the Site for strategic consideration as part of the Call for Sites process.

The Government's objective as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') is to significantly boost the supply of homes by ensuring that LPAs meet identified housing needs. The NPPF also confirms that a broad range of new employment, commercial and infrastructure development will be required to support continued economic growth. Greater Cambridge is identified by the Government as a national focus for development and innovation, and therefore expected to accommodate a substantial proportion of this growth.

The December 2024 update to the Standard Method increased the minimum local housing need figures for both authorities. Cambridge City's requirement rose from 687 to 1,135 homes per annum ('hpa'), while South Cambridgeshire's increased from 1,039 to 1,174 hpa. These significant increases reinforce the need to identify further land capable of meeting future housing, employment and infrastructure requirements.

The Site provides a strong opportunity to contribute to these strategic needs, delivering new housing alongside employment / commercial uses.

The Site is available, partly previously developed, and in light of the recent changes to the NPPF relating to Green Belt, it is considered that areas of the Site should meet the definition of Grey Belt 'in-principle'. Paragraph 158 of the NPPF states that where it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, plans should give priority to previously developed land, then consider Grey Belt which is not previously developed, and then other Green Belt locations.

## Relevant Planning History

A summary of the most relevant recent planning applications at the Site are set out below:

- **S/1302/08/O** | Redevelopment of land for B1(c) B2 & B8 & associated infrastructure - Phase 2. **Refused 24 Oct 2008**
- **S/1332/08/F** | Phase 1 - Redevelopment of Sawston Business Park for a Mixed B1(C) B2 & B8 Scheme and Associated Infrastructure and Landscaping Work. **Refused 30 Oct 2008**
- **S/0108/09/F** | Phase 1 - Development of Sawston Business Park for Mixed B1(c) B2 & B8 Scheme & Associated Infrastructure & Landscaping Work. **Granted 22 Apr 2009**
- **S/0069/09/O** | Phase 2 - Redevelopment of Land at Sawston Business Park for a Mixed B1(c) B2 B8 Scheme and Associated Infrastructure. **Granted 22 Apr 2009**
- **S/0680/15/FL** | Change of use from B8 to B2 use class and associated alterations to the Vision Centre including additional fenestration internal floorspace extension installation of plant and external works. **Granted 03 Sep 2015**
- **S/0158/20/FL** | Demolition of 582 sq.m (GIA) storage building (B8 Use Class) and erection of 50,445 sq.m (GIA) of research and development accommodation (B1(b) Use Class), including ancillary accommodation and broken down as follows: (i) Office accommodation (9,503 sq.m); (ii) Wafer fabrication (FAB) cleanroom (22,351 sq.m); (iii) Single level basement incorporating 284 no. car parking spaces (9,417 sq.m); (iv) Central Utilities Building (8,694 sq.m); (v) External storage building (480 sq.m); (vi) Cycle parking spaces (80 for staff and 6 for visitors, total 86); (vii) Surface, disabled and visitor car parking (16 spaces) adjacent to the office building entrance; (viii) Access and circulation roads, engineering works and footpaths / cycleways; (ix) Drainage and servicing infrastructure; and (x) Hard and soft landscaping. **Granted 14 Aug 2020**
- **S/0750/01/F** | Warehouse with Ancillary Offices. **Granted 24 Apr 2024**

## Site Designations

In accordance with the adopted Development Plan the Site is subject to the following designations:

- Sawston Business Park is identified as an Established Employment Site.
- Beyond the Business Park and its immediate surroundings the remaining areas of the Site are located within the Green Belt.
- Flood Zone 2/3 covers much of the western part of the larger parcel.
- A Scheduled Ancient Monument is located within the central part of the larger parcel situated to the south of the Business Park.

- The smaller parcel includes an area of woodland that is a SSSI.

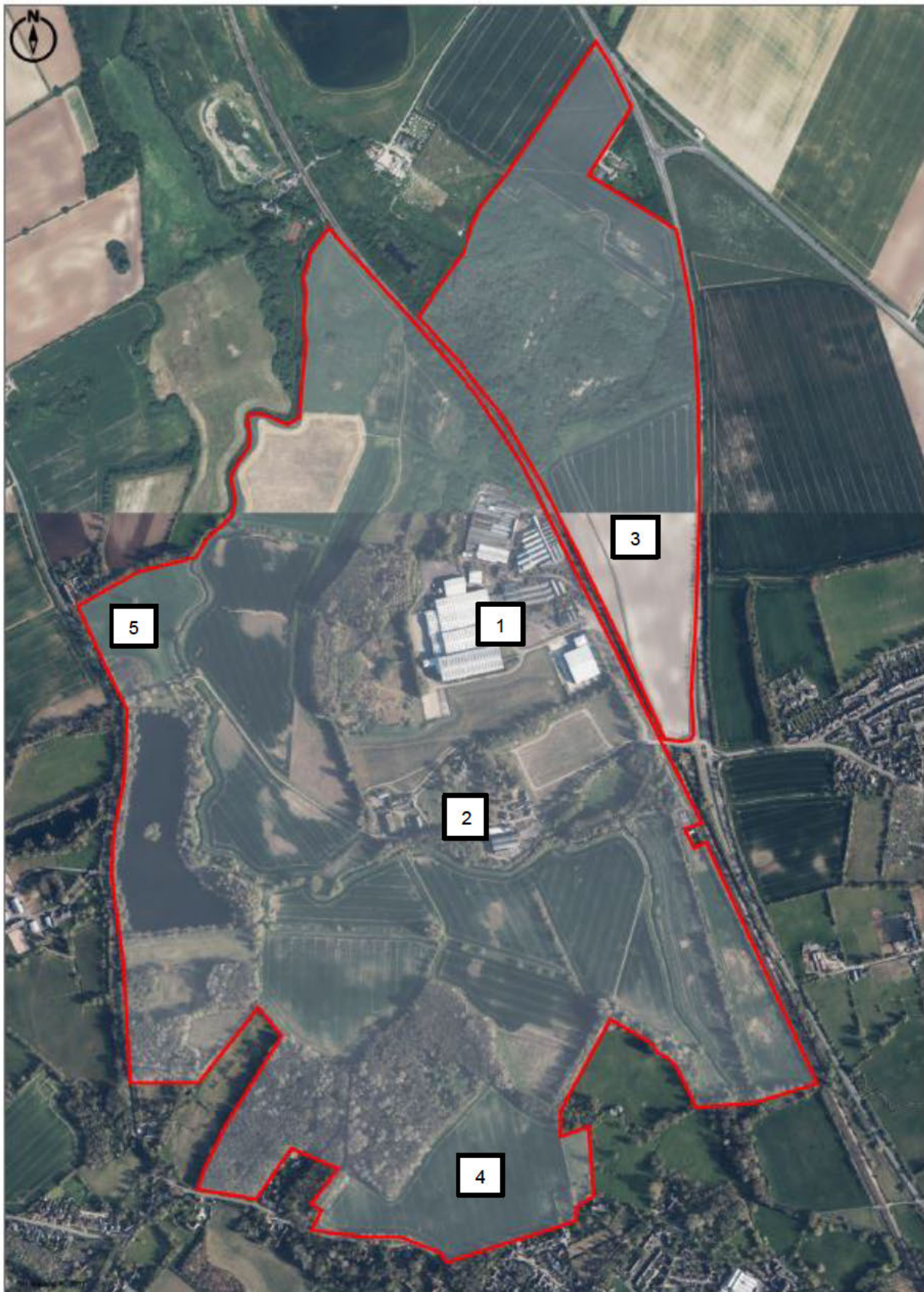
### Development Opportunities

The Landowner considers that the Site is capable of accommodating significant areas of new development. Specifically, the Landowner has identified five key development opportunity areas within the Site:

1. Sawston Business Park
2. Vacant agricultural and commercial buildings to the south of the Business Park
3. Eastern land parcel between railway line & A1301
4. Southern land parcel adjacent to Whittlesford
5. Western land parcel adjacent to Whittlesford Road

The key development opportunity areas within the Site are labelled in Figure 1 and are explained further below.

The proposed land uses are still to be determined, albeit at this stage land uses which are considered to be appropriate are set out below.

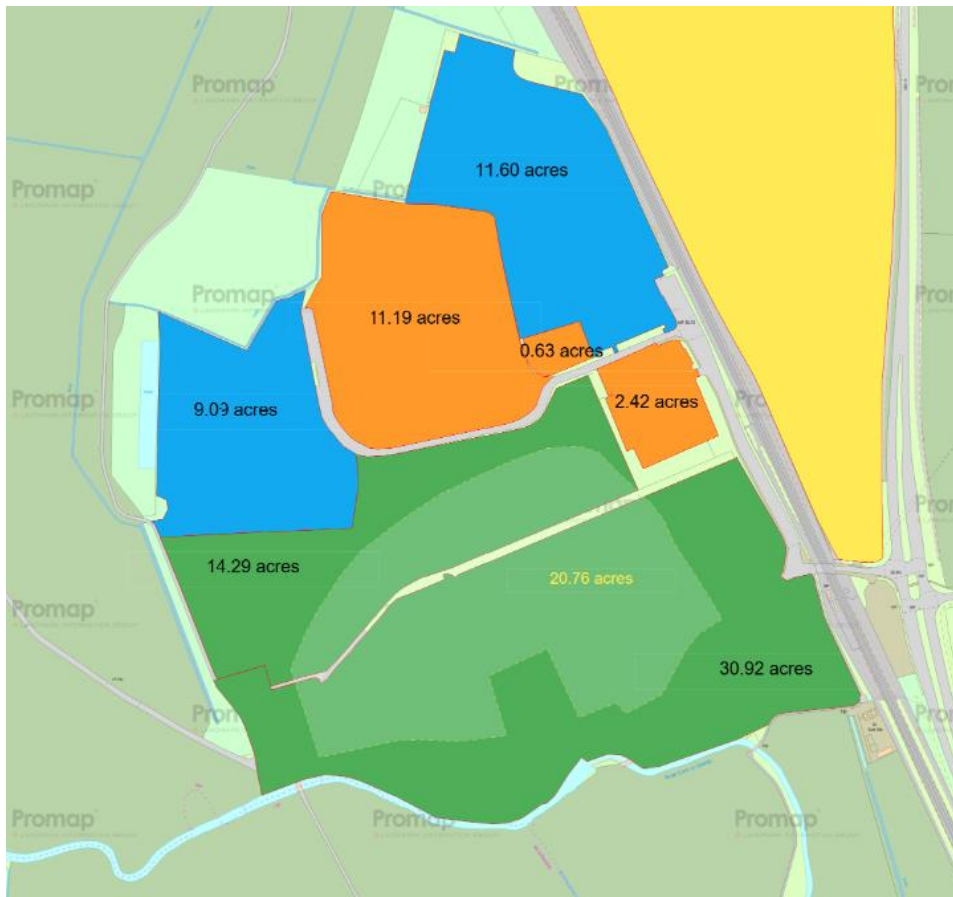


**Figure 1. Development Opportunity Areas within the Site**

## 1. Sawston Business Park

The Business Park currently accommodates two long-term tenants, providing a solid foundation for future growth. There is significant potential to build on this success, supported by the Site's excellent connectivity to transport networks and its strategic location in close proximity to Cambridge. The Greater Cambridge area is an attractive location for a diverse range of businesses, and the Business Park is well placed to help meet national, regional and local economic and employment needs.

The designation of the Business Park as an Established Employment Site by Local Plan Policy E15 demonstrates its significance as an employment location and the policy allows for the redevelopment of existing buildings and specifies that appropriate development for employment use will be permitted.



**Figure 2. Land parcels at Sawston Business Park and land to the south of the Business Park.**

Figure 2 identifies the various land parcels at the Business Park and at the adjacent land to the south.

The two existing long-term tenants are contained within the parcels identified in orange.

The buildings in the northeastern corner of the Business Park, identified in blue (11.60 acres), have been vacant for many years and are increasingly dilapidated. This area of the Site is previously developed land inset from the Green Belt. This area offers a prime opportunity for redevelopment in the near term, and the Landowner wishes to engage with the Council at the earliest opportunity regarding the redevelopment of this area of the Site.

To the immediate west of the existing buildings, planning permission was granted in 2020 for the expansion of the Business Park to deliver an R&D scheme (Ref: S/0158/20/FL), identified in blue (9.09 acres). Although the permission was not implemented, it demonstrates the acceptability of expanding the Business Park into the surrounding Green Belt. It is therefore considered that a similar form of development should once again be acceptable as a baseline. Given this historic permission, the allocation of this wider land for business purposes should be supported. This would better facilitate further development coming forward in this location, with the land allocated for business purposes and taken out of the Green Belt. Notwithstanding, given the previous permission, it is considered that new development in this area of the Site could come forward in the near-term and the Landowner wishes to engage with the Council at the earliest opportunity.

Immediately south of the Business Park is undeveloped land which is inset from the Green Belt, identified in dark green (14.29 acres), presenting an opportunity for new development designed sensitively in the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

In summary, the Business Park has the potential for enhancement and expansion for a range of commercial uses (B2, B8, E(g)(ii), E(g)(iii) / data centres / R&D / life sciences).

## **2. Vacant Agricultural and Commercial Buildings to the south of the Business Park**

Several existing vacant agricultural buildings and commercial buildings are located close to the centre of the Site within the dark green area (30.92 acres). These buildings comprise previously developed land within the Green Belt and have the potential for enhancement / expansion or redevelopment. The Landowner may engage with the Council in the near-term regarding these opportunities.

## **3. Eastern land parcel between railway line & A1301**

This land parcel is defined by strong, identifiable boundaries, namely the railway line to the west, the A1301 to the east and the woodland to the north. The parcel lies within the Green Belt and sits immediately adjacent to the A1301 to which there is an existing access at the southern end of the parcel.

The Government published an updated NPPF on 12 December 2024, alongside revisions to the National Planning Practice Guidance ('NPPG') in relation to Green Belt/Grey Belt on 27 February 2025. In consideration of the assessment criteria identified within the NPPG, our initial Grey Belt assessment indicates that the parcel makes a weak contribution to purposes A, B and D and therefore the parcel should be considered to meet the definition of Grey Belt. In due course the Landowner will undertake further studies and engage with the LPA to consider the Grey Belt status.

The parcel has potential to accommodate either commercial development (B2, B8, E(g)(ii), E(g)(iii) / data centres / R&D / life sciences) situated in close proximity to Sawston Business Park or residential development (C3 / C2) situated in close proximity to the settlement boundary of Sawston village.

## **4. Southern land parcel adjacent to Whittlesford**

This land parcel is similarly defined by strong, identifiable boundaries, with woodland enclosing much of its perimeter. The parcel lies within the Green Belt.

Similarly to the above, in consideration of the assessment criteria identified within the NPPG, our initial Grey Belt assessment indicates that the parcel makes a weak contribution to purposes A, B and D and therefore the parcel should be considered to meet the definition of Grey Belt. In due course the Landowner will undertake further studies and engage with the LPA to consider the Grey Belt status.

Along the southern boundary, the parcel directly adjoins the settlement boundary of Whittlesford village, making this location well suited to residential development (C3 / C2).

## **5. Western land parcel adjacent to Whittlesford Road**

The land parcel is situated adjacent to a collection of existing residential properties known as Ley Cottages. Whittlesford Road provides road access to the surrounding villages. The parcel lies within the Green Belt and within Flood Zone 1.

The parcel has the potential to accommodate a modest scale of residential development (C3) to meet local needs.

## **6. Other Development Opportunities**

Areas of the Site may be suitable for accommodating energy infrastructure including solar pv and battery storage.

## **Development Capacity**

At this stage, no formal capacity calculations have been undertaken therefore the calculations set out below are indicative.

### **Sawston Business Park**

The vacant buildings in the northeastern corner comprise 124,000 sq ft of floorspace situated within 11.60 acres of land and offer a prime opportunity for redevelopment.

The lapsed planning permission (ref. S/0158/20/FL) was to provide 542,985 sq ft. of floorspace within 9.09 acres of land.

Other areas of the Business Park and areas which contain the vacant agricultural and commercial buildings to the south, have the potential to accommodate several hundred sq ft. of floorspace design sensitively in the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

### **Eastern land parcel between railway line & A1301**

The parcel comprises 12 hectares / 29.7 acres.

Assuming a 40% plot coverage the parcel could accommodate 517,492 sq ft of single storey commercial / employment floorspace or 480 C3 units at 40 dph. The full parcel does not necessarily need to be developed.

### **Southern land parcel adjacent to Whittlesford**

The parcel comprises 9.54 hectares / 23.58 acres.

At 40 dph the parcel could accommodate 381 C3 units. The full parcel does not necessarily need to be developed.

### **The Western land parcel adjacent to Whittlesford Road**

The parcel comprises 3.13 hectares / 7.75 acres.

Given the location of the parcel, it is envisaged that the full site would not be developed with a minor scale development of c. 9 units being appropriate.

### **Development Timescales**

The development opportunities **within and adjacent to Sawston Business Park** are available to come forward immediately (within the next 1-2 years) and certainly within the first 5 years of the plan period. The area comprises previously developed land and an expired planning permission meaning that development can come forward in the near term.

The development opportunities at the greenfield parcels of **Eastern land parcel between railway line & A1301** and **Southern land parcel adjacent to Whittlesford** require initial feasibility studies undertaken however the parcels are available and at this stage there is no reason for why development cannot come forward in the near-term and certainly within the first 5 years of the plan period.

The development opportunity at **the Western land parcel adjacent to Whittlesford Road** is similarly able to come forward in the near-term and certainly within the first 5 years of the plan period.

### **Conclusion**


The Site comprises over 500 acres / 202 hectares of land including Sawston Business Park, agricultural buildings, agricultural land, and woodland.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan and therefore the Landowner submits the Site for strategic consideration as part of the Call for Sites process for new employment / commercial and residential development.

The Landowner has identified five key development opportunity areas within the Site. The Site is available, partly previously developed, and in light of the recent changes to the NPPF relating to Green Belt, it is considered that areas of the Site should meet the definition of Grey Belt.

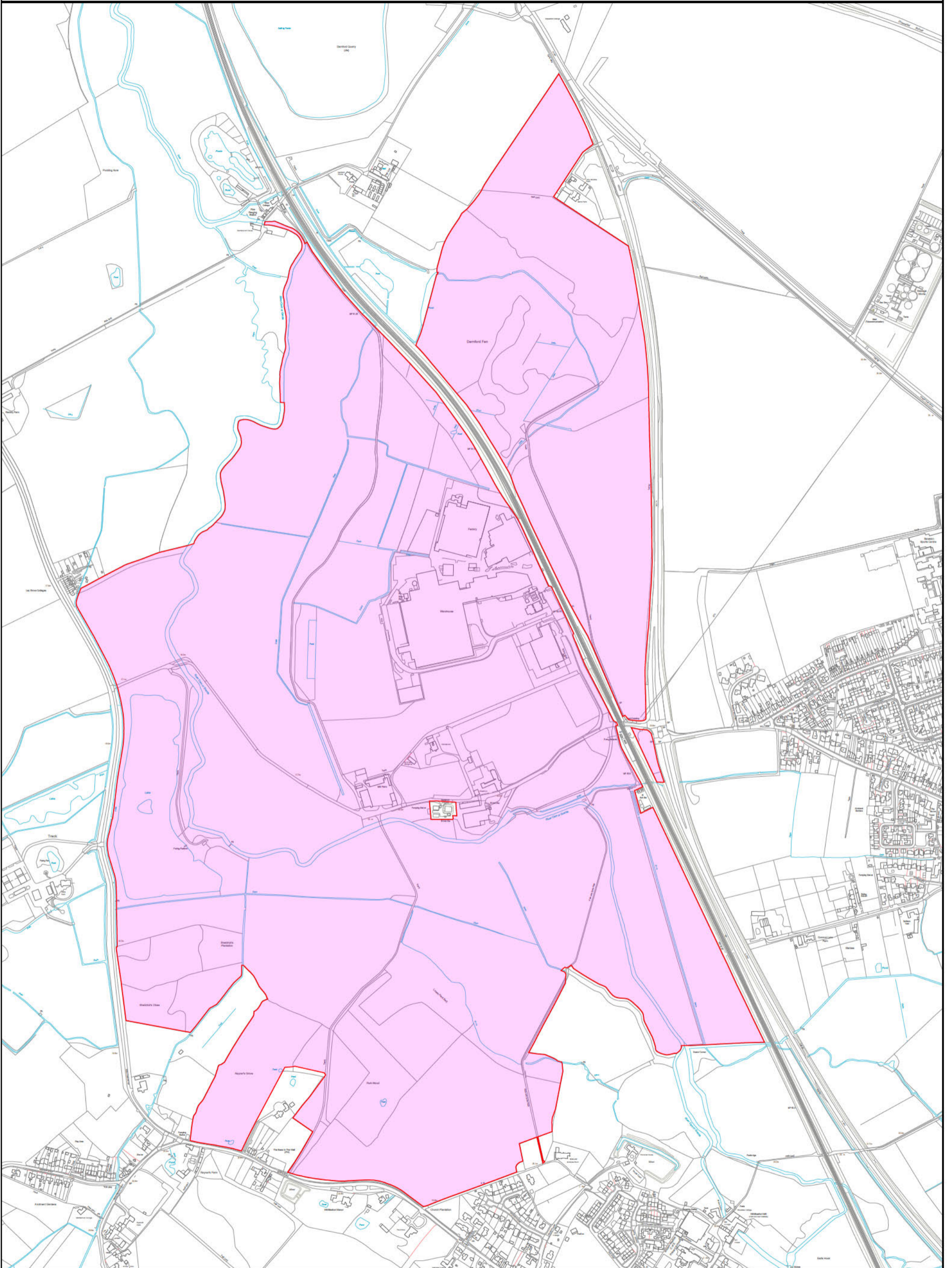
The Landowner would welcome a discussion with Officers at the Council to discuss the Site and how it could contribute towards meeting strategic and local needs in the near-term as well as through the plan-making process.

We trust the information above provides sufficient detail to register the Site at this stage. We look forward to discussing the Site further with Officers during the plan-making process and via pre-application engagement.

Should you have any queries or would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact myself or my 

  
Yours faithfully,

# Land at Sawston



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**LDS**  
Land & Building Surveyors

Date:	Drawn By:	Scale:	Plan Ref:
06:02:26	CW	1:7500 @ A3	20708
Title		<b>Land at Sawston</b>	

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