Appendix 5.4. Local Planning Policy

Cambridge Local Plan (October 2018)

5.4.1. The Cambridge Local Plan forms part of the development plan for Cambridge, replacing the ‘Cambridge Local Plan 2006’. It sets out the vision, policies and proposals for the future development and land use in Cambridge to 2031. It is the main consideration in the determination of planning applications.

5.4.2. Policies of relevance to the LVIA are set out below.

5.4.3. Policy 4: The Cambridge Green Belt states (inter alia):

“The extent of the Cambridge Green Belt within the administrative area of Cambridge City Council is set out on the Policies Map. New development in the Green Belt will only be approved in line with Green Belt policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).”

5.4.4. Supporting text adds:

“2.51. The Green Belt preserves the unique setting and special character of the city and includes green corridors that penetrate deep into the urban and historic heart of Cambridge. It is a key component in providing for active and passive sport and recreation, for amenity and biodiversity. A significant proportion of the Cambridge Green Belt within the city’s boundaries is in agricultural use. The Green Belt is one of the key elements that contribute to the symbiotic relationship between high quality of life, place and economic success of Cambridge.

2.52. The purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt are set out in Table 2.4 below:

Table 2.4: National and Cambridge Green Belt purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Green Belt purposes</th>
<th>National Green Belt purposes</th>
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<tr>
<td>• to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas</td>
<td>• preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre</td>
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2.53. Significant land was taken out of the Cambridge Green Belt in the 2006 Local Plan following strategic reviews. This land was allocated as part of the growth strategy, which involved the delivery of urban extensions and enhancement of corridors and edges of the remaining Green Belt. Meeting the need for growth, these sites are now being delivered.

2.54. The changes to the Green Belt around the edge of Cambridge have necessitated new assessment to update our understanding of the value of the Cambridge Green Belt today. This work has shown that the remaining areas of Green Belt have increased in value as they are now closer to the city's edge and less Green Belt land remains to perform the unique roles played by the Cambridge Green Belt. The Green Belt is a critical environmental asset for Cambridge in forming the important setting for a compact, historic city and contributing to the high quality of life and place enjoyed here.”

5.4.5. **Policy 8: Setting of the city** states [inter alia]:

“Development on the urban edge, including sites within and abutting green infrastructure corridors and the Cambridge Green Belt, open spaces and the River Cam corridor, will only be supported where it:

• responds to, conserves and enhances the setting, and special character of the city, in accordance with the Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment 2003, Green Belt assessments ¹, Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and their successor documents;

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- promotes access to the surrounding countryside/open space, where appropriate; and
- [...] includes landscape improvement proposals that strengthen or re-create the well-defined and vegetated urban edge, improve visual amenity and enhance biodiversity.

Proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity, particularly proposals for landscape-scale enhancement across local authority boundaries, will also be supported. The Council will support proposals which deliver the strategic green infrastructure network and priorities set out in the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy.”

5.4.6. Supporting text adds:

“2.75. Cambridge has a distinct and unique character and landscape setting and is surrounded by attractive green space, much of which is accessible. Cambridge is characterised by its compact nature, well-defined and vegetated edges, open spaces, and the green corridors that extend into the city centre from the countryside. These green corridors are protected as part of the Cambridge Green Belt or as Protected Open Space. A number of studies have considered the setting of the city and features that are considered to be critical to this setting. These studies have all highlighted that the interface between the urban edge and the countryside is one of the important and valued landscape features of the city, contributing to the quality of life and place enjoyed here. [...]”

2.77 To date, Cambridge has retained its historic clear distinction between the city and the rural area that provides its setting. Development on the urban edge of the city, adjacent to the Green Belt, has the potential to have a negative effect on the setting of the city. As such, any development on the edge of the city must conserve and enhance the city’s setting.”

5.4.7. Policy 55: Responding to context states [inter alia]:
“Development will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings to help create distinctive and high quality places. Development will:

- identify and respond positively to existing features of natural, historic or local importance on and close to the proposed development site;
- be well connected to, and integrated with, the immediate locality and wider city; and
- use appropriate local characteristics to help inform the use, siting, massing, scale, form, materials and landscape design of new development.”

Supporting text adds:

“7.3. An understanding of and appropriate response to context will ensure that the special character of Cambridge is protected and enhanced. The context of a development describes the setting of a site or area including land uses, open spaces, the built and natural environment and social and physical characteristics. Proposals for new development should create a scale and form that is appropriate to existing buildings, the public realm and open spaces, which complement the local identity of an area.

7.4. It is essential that the context of any proposal be considered early on as part of the design process. A development that responds positively to its context is one that will either enhance areas of existing high quality, or will seek to introduce distinctiveness to areas of weaker character. The outcome of this thorough understanding and well considered response should be the successful integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.”

Policy 56: Creating successful places states [inter alia]:

“Development that is designed to be attractive, high quality, accessible, inclusive and safe will be supported. Proposals should:

- provide a comprehensive design approach that achieves the successful integration of buildings, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography and landscape;
create attractive and appropriately-scaled built frontages to positively enhance the townscape where development adjoins streets and/or public spaces;

... use materials, finishes and street furniture suitable to the location and context;
... create and improve public realm, open space and landscaped areas that respond to their context and development as a whole and are designed as an integral part of the scheme;

Policy 57: Designing new buildings states [inter alia]:

“High quality new buildings will be supported where it can be demonstrated that they:
... have a positive impact on their setting in terms of location on the site, height, scale and form, materials and detailing, ground floor activity, wider townscape and landscape impacts and available views;
...”

Supporting text adds:

“7.10. High quality building design is linked to context, in terms of appropriateness, and to place making in terms of how the proposed development will be sited. Without imposing architectural tastes or styles, it is important that a proposed development is considered in terms of site location, height, scale, form and proportions, along with materials and detailing, with the latter two linking directly to the quality and durability of a proposal. Where new buildings are proposed or existing buildings altered or extended, it is important that any heritage assets and their settings are carefully considered. This would include the analysis of the special character of that asset and justification of the approach to the proposed development (this applies equally to Policy 58 on altering and extending buildings)…”

Policy 60: Tall buildings and the skyline in Cambridge states [inter alia]:

...
“Any proposal for a structure that breaks the existing skyline and/or is significantly taller than the surrounding built form will be considered against the following criteria:

- **location, setting and context** – applicants should demonstrate through visual assessment or appraisal with supporting accurate visual representations, how the proposals fit within the existing landscape and townscape;
- [..]
- **scale, massing and architectural quality** – applicants should demonstrate through the use of scaled drawings, sections, accurate visual representations and models how the proposals will deliver a high quality addition to the Cambridge skyline and clearly demonstrate that there is no adverse impact;
- [..]

5.4.13. Supporting text adds:

“7.16. The city is generally free from clustered modern towers and bulky buildings with the notable exception of the hospital buildings at Addenbrooke’s and the hangars at Cambridge Airport, which sit in stark contrast to the surrounding, low lying suburbs. While there has been a move to build a number of taller buildings across the city in recent years, further opportunities to create new taller buildings in the city must be carefully considered and placed in the right locations. [..]

7.20. Cambridge should seek to maintain and, where appropriate, enhance the overall character and qualities of its skyline as the city continues to grow and develop into the future. Any proposals for new tall buildings will need to demonstrate how they have taken account of the prevailing context and more distant views to enhance the skyline.” [..]

5.4.14. **Policy 61: Conservation and enhancement of Cambridge’s historic environment** states [inter alia]:

“To ensure the conservation and enhancement of Cambridge’s historic environment, proposals should:
• preserve or enhance the significance of the heritage assets of the city, their setting and the wider townscape, including views into, within and out of conservation areas;

• retain buildings and spaces, the loss of which would cause harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area;

• be of an appropriate scale, form, height, massing, alignment and detailed design which will contribute to local distinctiveness, complement the built form and scale of heritage assets and respect the character, appearance and setting of the locality;

• demonstrate a clear understanding of the significance of the asset and of the wider context in which the heritage asset sits, alongside assessment of the potential impact of the development on the heritage asset and its context; and

• provide clear justification for any works that would lead to harm or substantial harm to a heritage asset yet be of substantial public benefit, through detailed analysis of the asset and the proposal.”

5.4.15. Supporting text adds:

“7.22. Cambridge’s historic and natural environment defines the character and setting of the city, and contributes significantly to Cambridge residents’ quality of life. Against the backdrop of a successful, growing city, it is important to preserve and enhance the historic and natural environment to ensure that Cambridge remains compact and walkable and that the connection between the city’s historic core and the wider countryside is maintained... […]

7.27. It is important to identify and assess the impact of the development on the special character of the heritage asset in the Cambridge context. This could include:

• the effect on views or the setting of buildings and spaces;

• how the proposals will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area; and

• consideration of how the scale, height, massing, alignment and materials respond to the local context. [...]"
Cambridge East Area Action Plan (February, 2008)

5.4.16. The Cambridge East Area Action Plan (CEAAP) was undertaken to provide detailed planning policy guidance for development on the eastern edge of Cambridge, and was prepared jointly by Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire. The Site is located within the extent of the CEAAP.

5.4.17. **Policy CE/13 Landscape Principles** states that [inter alia]:

*Landscape Strategy:*

- A Landscape Strategy for Cambridge East must be submitted and approved prior to the granting of planning permission of a level of detail appropriate to the type of application. It will be implemented as part of the conditions / planning obligations for the development of the new urban quarter. [...] The strategy will:
  - Create an appropriate setting for the new urban quarter, which respects and reinforces local landscape character and minimises any adverse visual or landscape impacts on the surrounding area including the setting and character of Cambridge and surrounding settlements, in particular Fen Ditton and Teversham;
  - Establish the principles for structural landscaping and creating appropriate landscape character within the green corridor and areas of the Green Belt providing green separation from villages;
  - [...] 

5.4.18. **Policy CE/14 Landscaping within Cambridge East** states that:

- “A series of green fingers will be created into and through the urban area, which connect with other open spaces within and around Cambridge East and the wider countryside beyond and which may be based on:
  - Existing landscape features;
  - New landscape character areas.”
5.4.19. **Policy CE/4 The Setting of Cambridge East Revised Cambridge Green Belt** states that: [inter alia]

- “The purposes of the Green Belt in the vicinity of Cambridge East are to:
  - Ensure that the development of Cambridge East does not detract from the setting of Cambridge;
  - Minimise any adverse visual or landscape impacts on the surrounding area including the setting and character of the surrounding settlements, in particular the closest villages of Fen Ditton and Teversham and their Conservation Areas.”

5.4.20. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031**

5.4.21. **Policy HQ/1: Design Principles** states [inter alia]:

“All new development must be of high quality design, with a clear vision as to the positive contribution the development will make to its local and wider context. As appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, proposals must:

- Preserve or enhance the character of the local urban and rural area and respond to its context in the wider landscape…”

5.4.22. **Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character** states:

“Development will only be permitted where it respects and retains, or enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the local landscape and of the individual National Character Area in which it is located.”

5.4.23. Supplementary notes add:

“6.11 To assist in retaining the distinctive nature of the South Cambridgeshire landscape the Council provides more detailed guidance about landscape character areas in the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Landscape in
New Developments SPD to ensure that development respects both the distinctiveness of these National Character Areas and the more detailed local landscapes. Within the lifetime of the Local Plan these SPDs will be reviewed to include the more detailed East of England Landscape Typology published by Landscape East further refining the landscape character areas within the district.”

5.4.24. **Policy NH/8: Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt** states that:

- “Any development proposals within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that they do not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.
- where development is permitted, landscaping conditions, together with a requirement that any planting is adequately maintained, will be attached to any planning permission in order to ensure that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated.
- Development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality.”

5.4.25. Further notes add:

“6.35 Green Belt is a key designation in the district, designed to protect the setting and special character of Cambridge. **Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt and will not be approved except in very special circumstances and in accordance with the approach set out in the NPPF (2012).**”