

**St John's College (ID 3084)**

**Matter SC1 – Development Frameworks, Strategy for the Rural Area, Omission Sites in the Villages – 1.3E Girton iii. Omission Sites**

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**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Examination**

**Matter SC1 – Development Frameworks, Strategy for the Rural Area and Omission Sites in the Villages – 1.3E Girton iii. Omission Sites – a. Land at Cockerton Road (Representation ID 60393)**

**Hearing Statement**

**On behalf of St John's College (Representor ID 3084)**

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- 1. Statement of Purpose**
- 2. Issue SC1 1.3E Girton iii. Omission Sites a. Land at Cockerton Road**

**1. Statement of Purpose**

- 1.1. This Hearing Statement addresses part of Matter CS1 as raised by the Inspector, concerning Development Frameworks, Strategy for the Rural Area and Omission Sites in the villages. It specifically responds only to question iii) under 1.3E concerning omission sites in Girton and site a. Land at Cockerton Road, in particular.
- 1.2. In answering question iii) in relation to site a., we identify how the proposed policy would fail the tests of soundness as per the National Planning Policy Framework, and moreover, how the Plan could be made sound.
- 1.3. This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of St John's College (Representor ID 3084).
- 1.4. Our response to question iii) in relation to site a. is set out at Section 2 of this Statement.

**2. Issue SC1 1.3E Girton iii. Omission sites**

**Is the plan unsound without the allocation of the following sites for housing development, or other uses as specified below, and if so, why?:**

**a. Land at Cockerton Road**

- 2.1 In explaining this objection to the Plan, and specifically the Council's failure to allocate land for housing development at Cockerton Road, Girton, we would like to do so within the context of brief reference to objections we have made to strategic level policies within the Plan. These strategic level objections have been concerned with objectively assessed housing need (representation reference 66029), the overall spatial vision (representation reference 27964), and the level of contribution made by the more sustainable villages to housing supply (representation reference 60392). In relation to each of these issues, objections have been submitted by Savills on behalf of St. John's College throughout the emerging Development Plan process, culminating in the presentation of evidence by Savills at the Examination hearings.
- 2.2 In terms of our objections in relation to objectively assessed housing need, evidence was presented by Savills at the Examination hearings in May 2016 in relation to Matter PM1A concerning objectively assessed housing need. This evidence was presented within our Hearing Statement for this Matter under representation reference 66029. This evidence included technical consideration by GL Hearn of the Council's objectively assessed need for the District and concluded that the objectively assessed housing need for the District in the plan period should be 27,000 dwellings, rather than the 19,500 dwellings proposed by the Council.
- 2.3 In terms of our objections in relation to the overall spatial vision, evidence was presented by Savills at the Examination hearings in October 2014 in relation to Matter 2 concerning the overall spatial vision and general issues objectively assessed housing need. This evidence was presented within our Hearing Statement for this Matter under representation reference 27964. As part of this evidence, we set out our position of support for a general development strategy being permitted whereby new growth is directed towards firstly, the urban area of Cambridge and then its urban edge and then new settlements and then to larger villages.
- 2.4 In terms of our objections in relation the level of contribution made by the more sustainable villages to housing supply, verbal evidence was presented by Savills at the Examination hearings in March 2015 in relation to Matter 8C concerning the contribution of the District's more sustainable villages towards housing supply. This evidence was presented under representation reference 66029. This evidence explained our position that the District's villages should play a significantly greater role in the delivery of housing supply, with allocations being made at only six of the eighteen Rural Centres and Minor Centres.

- 2.5 More specifically, our objection to this aspect of the Plan submitted that of the more sustainable villages, the 'necklace' villages of Girton, Histon & Impington, Milton, Fulbourn and Great Shelford and Stapleford, offer a particular opportunity to deliver higher levels of growth than other villages because of their accessibility to higher order services in Cambridge and the significant sustainability benefits offered by this approach. Consequently, we have submitted that appropriate levels of growth should be allowed to take place at these settlements.
- 2.6 It is within the context of the above objections, that we consider the Plan to be unsound without allocation of the Cockerton Road site. In particular, the matter of the overall growth to be planned for remains unresolved as part of the Examination process and therefore, should it be found that the District's objectively assessed housing need is higher than 19,500 dwellings, then the plan will need to provide for such a higher amount of housing development. As a result of the above objections, we consider that allocations of an appropriate scale should be identified at Girton to accommodate higher levels of growth arising from an approach in which a higher District-wide level of growth is delivered, with the 'necklace' villages playing a greater role as part of this.
- 2.7 Turning to the specifics of the Cockerton Road site, it lies within the freehold ownership of our client and is available for development now. We also consider the site to lie in a suitable location for development, lying adjacent to the built up area of Rural Centre of Girton. It should also be noted that the site currently lies within the green belt. However, in accommodating higher levels of growth in the District than the Council is currently planning for, this will inevitably involve the removal of more land from the green belt. The National Planning Policy Framework remarks that green belt boundaries should only be reviewed in exceptional circumstances. We submit that in ensuring that sufficient levels of housing growth are planned for, such exceptional circumstances are presented, particularly within the context of South Cambridgeshire and its relationship to Cambridge and the role the city plays as a key driver in the national economy. We also submit that owing to the contained and small scale nature of the site, its removal from the green belt, would not unacceptably harm the purposes of including land within it.
- 2.8 In light of the above, we do not consider the plan to be sound without the Cockerton Road site shown as a housing allocation, because we do not believe the plan to be positively prepared (the strategy does not meet objectively assessed needs). As such, we consider that Policy H/1 should be amended to add the site to the list of sites identified for housing development, with the site area being 0.45 Ha and the amount of development being for up to 15 dwellings.

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**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Examination**

**Matter SC1 – Development Frameworks, Strategy for the Rural Area and Omission Sites in the Villages – 1.3E Girton iii. Omission Sites – b. Land at Dodford Lane / High Street (Representation ID 60394)**

**Hearing Statement**

**On behalf of St John's College (Representor ID 3084)**

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## Contents

- 1. Statement of Purpose**
- 2. Issue SC1 1.3E Girton iii. Omission Sites b. Land at Dodford Lane / High Street**

**1. Statement of Purpose**

- 1.1. This Hearing Statement addresses part of Matter CS1 as raised by the Inspector, concerning Development Frameworks, Strategy for the Rural Area and Omission Sites in the villages. It specifically responds only to question iii) under 1.3E concerning omission sites in Girton and site b. Land at Dodford Lane / High Street, in particular.
- 1.2. In answering question iii) in relation to site b., we identify how the proposed policy would fail the tests of soundness as per the National Planning Policy Framework, and moreover, how the Plan could be made sound.
- 1.3. This Hearing Statement has been prepared on behalf of St John's College (Representor ID 3084).
- 1.4. Our response to question iii) in relation to site a. is set out at Section 2 of this Statement.

**2. Issue SC1 1.3E Girton iii. Omission sites**

**Is the plan unsound without the allocation of the following sites for housing development, or other uses as specified below, and if so, why?:**

**b. Land at Dodford Lane / High Street**

- 2.1 In explaining this objection to the Plan, and specifically the Council's failure to allocate land for housing development at Dodford Lane / High Street, Girton we would like to do so within the context of brief reference to objections we have made to strategic level policies within the Plan. These strategic level objections have been concerned with objectively assessed housing need (representation reference 66029), the overall spatial vision (representation reference 27964), and the level of contribution made by the more sustainable villages to housing supply (representation reference 60392). In relation to each of these issues, objections have been submitted by Savills on behalf of St. John's College throughout the emerging Development Plan process, culminating in the presentation of evidence by Savills at the Examination hearings.
- 2.2 In terms of our objections in relation to objectively assessed housing need, evidence was presented by Savills at the Examination hearings in May 2016 in relation to Matter PM1A concerning objectively assessed housing need. This evidence was presented within our Hearing Statement for this Matter under representation reference 66029. This evidence included technical consideration by GL Hearn of the Council's objectively assessed need for the District and concluded that the objectively assessed housing need for the District in the plan period should be 27,000 dwellings, rather than the 19,500 dwellings proposed by the Council.
- 2.3 In terms of our objections in relation to the overall spatial vision, evidence was presented by Savills at the Examination hearings in October 2014 in relation to Matter 2 concerning the overall spatial vision and general issues objectively assessed housing need. This evidence was presented within our Hearing Statement for this Matter under representation reference 27964. As part of this evidence, we set out our position of support for a general development strategy being permitted whereby new growth is directed towards firstly, the urban area of Cambridge and then its urban edge and then new settlements and then to larger villages.
- 2.4 In terms of our objections in relation the level of contribution made by the more sustainable villages to housing supply, verbal evidence was presented by Savills at the Examination hearings in March 2015 in relation to Matter 8C concerning the contribution of the District's more sustainable villages towards housing supply. This evidence was presented under representation reference 66029. This evidence explained our position that the District's villages should play a significantly greater role in the delivery of housing supply, with allocations being made at only six of the eighteen Rural Centres and Minor Centres.

- 2.5 More specifically, our objection to this aspect of the Plan submitted that of the more sustainable villages, the 'necklace' villages of Girton, Histon & Impington, Milton, Fulbourn and Great Shelford and Stapleford, offer a particular opportunity to deliver higher levels of growth than other villages because of their accessibility to higher order services in Cambridge and the significant sustainability benefits offered by this approach. Consequently, we have submitted that appropriate levels of growth should be allowed to take place at these settlements.
- 2.6 It is within the context of the above objections, that we consider the Plan to be unsound without allocation of the Dodford Lane / High Street, Girton site. In particular, the matter of the overall growth to be planned for remains unresolved as part of the Examination process and therefore, should it be found that the District's objectively assessed housing need is higher than 19,500 dwellings, then the plan will need to provide for such a higher amount of housing development. As a result of the above objections, we consider that allocations of an appropriate scale should be identified at Girton to accommodate higher levels of growth arising from an approach in which a higher District-wide level of growth is delivered, with the 'necklace' villages playing a greater role as part of this.
- 2.7 Turning to the specifics of the Dodford Lane / High Street, Girton site, it lies within the freehold ownership of our client and is available for development now. We also consider the site to lie in a suitable location for development, lying adjacent to the built up area of Rural Centre of Girton. We note from the Sustainability Appraisal Addendum Report (March 2016) (RD/MC/021) that the site (SC144) is assessed as 'red' in terms of impacts upon landscape, townscape and heritage. Despite these assessed impacts, we consider the site to be suitable for housing development in that these impacts could be mitigated through sensitively designed development.
- 2.9 The site is also assessed as 'red' in terms of its impact upon the green belt. However, in accommodating higher levels of growth in the District than the Council is currently planning for, this will inevitably involve the removal of more land from the green belt. The National Planning Policy Framework remarks that green belt boundaries should only be reviewed in exceptional circumstances. We submit that in ensuring that sufficient levels of housing growth are planned for, such exceptional circumstances are presented, particularly within the context of South Cambridgeshire and its relationship to Cambridge and the role the city plays as a key driver in the national economy. We also submit that owing to the contained nature of the site, its removal from the green belt, would not unacceptably harm the purposes of including land within it.
- 2.10 In light of the above, we do not consider the plan to be sound without the Hinton Way site shown as a housing allocation, because we do not believe the plan to be positively prepared (the strategy does not meet objectively assessed needs). As such, we consider that Policy H/1 should be amended to add the site to the list of sites identified for housing development, with the site area being 3.5 Ha and the amount of development being for up to 50 dwellings.

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