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**RD/GEN/280**

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31 March 2016

Dear Miss Graham and Mr Wood

**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan:  
Provisional Proposed Modifications - Land South of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus**

As indicated in the joint letter of 31 March 2016 in relation to the Proposed Modifications to the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans, this letter addresses the current position of South Cambridgeshire District Council in relation to Land South of Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC).

The Proposed Modifications consultation undertaken in December 2015 and January 2016 included a provisional Modification to the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan to allocate land south of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) as an extension to the employment site, currently entirely with Cambridge (Provisional Proposed Modification PM/SC/8/A and related modifications PM/SC/2/P, PM/SC/3/F, PM/SC/8/B and part of PM/SC/2/O and PM/SC/2/G).

The potential suitability of land south of the CBC for development has only been known since November 2015 and responds specifically to the findings of the Inner Green Belt Boundary Study undertaken for the Councils by LDA Design (2015) as part of the additional work undertaken in response to the Inspectors' letter of 20 May 2015. The study identified the area south of CBC as land that could be released from the Green Belt without significant harm to Green Belt purposes. The Councils joint position is that jobs and homes can provide exceptional circumstances justifying a change to the Green Belt in the Local Plans, but only where this would not cause significant harm to Green Belt purposes. The findings of the LDA study provide an opportunity to allocate an extension to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus if development would be suitable and deliverable. All of the site is within South Cambridgeshire.

As made clear in the schedule of Proposed Modifications, the Council's position is that there is no overall shortage of employment land within South Cambridgeshire for high-tech and research and development companies and organisations, but that the findings of the new study provide an opportunity to allocate land for an extension to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus to provide

high quality biomedical development on the edge of Cambridge with its locational benefits, without causing significant harm to the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt. The Council considers that it would not be positive planning for the Local Plan to prevent such development if it proves to be suitable and deliverable.

The allocation has support from Cambridge University and other life science stakeholders. Objections to the allocation express concerns about its impacts on the Nine Wells Local Nature Reserve and its chalk springs, flood risks, possible impacts on water quality and flow, bridleways, traffic, biodiversity impacts and loss of Green Belt.

Apart from the Green Belt, the evidence base does not yet adequately address all relevant points of concern. South Cambridgeshire District Council has therefore deferred making a decision on the provisional modification that would allocate the site, to allow time for additional technical evidence to be gathered that will cover surface water flood risk, groundwater hydrology (including flow and quality), biodiversity, transport impacts and scope for mitigation and enhancement.

The Council will consider the additional technical evidence once it has been completed and decide in the Summer whether or not the provisional allocation can be confirmed. If it is confirmed, the Council will consider what changes are necessary to the policy proposed in the Provisional Modification and its supporting text are necessary to take account of the additional evidence and to address matters raised in representations.

The Council is pursuing this course of action on the basis that, whilst it results from the additional work undertaken to respond to the Inspectors' letter of 30 May, it is a discrete issue that will not result in any delay to the joint hearings programmed for June 2016 or the examination of the remainder of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, which will follow on after the examination of the Cambridge Local Plan.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries.

Yours sincerely

*Caroline Hunt*

**Caroline Hunt**  
Planning Policy Manager