

Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Examination

Statement for Matter CC1B: Open Space and Natural Environment

On behalf of St John's College (ID. 689)

- Representation numbers 27991, 27993

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1B.1iii Policy 67: Is the inclusion of the term “educational need” in the third paragraph of the policy overly restrictive? Is its inclusion necessary or should it be clearly defined? Should any definition include student accommodation?

- 1.1 This Pre-Hearing Statement has been prepared by Savills (UK) Limited on behalf of St John's College to amplify its representations made in 2013 to the Proposed Submission Local Plan 2014.
- 1.2 Given the importance of the University of Cambridge to the local economy and general prosperity of Cambridge it is vital that the individual Colleges are allowed to grow and develop over time to meet changing educational patterns, student needs and address any specific relevant demands of circumstance.
- 1.3 Policy 67 is fundamentally about protecting open spaces within the city. Whilst this is an accepted approach to control new development, it is crucial that this policy is not used to prevent legitimate development proposals from being implemented. It also needs to be considered in the context of other designations that might be applicable to individual sites and not simply used as a blanket approach.
- 1.4 The current phrasing used within the policy simply relates to 'educational need'. Whilst this is not defined anywhere in the Plan there is a concern that it may be interpreted in a narrow sense to be solely related to teaching and learning, and not, for example, to apply to the provision of College accommodation – such accommodation could apply to both staff and students.
- 1.5 The provision of accommodation close to the teaching facilities is clearly a strong characteristic of many of the Colleges and indeed it is this functional relationship that provides for the ambience and atmosphere of these spaces within the City. To suggest a policy which has such a blanket approach to restricting development is unacceptable. Consequently the inclusion of the phrase 'educational need' is overly restrictive in response to the Inspector's first question.

- 1.6 Regarding the Inspector's second question, the College has made representations to suggest that the terms be more clearly defined and include reference to accommodation which is referred to in the Inspector's third question.
- 1.7 It is important from the College's perspective that any policy put forward is sufficiently flexible to allow a range of uses to come forward. The College as landowner clearly has control of the form, scale and nature of proposals coming forward and is not going to be putting forward schemes that are incompatible with a collegiate environment. As currently drafted, the policy could seek to resist for example, ancillary offices or dining facilities and consequently it is important that the 'educational need' is clarified.
- 1.8 In the event that this element of the Policy is not clarified by extra wording to expand the term 'educational need', then the College could wish to see the removal of the phrase from this part of the Policy and which could therefore read:
- “In the case of school, college and university grounds, development may be permitted where it does not adversely affect playing fields or other formal sports provision on the site”.***
- 1.9 This wording still means that other policies in the Plan could still be applicable.

1B.2vi Should the Meadow Triangle site (NAT19) be reviewed against the criteria for designation as POS in respect of its location and amenity value?

- 2.1 This site is located on the western edge of Cambridge at the junction of Wilberforce Road and Adams Road. It is a triangular piece of grassland sandwiched between the Emmanuel College Playing Fields and the University Sports Ground. With our original representation we submitted a detailed landscape appraisal which demonstrates that there is no reason why the site could not be developed whilst retaining important features on the site such as existing trees and hedgerows.
- 2.2 The site is already within the West Cambridge Conservation Area. However, it is not identified as an important open space or view within this appraisal in contrast with the adjacent Emmanuel College Sports Field which is identified as such.
- 2.3 We believe that the site should be reviewed against the criteria for designation as POS. The site is currently fenced off and there is no public access to the site. It therefore performs no function for recreational purposes. In terms of environmental importance it does not make a major contribution to the setting, character, structure and the environmental quality of the city. Neither does it make a major contribution to the character and environmental quality of the local area.
- 2.4 The site is essentially an area of open grassland that does not have any particular biodiversity benefit or recreational access for the local area. It does not have any specific features other than a hedgerow along one boundary. It is adjacent to a cycle route and so only meets one of the criteria required for designation as open space. It is sandwiched between the Emmanuel College Playing Fields and the University Sports Ground and consequently does not perform the role of an important green break in the area.
- 2.5 In any event the site is also within the West Cambridge Conservation Area and therefore does not need this extra layer of protection. In conclusion we consider that this open space designation is unnecessary and should be removed from the site.