

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan



Examination in Public
October – December 2002



Report of the Panel



February 2003

CHAPTER 8

GREEN BELT

- 8.1 Policies P9/3a, P9/3b and P9/3c are a suite of policies dealing with the purposes of the Green Belt, principles for the review of Green Belt boundaries and the location and phasing of land to be released from the Green Belt.

VISION AND PURPOSE (Policy P9/3a)

- 8.2 Policy P9/3a sets out the purposes of the Green Belt around Cambridge as defining the extent of its urban growth, preserving its unique character, maintaining the quality of its setting and preventing communities from merging into one another and with Cambridge. The policy sets out the nature of development which would be appropriate in the Green Belt and requires LPAs to jointly draw up strategies for the active management of the Green Belt.

Vision

- 8.3 Policy 24 of RPG6 sets the framework for the approach to the Green Belt to be addressed in the Plan. This requires a review of the Cambridge Green Belt to be carried out and any changes to its boundaries to be included in development plans. The policy states that *'the review should start from a vision of the city and the qualities to be safeguarded'*. This is partly addressed in paragraph 9.24 of the Plan which sets out how the SPAs see the future form of Cambridge, although it does not expressly set out a vision. At the EIP, in response to suggestions by participants that the Plan should include a vision, the SPAs submitted SPA Supplement 7 which provides a diagrammatic interpretation of their vision of the city.
- 8.4 It was suggested to us that the approach taken by the Landscape Design Associates (LDA) in their study for South Cambridgeshire¹ would meet the intention of Policy 24 of RPG6. In this study LDA reflect on the vision for the original Green Belt which was defined by Holford and Wright in 1950. Whilst recognising that the Holford and Wright report is outdated, LDA conclude that the essential vision of Cambridge as a compact and contained city is as appropriate today as it was in 1950, albeit the size of the city is larger than that envisioned by Holford and Wright.
- 8.5 There is a fundamental difference of opinion between the City Council and South Cambridgeshire, the two LPAs who have a direct influence on the future form and shape of the city, as to what the vision for the city should be. On the one hand, South Cambridgeshire see the Green Belt as defining the 'compact city' whilst, on the other, the City suggest that to continue the Holford vision would lead to economic stagnation. This conflict is exemplified by the opposing approaches taken by each LPA to the proposed expansion to the east of Cambridge Airport which we deal with a little later in this chapter.
- 8.6 The Panel is not convinced that the key element of the Holford vision, ie the compact city, is outdated or that it is unsustainable. We note that the recently produced Cambridge

¹ Cambridge Green Belt Study (CD2.9)

- Landscape Assessment describes Cambridge as ‘*a compact city with a strong sense of identity*’². As we see it, the vision of the compact city with its necklace of villages does not need to be incompatible with the ability of the Sub-Region to deliver the housing needed to redress the current imbalance between jobs and housing, whilst maintaining economic growth and continuing to develop the centres of excellence in tertiary education and research which are fundamental to the quality of Cambridge as a dynamic but historic city.
- 8.7 As indicated in Chapter 7, we are aware that this Plan should ‘*allow scope for, rather than constrain, continuing development beyond 2016*’ within the Cambridge Sub-Region (Policy 21 RPG6). However, we do not believe that this means that Cambridge City should continue to grow by peripheral expansion into the long term if such growth would be incompatible with maintaining the essential characteristics and qualities of the city. Our view is that the vision of a compact city is critical to preserving its unique qualities, even if this results in the need to accommodate longer-term growth elsewhere in the Cambridge Sub-Region.
- 8.8 We see the relationship between the city’s historic core, its peripheral development and the countryside, which provides a wider setting to the city and penetrates into its core, as fundamental to its unique character. These are the elements which we consider need to be reflected in the vision and qualities to be protected. The concept of the four expanded communities, which will deliver the growth which the city needs to accommodate to deliver a balanced community in a thriving economy, is the approach adopted by this Structure Plan to the delivery of this vision. We believe that this approach would be consistent with the vision identified in the Buchanan Study³ in their overall theme for Cambridge of ‘*a Central and Expanded Urban Hub*’ in which ‘*Historic Cambridge will be the focus for an expanded 21st century city, but maintain its intimate character, historic features heritage and good quality*’ (paragraph 3.5.3).
- 8.9 In terms of what the Plan should say, we consider that the ‘vision’ part of paragraph 9.24 should be combined with the description in the LDA study of the ‘compact city’, which is also recognised as a dynamic city. Thus, the vision for Cambridge is of a ‘*compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre*’. As to the qualities to be safeguarded, apart from its unique historic character, of particular importance to the quality of the city are the green spaces within it, the green corridors which run from open countryside into the urban area, and the green separation which exists to protect the integrity of the necklace of villages. All of these features, together with views of the historic core, are key qualities which are important to be safeguarded in any review of Green Belt boundaries. All of this could usefully be put at the beginning of the Green Belt section to provide a clear starting point for the future Green Belt reviews. We suggest the diagrammatic interpretation of this, as shown in SPA Supplement 7 (suitably amended to delete the expanded community to the east of Cambridge Airport⁴), be included as part of the Key Diagram as it represents a fundamental part of the strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region.

Purpose

- 8.10 There was much discussion at the EIP about whether the policy properly reflected the purposes of a Green Belt as set out in PPG2 and we were offered an alternative policy

² Page 1 Executive Summary Cambridge Landscape Character Assessment Draft August 2002 (CD1.28).

³ Cambridge Sub Region Study (CD2.1)

⁴ See later under Locations – East of Cambridge.

wording. It is not the role of the Structure Plan simply to reiterate national policy - it should interpret national policy as it relates to the strategic or local context. In the case of Cambridge it only has a Green Belt because it is a historic city. It follows that all five purposes of Green Belts as set out in paragraph 1.5 of PPG2 are not necessarily relevant to this Green Belt.

8.11 The Steering Group for the Sub-Regional Study agreed that there are two purposes which are critical to the Cambridge Green Belt (paragraph 7.2.7 CD 2.1):

- Primary purpose: *'To preserve the special character of Cambridge and to maintain the quality of its setting.'* This is the same as the main aim of the Cambridge Green Belt Local Plan⁵.
- Secondary purpose: *'To prevent further coalescence of settlements'*. This is one of the specific aims of the Cambridge Green Belt Local Plan.

These purposes seem to us to reflect the qualities which we identify as special to Cambridge and which need to be protected.

8.12 It was suggested to us that use of the phrase in Policy P9/3a of *'defining the extent of its urban growth'* is not an appropriate interpretation of the purpose in PPG2 *'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'*. In our opinion the two are not incompatible. The intention of Green Belt policy is spelt out in paragraph 1.4 of PPG2. Whilst the *'fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open'*, Green Belts *'can shape patterns of urban development'* and *'help to ensure that development occurs in locations allocated in local plans'* and they *'can assist in moving towards more sustainable patterns of urban development'*.

8.13 In requiring a review of the Green Belt around Cambridge, RPG6 refers to the identified *'conflict between the Cambridge Green Belt on its existing boundaries and sustainable patterns of development and movement'* (paragraph 5.15). The *'substantial shift from existing policies'* required by RPG6 (paragraph 5.16) leads to the need to focus development so far as possible on the city and its environs. Thus, we see one of the purposes of the Green Belt around Cambridge as shaping the patterns of development which will be required during this Plan period and beyond to meet the needs of the city, so far as this is compatible with other Green Belt purposes. Accordingly, the Green Belt will define the extent of the growth of Cambridge. It would be clearer if that is how it is expressed in the policy.

8.14 In conclusion, we see no need to fundamentally change Policy P9/3a in the ways suggested to us, although we suggest that it might be set out in a clearer way. It is also important that the policy reflects the vision of Cambridge as *'a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre'* to guide the review of Green Belt boundaries under Policy P9/3b. We were asked to consider whether the policy should require the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of the setting of the city. We see this as a beneficial addition to the policy given the opportunity afforded to achieve this through planned urban extensions.

8.15 We were also asked to include *'institutions standing in large grounds'* as appropriate development to allow for the growth of high technology clusters presently located in the Green Belt. This would not accord with PPG2. Advice on the future of major developed sites in the Green Belt is given at Annex C to PPG2. There is no need to repeat this

⁵ As set out in paragraph 1.17 (CD2.8)

guidance in the Structure Plan. Any very special circumstances relating to the expansion of any of the high tech institutions would need to be justified on their individual merits, as they have been up until now, and in the context of Policy P2/4. We have seen and heard nothing to suggest to us that the economic future of these institutions is being hampered by Green Belt policy in this area.

RECOMMENDATION 8A

Include at the beginning of the section on the Green Belt the following vision of the city and the qualities to be safeguarded:

‘The vision for Cambridge is of a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre. Apart from its unique historic character, of particular importance to the quality of the city are the green spaces within it, the green corridors which run from open countryside into the urban area, as indicated on the Key Diagram, and the green separation which exists to protect the integrity of the necklace of villages. All of these features, together with views of the historic core, are key qualities which are important to be safeguarded in any review of Green Belt boundaries.’

Revise paragraph 9.24 by deleting the second sentence and replacing it with the following and relocate the paragraph to follow the vision:

‘This Plan provides for three expanded communities within the context of the overall vision. These are focussed on the University in West/North-West Cambridge, on Addenbrooke’s in the south and on the airport site to the east. A fourth expanded community focussed on the Northern Fringe is already committed.’

Incorporate into the Key Diagram the diagrammatic vision shown on SPA Supplement 7 suitably amended to delete the expanded community to the east of Cambridge Airport and to more accurately reflect the locations of the expanded communities and the green corridors.

Redraft the first paragraph of Policy P9/3a as follows:

‘A Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge which will define the extent of urban growth. The purposes of this Green Belt are to:

- *preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre;*
- *maintain and enhance the quality of its setting;*
- *prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.’*

PRINCIPLES FOR RELEASE (Policy P9/3b)

8.16 Policy P9/3b requires LPAs to identify the boundaries of land to be released from the Green Belt in accordance with Policy P9/3c on the basis of three principles:

- retain any areas required for the essential purposes of the redefined Green Belt as set out in Policy P9/3a;

- provide green separation between existing villages and any urban expansion of Cambridge;
- ensure protection of green corridors.

The policy also requires LPAs to review the outer boundary of the Green Belt which will be extended in the vicinity of Oakington to prevent coalescence with the proposed new settlement.

8.17 As a result of the representations made and the discussion on this topic the SPAs agreed a number of changes:

- deletion of the word '*redefined*' in the first bullet point. This is a sensible amendment to the policy which, as written, is confusing.
- deletion of the word '*essential*' before '*purposes*' – it was intended to refer to the two essential purposes of the Green Belt as defined in the Buchanan Study. However, as Policy P9/3b refers to the purposes as set out in Policy P9/3a the word '*essential*' is redundant.
- to add '*in the context of sustainable development and planned settlement form*' to the end of the first bullet point. PPG2 requires LPAs when drawing Green Belt boundaries to '*take account of the need to promote sustainable development*' (paragraph 2.10). We agree that this should form one of the principles for the release of Green Belt land.
- delete the last paragraph of the policy and include a reference to the need to have regard to new settlement proposals in the penultimate paragraph. In relation to new settlement proposals, it is not necessarily helpful or appropriate for the policy to single out the extension of the outer boundary of the Green Belt around Oakington, as there may be a need to redefine the outer boundary in relation to the new settlement proposals more generally.
- insertion of text to allow for boundary amendments to accommodate limited development in identified Rural Centres. This would accord with the modifications we propose to Policy P1/1.

There was a general consensus in support of all these changes.

8.18 Our attention was drawn to the requirement in Policy 24 of RPG6 to 'review' the Green Belt first and then consider whether any locations which do not contribute to the purposes of the Green Belt and can be released, are suitable for development. We agree that it would be appropriate for Policy P9/3b to expressly require a review of the Green Belt but we accept that the process of identifying general locations for the release of land for development has been carried out as part of this Structure Plan. Subject to our conclusions on the particular locations identified in Policy P9/3c, we see no reason to depart from the requirement in Policy P9/3b that LPAs look to release land for possible future development in particular locations, as set out in Policy P9/3c.

8.19 The Panel agree with those who suggested that the principles for release are incomplete. Clearly, they need to properly reflect both the purposes of the Green Belt and the vision. In our view, by singling out the principles of maintaining green separation and green corridors the policy fails to achieve the clarity that the SPAs are seeking. We take the view that the vision of Cambridge as a compact city and the need to maintain views of the historic core must each form one of the principles.

- 8.20 However, we see no need for the policy to refer expressly to the openness of the green corridors and the areas of green separation between settlements. It is assumed by the SPAs that these areas would be retained in the Green Belt and openness is a fundamental requirement of any land in the Green Belt. It would be helpful, however, for the supporting text to make the SPAs' intention clear. As to the width of such areas, it will be for the LPAs in determining the boundaries of the Green Belt to ensure that green corridors and areas providing green separation are of sufficient width that the purposes of the Green Belt, to prevent coalescence and maintain the setting of the city, are achieved.
- 8.21 We do not support the suggestion that there should be some form of 'greenfield swap' to provide land for recreational purposes. Any land to be included in the Green Belt as a result of the review of its outer boundaries should only be included to meet the purposes of the Green Belt as defined in Policy P9/3a. Recreational use is not one of those purposes. However, once land has been included it would be appropriate for such land to have a positive role in meeting the recreational needs of the city, in accordance with the advice in PPG2 paragraph 1.6. The last paragraph of Policy P9/3a requires LPAs *'to draw up strategies for the active management of the Green Belt'* for, amongst other things, *'outdoor recreation'*. In our view, this accords with the advice in PPG2 and there is no need for any further change to the policy in this regard.
- 8.22 An argument was presented to us that good design can, in many instances, protect the integrity of settlements making it unnecessary to require green separation. High quality design is critical to ensuring that the proposed new communities can be satisfactorily assimilated into the character of the city. Policy P1/3 requires this. However, we believe that green spaces, green corridors and green separation are such key qualities of the city and its setting that these must form part of the fundamental principles for the release of Green Belt land.

RECOMMENDATION 8B

Redraft Policy P9/3b as follows:

'Local Planning Authorities will carry out a review of the Green Belt in their areas to identify the boundaries of land to be released from the Green Belt to serve the long-term development needs of Cambridge, in the locations indicated on the Key Diagram and set out in Policy P9/3c.

In determining the boundaries of the areas to be released from the Green Belt the Local Planning Authorities will:

- *retain any areas required to maintain the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in Policy P9/3a in the context of delivering sustainable development and planned settlement form;*
- *have regard to the compact form of the city;*
- *provide green separation between existing settlements and any urban expansion of Cambridge to maintain the identity of the individual settlements;*
- *ensure the protection of green corridors running from open countryside into the urban area as generally indicated on the Key Diagram;*
- *maintain views of the historic core;*

- *provide, where appropriate, for limited development in identified Rural Centres in accordance with Policy P1/1.*

The Local Planning Authorities will review the outer boundary of the Green Belt to determine if additional areas can be identified which serve the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt and should be included within it, having regard to new settlement proposals.'

Revise paragraph 9.26 to reflect the up-to-date position and include the following within any redrafted text: 'It is expected that the green corridors and green separation referred to in Policy P9/3b will be retained within the Green Belt'.

LOCATION AND PHASING (Policy P9/3c)

- 8.23 Policy P9/3c sets out the location and phasing of development land to be released from the Green Belt. It requires strategic Masterplans to be prepared for the southern fringe of the city and for the eastern sector as a whole. Phasing policies are to be included in Local Plans and land not required for development before 2016 is to be safeguarded.

Format of Policy

- 8.24 We find the layout of this policy rather confusing as it contains a number of different elements which are not always set out in the most logical order. Accordingly, we have re-ordered the policy and inserted sub-headings to aid clarity. We also think it helpful for the policy to refer to the fact that the identified areas will help to deliver the vision of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city.

General

- 8.25 Some participants thought that the policy is too locationally specific. This policy is unusual in that it gives very clear guidance to the LPAs as to where they should be looking to release land from the Green Belt. We heard a great deal at the EIP about the urgency of delivering the change in strategy required by RPG6. It is essential that major development, such as that proposed for the edge of Cambridge, be brought forward through the Development Plan system. However, the significant increase in build rate required in the Cambridge Sub-Region and the need for an early start to be made in redirecting the strategy to focus on meeting the needs of Cambridge in a more sustainable way, means that the Development Plan system must deliver an early outcome on the Green Belt review and the land to be released. In our view, this justifies the general approach of Policy P9/3c in defining locations where meeting the needs of Cambridge in a sustainable way need not compromise the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 8.26 As to the basis for the locations chosen, the Buchanan Study carried out an independent appraisal of the options for development and included a Green Belt Review which considered *'the role of the Green Belt adjoining and close to the urban edge, in line with the preferred sequence of Regional Planning Guidance'* (paragraph 7.1.2). The Study was managed by a Steering Group comprising officers from all of the LPAs⁶ and it assessed *'32 Green Belt sites around the inner boundary and 31 other Green Belt sites'* (paragraph 7.3.5). This comprehensive work, carried out with the involvement of all of

⁶ Including from this area Cambridgeshire County, Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland and Huntingdonshire.

the affected LPAs, helped to inform the Structure Plan. Whilst we note that there is some disagreement over the precise locations chosen by the SPAs (a matter we deal with later), we are satisfied that this rigorous approach provides justification for the principle of specifying locations in Policy P9/3c.

Phasing

8.27 We have concluded on Policy P9/2 that Supplementary Planning Guidance should be prepared to give guidance on the phasing of housing development. We do not find the criteria for phasing as set out in Policy P9/3c to be helpful, indeed many participants seemed to find them confusing. In our view, it is sufficient for this policy simply to refer to phasing policies being set out in Local Plans in accordance with Policy P9/2. We note the concern of the SPAs that sites should not come forward unless any infrastructure requirements relating to the wider area can be delivered. However, this is a matter which could be addressed through masterplanning. Any additional guidance which the SPAs wish to give on phasing might be covered in the proposed Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Masterplanning

8.28 Some participants felt that there was a need for a Strategic Masterplan for the North West area as well as for the East and the South West. The Panel does not see that this level of masterplanning is needed for this sector for three reasons:

- there is not the same level of interdependence between the two locations in the North West sector as there is between the locations in the Eastern and Southern sectors, in particular in relation to access and transportation. Issues relating to the transport infrastructure required for these locations could be dealt with through an Area Transport Plan (see our conclusions on the North West sector below);
- the proposed developments are not on a similar scale; the Huntingdon Road/Histon Road location, in particular, is relatively modest in scale;
- the requirement to develop a 'strategic' Masterplan could cause difficulties because the delivery timescale for the two identified locations are likely to be different as the release of the Madingley Road/Huntingdon Road location is dependent on the University demonstrating a clear need (see below).

Nevertheless, each location will need to have regard to the other, to any other relevant developments in the area and to the need for community facilities and services when the individual Masterplans are prepared. We propose that this is clarified in the supporting text to the policy.

8.29 The Panel are recommending that the location West of Trumpington Road be included in the policy (see below). However, we have insufficient information on the potential interrelationships between this location and the rest of the south and south west locations to advise the SPAs as to whether this should be included in the strategic masterplanning for these locations. The SPAs will need to consider the implications of our proposed additional location before they publish their modifications. Whatever they decide, the policy needs to make it clear that in any masterplan for this location particular attention will need to be paid to the need to protect the quality and character of Grantchester Meadows.

8.30 We see no need for the policy to spell out who would actually prepare the strategic masterplans. This matter can be covered adequately in the supporting text as it is a matter of process rather than policy. We support giving encouragement to consulting with local resident groups but again this is a matter to be included in the supporting text. We also agree with those who pointed out the importance to the delivery of the strategy of carrying out the preparation of strategic masterplans in parallel with the local plan process, to minimise delays in delivering housing in accordance with the Development Plan allocations. We think it helpful for the Plan to explain the difference between Strategic Masterplans, Masterplans and Design Frameworks and we have drafted some text to achieve this.

PLAN PREPARATION

8.31 Given the interrelationship between the release of the various Green Belt locations and the delivery of the strategy of the Plan we strongly recommend that a joint Green Belt Local Plan or appropriate document under the revised Development Plan system is prepared. This will enable the two main LPAs, Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire, to achieve consistency in the definition of the Green Belt boundaries and phase the release of the sites to make the best use of infrastructure and to meet the build rate required to deliver the aims of the strategy.

LOCATIONS

East Cambridge

8.32 This is the most controversial of the three locations identified in the draft Structure Plan. Three separate areas are identified for development in this Plan period:

- North of Newmarket Road;
- North of Cherry Hinton - at the EIP the SPAs proposed to add 'and east';
- Cambridge Airport.

A further area has been proposed by one of the participants, namely land at Fen Ditton. In addition, the draft Plan seeks to safeguard land to the east of the Airport for development after 2016, provided it can be developed whilst maintaining the fundamental purposes of the Green Belt.

North of Newmarket Road

8.33 There was little disagreement amongst participants as to the potential for land in this location to be released for development. It is well related to the compact city and to Marshalls employment area and it is located adjacent to a Park and Ride site in a transport corridor which has existing bus services. We believe that issues concerning the relationship of any development to Fen Ditton are capable of being addressed satisfactorily at the Local Plan stage. However, given our conclusions on the transportation issues in this area of Cambridge (below and in Chapter 6 of this report), we support the need for this location to be considered as part of the strategic masterplanning for the eastern sector of the city.

North and east of Cherry Hinton

- 8.34 The potential for land to the north of Cherry Hinton to be released for development was not generally disputed by participants. The location is well related to the compact city. It would represent a logical extension of the Cherry Hinton area subject to the protection of the Coldhams Common/Teversham green finger and to the transportation issues being addressed as referred to a little later.
- 8.35 As to the location east of Cherry Hinton, this was proposed to be added by the SPAs as a result of the Llewellyn Davies study⁷ which identified this area as having potential for development as part of the eastern expansion of the city. We conclude below that the longer term expansion of the city eastwards would not accord with the vision of Cambridge as a compact city. We recognise that the existing distributor road along the eastern edge of Cherry Hinton represents a clear boundary to the city, although we also note that some limited development in this location could make more efficient use of this existing infrastructure without necessarily leading to coalescence with Teversham or Fulbourn. In our view, any scope which may exist for any amendments to the Green Belt boundary in this location are not a strategic matter. Thus, we do not propose to recommend that the change proposed by the SPA be included in the Structure Plan.

Cambridge Airport

- 8.36 The Cambridge Green Belt Local Plan refers to this location as follows: *‘Together with Coldhams Common, Cambridge Airport forms part of a prominent wedge of open land which stretches into the city and as such it is appropriate for inclusion within the Green Belt. If flying ceased or runway alignments changed, or development within the safeguarding areas were to be sanctioned, the Green Belt function could be seriously undermined or lost’*⁸. We were asked to consider what had changed since that Plan was prepared.
- 8.37 The Green Belt Local Plan provisions have to be viewed in the context of the strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region as expressed in RPG6 and the need to review the function of locations on the edge of the city which lie within the Green Belt in order to deliver a more sustainable pattern of development. In that context, the Buchanan Study identified this location as having *‘potential for development following the creation of an appropriate landscape framework’*, although the study assessed the location as requiring a wide continuation of the Teversham ‘green finger’ which would limit the capacity to about 3,500 dwellings.
- 8.38 We consider that this is an important location for the strategy of the Cambridge Sub-Region. It is contained by Airport Way and reasonably well related to Cambridge in terms of the compact city, lying as it does between the developed areas of Cherry Hinton to the south and along Newmarket Road to the north. It also has the potential to enable the development of previously developed land. We note that there is general agreement amongst the relevant LPAs and their respective consultants that this is an appropriate location to consider the release of land from the Green Belt for future development. We agree with the conclusion of the Landscape Design Associates that *‘there is potential to enhance the setting and special character of the city through such development, if it is planned, designed and implemented in a sensitive manner’*⁹. In this context, any land

⁷ Eastern Cambridge Study, Llewellyn Davies in association with others (CD2.6)

⁸ Paragraph 3.31, Cambridge Green Belt Local Plan (CD2.8)

⁹ Section 7.5 page 109, Cambridge Green Belt Study (CD2.9)

release in this location will need to pay proper regard to the need to maintain the penetration of the countryside into the heart of the city provided by the Teversham green finger which links with Coldhams Common. This requirement should be made clear in the policy.

- 8.39 However, given the scale of the land potentially available, we also support the principle that this location ought to be developed at a high density to maximise its potential contribution to meeting the housing needs of the city. The precise capacity will be determined through the Local Plan process when the boundaries of the Green Belt in this location will be determined and the development principles established. However, we see no reason to disagree in principle with the SPAs' assumption that this location could ultimately accommodate in the region of 6,000 dwellings.

Timing

- 8.40 The Panel was informed that these three locations are being promoted as being in one effective ownership of which the Marshall Group are the largest landholder. In relation to north of Newmarket Road and north of Cherry Hinton there would appear to be no impediment in principle to the delivery of land in these locations for development early in the Plan period.
- 8.41 However, in relation to the release of land at Cambridge Airport this is dependent upon the relocation of the airport and its associated facilities. The Marshall Group confirmed their intention to seek to move. In conjunction with EEDA, Marshalls commissioned a study¹⁰ to consider the implications of relocation, both in terms of the contribution Marshalls make to the Cambridge economy, a matter of concern both to EEDA and to other participants at the EIP, and possible relocation destinations. This report identified a number of alternative options for the relocation of the Airport and Marshalls confirmed that they have held informal and confidential discussions with owners of possible relocation sites.
- 8.42 One of the options identified in the Arup Report is Alconbury. We refer in Chapter 6 to the possible relocation of Cambridge Airport to Alconbury in the context of the SERAS Report¹¹. These proposals are controversial and at an early stage in the consultation process so can be afforded little weight in relation to this Structure Plan. We note, however, that should the Government choose to follow the SERAS approach to Alconbury, Marshalls have scrutinised the facilities and they would be content with the identification of this as a potential alternative location for the airport.
- 8.43 In their statement to the EIP Marshalls stated that they believed that development at the airport could happen 10-15 years from now. This confirmed the view of many of the participants that it is unrealistic for the SPAs to identify this location in Policy P9/3c as one to be considered for the early commencement of development. Subsequent to the debate on this matter the Panel were informed by Marshalls that their discussions on relocating the airport were making very good progress and they are confident that the airport location could be made available around 2010.
- 8.44 However, the Panel also notes that Marshalls have a current planning application for a new passenger terminal. We appreciate that, in order to protect the business, existing facilities may need to be modernised irrespective of the plans to relocate. We also note

¹⁰ Cambridge Airport Study, Arup Economics and Planning, September 2002(CD2.20)

¹¹ See our conclusions under policy P8/12

that the design of the proposed terminal is intended to be capable of adaptation to B1 uses. Nevertheless, we remain unconvinced that the timetable for relocation can be relied upon. There is, clearly, a good deal of uncertainty about the status of the Cambridge Airport location in terms of its potential contribution to the strategy during the Structure Plan period. Nevertheless, this location should be capable of accommodating the 2,500 dwellings which the SPAs have assumed could be developed within the Plan period and it provides scope for longer term development beyond 2016. In our view, these issues need to be made clear in the Plan and we recommend changes to the policy and the text to achieve this.

Transportation Matters

8.45 The Plan recognises the interrelationships and interdependency between these locations in requiring a strategic Masterplan to be prepared and the reason given for this was because all rely on the same transport corridor. We heard much criticism of the SPAs approach to the eastern sector of the city and, in particular, in relation to the transportation issues. We share many of the concerns raised about, for example, the scale of development proposed both here and elsewhere in the city without any clear proposals for dealing, comprehensively, with the transportation issues. In Chapter 6 we support the arguments raised which suggested that the scale of development proposed required consideration to be given to the need for some form of orbital route to link the four new communities and the major employment areas.

Land East of Cambridge Airport

8.46 Unlike Cambridge Airport there is no consensus between the LPAs about the proposal to safeguard land to the east of Airport Way for development after 2016. Indeed, amongst participants this proved to be the most controversial of the locations proposed in the Structure Plan. The Buchanan Study concluded that development in this location would cause coalescence between Teversham and Fulbourn and it would have a significant effect on the urban form of Cambridge.

8.47 Subsequent to the Buchanan Study two further studies have been carried out in relation to this location:

- DEGW were commissioned by the City Council to undertake a study testing the feasibility of an expansion to Cambridge¹². This concludes that *'the bulk of the population growth generated by Cambridge should be located within the City and its immediate surroundings'* and they put the case for eastern expansion.
- Llewellyn Davies, in association with others, undertook a study for the County and City Councils which addressed two key issues:¹³
 - i. what is the potential location, scale and form of eastwards development; and
 - ii. where should the new Green Belt boundary be positioned. This report concluded that *'expansion eastwards offers major potential for development in a manner which:*
 - *can be a quality exemplar of sustainable urban expansion; and*

¹² DEGW Report Cambridge Urban Expansion October 2001 (CD2.6.2)

¹³ Eastern Cambridge Study September 2002 (CD2.6)

- *create a unique opportunity for the growth of the City as a regional centre*'.

- 8.48 Both of these studies seek to demonstrate how major development to the east of the airport might be accommodated in a way which maintains the integrity of the settlements of Teversham and Fulbourn and which would provide a high quality form of development. However, in doing so, we believe that the concept of the compact city would be diminished. The proposed expansion to the east of the airport is of a scale and character which is very different from the proposed urban extensions to the north-west, south/south-west and north (Cambridge Northern Fringe). Each of these areas would be reasonably well related to the existing compact urban form of the city and capable of being complementary to it.
- 8.49 Airport Way seems to us to form a very clear and logical boundary to the eastward expansion of the city. We have concluded above that development of the airport would conform with the vision of the compact city. However, lying immediately beyond Airport Way, Teversham forms one of the necklace of villages which surround Cambridge and form part of its special character. It would be effectively swallowed up by further expansion to the east of the airport, becoming part of the city rather than a distinctive settlement in its own right. As to Fulbourn, the scale of separation proposed to retain the identity of this settlement and avoid coalescence with Teversham would render the effect of the proposals to expand in this location a form of village expansion rather than urban extension. In our view, that approach is not consistent with the sequential approach required by Policy 21 of RPG6.
- 8.50 One consequence of the expansion of the city to the east would be to further unbalance the relationship between the historic core and its supporting residential and employment areas. The eastern expansion would be poorly related spatially to the centre of the city. The scale of the development proposed for this location could lead to a new focus for major services and facilities which might compete with the city centre and compromise the vision of a thriving historic centre.
- 8.51 We remain unconvinced by the transport strategy for the further expansion to the east, beyond the airport, which is based on the principle of holding car use at current levels and accommodating all future growth in traffic by increased use of walking, cycling and public transport. We accept that this approach is consistent with the objectives of the SPAs and that, at this stage, detailed transportation proposals have not been worked up. Nevertheless, we have doubts as to the realism of the Llewellyn Davies' assumptions as to the walking and cycling levels likely to be achieved from locations to the east of Airport Way, ie 37% from Teversham north and east and 28% from Fulbourn. Such levels would be dependent on achieving quite a high level of self-sufficiency in the proposed new communities as these locations are at some distance from the city centre and other major employment areas on the edge of the city. This reinforces the point made above about the potential creation of a competing centre to the east of the city.
- 8.52 We recognise in Chapter 7 and elsewhere that this Structure Plan should not constrain longer-term options for meeting the city's needs. It is also a requirement of PPG2 that any changes to Green Belt boundaries should be based on a long-term view. However, land should only be taken out of the Green Belt and safeguarded for future development if that is clearly the most appropriate of the available options for meeting the long-term needs of the city. The Llewellyn Davies study provides a comprehensive and flexible

strategy for delivering between 10,200 and 13,700 dwellings¹⁴ to meet at least some of the needs of the city over the next 30 years. However, we do not believe that these proposals would deliver the vision of the city which we have concluded ought to be reflected in the Structure Plan. In our view, they represent one, but only one, solution to the long-term needs of the city. Alternative options for meeting those needs, such as a second new settlement, have not been tested.

8.53 Furthermore, the SPAs have adopted a conservative assumption as to the dwelling capacity of the locations they propose for release from the Green Belt, assuming that 8,000 dwellings will be delivered during the Structure Plan period. This was at least in part based on the need to obtain some consensus on the scale of land release from the Green Belt to ensure a speedy delivery of the strategy. We note, however, that the Buchanan Study, which did not recommend that the city should expand eastwards beyond the airport, nevertheless found locations on the edge of the city which they felt had the capacity to accommodate 12,500 dwellings. Thus, there may well be more scope within other Green Belt areas proposed for release to accommodate some of the dwellings proposed for the eastern expansion. We have concluded elsewhere that a further location to the west of Trumpington Road ought to be added to Policy P9/3c which will increase the available opportunities to accommodate more housing on the edge of the city. We have also concluded in Chapter 9 that, of the alternative new settlement proposals we were asked to consider, Waterbeach offers the potential for longer term development. Development of a second new settlement in the longer term would not conflict with the vision of the city or the Sub-Region¹⁵.

8.54 We conclude that it would be wrong for the Structure Plan to safeguard land to the east of Cambridge Airport for longer term development post 2016 because:

- expansion beyond Airport Way to the east would be likely to compromise the vision of Cambridge as a compact city. This is a fundamental objection to the identification of this location in Policy P9/3c. In addition:
- there is no consensus that this is the appropriate option;
- alternative options, such as a second new settlement, have not been tested.

Accordingly, we do not recommend the inclusion of the new Policy P9/3d and supporting text proposed by the SPAs in their Schedule of Changes which deals expressly with land to the east of the Airport¹⁶.

Land at Fen Ditton

8.55 Land to the north and east of Fen Ditton is put forward as an alternative approach to the eastern sector on the basis that this location would:

- have no greater impact on the Green Belt and significant advantages over other eastern options;
- be located in an area of low environmental quality;
- be highly sustainable;
- facilitate orbital connections to major areas of employment;

¹⁴ Table 5.3 CD2.6

¹⁵ See Chapter 7

¹⁶ Change No 360/02 Schedule of Changes, SPA Supplement 11

- be deliverable within the Plan period.
- 8.56 We consider that, spatially, this location is reasonably well related to the Cambridge Northern Fringe and to other parts of the proposed eastern expansion to the north of Newmarket Road and, though to a lesser extent, at Cambridge Airport. It is contained by the A14 to the north and east and would generally accord with the vision of the compact city. However, significant urban expansion in this location would completely overwhelm the village of Fen Ditton which currently retains a clear separate identity as one of Cambridge's necklace of villages. The Panel is unconvinced by arguments put by the proponents of this location that the existing relationship between Fen Ditton and the city would remain unaltered. Fen Ditton would be effectively absorbed into the expanded city as it would be surrounded by major development to the north, east and south.
- 8.57 Although severed by the A14 from the wider fenland landscape to the north east, land to the north and east of Fen Ditton gives a flat, open setting to the city which is characteristic of the Fen Edge landscape. We accept that this location is not physically part of the River Cam corridor and views of the historic core of the city are limited. Nevertheless, we consider that the fenland character of the landscape in this location contributes to the Green Belt purpose of maintaining the quality of the setting of the city.
- 8.58 We note that major development in this location would provide the opportunity to carry out the management and enhancement of the landscape surrounding Fen Ditton which is recommended in the LDA Study. However, neither this nor any other benefit which this location might offer in terms of sustainable development, in our view, outweighs the likely loss of the integrity of Fen Ditton as a separate settlement which would result from such development. Moreover, enhancement of the landscape in this area does not need to be dependent on new development. In terms of impact on one of the necklace of villages which form an important part of the character and setting of Cambridge, the Panel do not see any material difference between this location and that to the east of Airport Way. We conclude that this is not a location which should accommodate major development of a strategic scale.

South / West Cambridge

- 8.59 Two locations are identified in the draft Plan in the south/southwest Cambridge sector:
- South and west of Addenbrooke's Hospital;
 - Clay Farm and areas east and south of Trumpington;
- 8.60 Two other locations have been proposed by participants:
- Land west of Trumpington Road
 - Land at Netherhall Farm

South and west of Addenbrooke's Hospital

- 8.61 This location is situated directly adjacent to the southern and western boundaries of Addenbrooke's Hospital. There are somewhat conflicting views from the recent Green Belt studies as to whether this area has any potential for development having regard to its Green Belt function. The Buchanan Report found that the land directly south of Addenbrooke's had potential for development if an appropriate landscape framework was created. However, it did not support development on land to the west, between the Hospital and the railway line, due to the open landscape character and presence of

- Hobson's Brook. The LDA Study concluded, from their broad scale assessment, that there was not the opportunity for large-scale development south of Addenbrooke's Hospital. Meanwhile the David Brown Study found that development both south and west of Addenbrooke's would have an unacceptable impact and would undermine the purpose of the Green Belt.
- 8.62 Despite this, all participants generally accepted the principle of releasing land in this location from the Green Belt. It was agreed that, on balance, the expansion needs of Addenbrooke's Hospital were sufficient to override the impact of major development in this location on Green Belt purposes. We concur with this view and are satisfied that the location would conform to the vision of Cambridge as a compact city.
- 8.63 We agree that any development in this location will need to be subject to careful masterplanning and phasing of development. Of particular importance to that process is the protection of the Hobson's Brook green finger to the west. Indeed, both the Buchanan Report¹⁷ and the LDA Study¹⁸ identify the route of Hobson's Brook as a 'Green Finger' worthy of protection. The challenge to be addressed by the Masterplan will be to incorporate not just the proposed development at Addenbrooke's, but also the proposed routes of the Rapid Transit System and the access road from Hauxton Road, whilst maintaining a green finger which is of sufficient width to fulfil its purpose. However we are satisfied that meeting this challenge should not limit the potential for development in this location to the extent that it should not be included in the Plan. We are recommending a slight amendment to Policy P9/3c to refer specifically to Hobson's Brook so the green corridor referred to in the policy is entirely clear.
- 8.64 One further matter that was raised concerned the impact that additional traffic, particularly construction traffic, will have on road congestion in this area. This concern stems from SPA Supplement 17, which in the 'Draft Outline Implementation Programme', implies that the housing in the 'South and west of Addenbrooke's location' would be completed prior to the completion of the access road from Hauxton Road. The SPA confirmed that the implementation programme is a work in progress and has not yet been considered by the Stakeholder Partnership. There is therefore scope for changes to the development programme to be made if it becomes clear that major development in this location would, indeed, generate an unacceptable level of traffic congestion. In any event, this is a matter to be addressed in considering the detailed phasing of land release from the Green Belt when the precise scale of the development, its anticipated construction timescale and the impact of that on transportation in the area can be properly assessed. This level of detail goes beyond that which can or should be addressed at the strategic level.
- 8.65 In summary, we are satisfied that this is an appropriate location to include in Policy P9/3c.

Clay Farm and areas east and south of Trumpington

- 8.66 On the evidence before us and, in particular, that in the three recent studies of the Green Belt¹⁹ this location appears to be generally suitable for release. Indeed, all three studies highlight this general area as one in which development would have a low level of impact

¹⁷ Page 9-12 of Technical Papers Volume 2 (CD2.3)

¹⁸ Paragraph 5.4 and Drawing Number 1641LP/07 (CD2.9)

¹⁹ The Buchanan Report, the LDA Study and the David Brown Study

on the function of the Green Belt²⁰. We heard nothing to convince us that this was not the case and are satisfied therefore that release of land in this location would not have a significant negative impact on the purposes of the Green Belt. However, a number of further issues were raised in relation to this location and we deal with these below.

- 8.67 The first of these relates to the proximity of this location to the Green Belt release at south and west of Addenbrooke's Hospital. Indeed, this location is very close to the release at Addenbrooke's which is just to the east of the Hobson's Brook green finger. As such, the arguments above relating to the extent of the development and the retention of the green finger are also relevant to this location. There is an important relationship between the scale and extent of development in both of these areas which highlights the importance of a strategic Masterplan for the southern fringe of the city.
- 8.68 There is also a potential benefit to be gained from the proximity of this location to Addenbrooke's Hospital. It was contended that it might be possible to tie a proportion of the affordable housing nomination rights to workers at the Hospital. There were some doubts expressed as to whether this would be possible within the current affordable housing and planning obligations regimes. However, the potential sustainability benefits of doing so are such that if this could be achieved then we believe that it should be supported.
- 8.69 One participant raised concern over the proximity of this location to Junction 11 of the M11. Whilst this would enable quick and easy access onto the national road network, it would also make this location particularly attractive to those working in London or Stansted to the south. Thus, any housing here may contribute towards meeting housing needs outside the Plan area, rather than those of the Cambridge Sub-Region. We accept that the Structure Plan cannot control the occupation of future dwellings to prevent the possibility that some may lead to out-commuting. However, we are satisfied that this location is well related to the compact city and that it has the potential to assist in delivering a better balance between jobs and housing in the Sub-Region.
- 8.70 The final matter is one of detail concerning the description of this location. We are inclined to agree with GO-East that the current description in the Plan is too locationally specific for a structure plan. Indeed, the reference in the description to 'Clay Farm' in particular implies the allocation of a specific site. The deletion of the words 'Clay Farm and areas' from this description would not, in our view, harm the implementation of the policy.
- 8.71 Also in relation to the description, it was contended that the present wording could imply the development of land directly to the south of Trumpington. We agree that this could lead to a degree of confusion in the Plan. This can be resolved through a simple change in the policy, altering the word '*south*' to '*south east*'. This would represent a more accurate description of the location identified on the Key Diagram without descending into a level of detail that is inappropriate for a Structure Plan. Furthermore, this would also address concerns that development in this location could result in the coalescence of Trumpington and Great Shelford.

²⁰ See Table A on page 9-5 of the Technical Papers Volume II to the Buchanan Report (CD 2.3); paragraph 8.4 of the LDA Study (CD 2.9); and, the 'South-west Case Study' in the Cambridge Green Belt Landscape Setting Study Vol II of the David Brown Study (CD 2.9.1).

Land west of Trumpington Road

8.72 This location was suggested by South Cambridgeshire District Council as having the potential for development at an early stage in the Plan period. As a result of the discussion on this location there are three issues to address:

- the impact of the location on the setting of Cambridge;
- the effect of development in this location on Grantchester Meadows;
- the transportation implications of major development in this location.

Impact on setting of Cambridge

8.73 This location was discounted by both the Buchanan and LDA studies, both of which concluded that land in this area contributed to the setting of Cambridge. In the David Brown study, the area was identified as one in which development would have a moderate level of impact on the setting of the city with the area immediately adjacent to Trumpington Road having a low level of impact. We note that this location was also identified in the City Council's study 'Cambridge Green Belt Towards 2016' as a potential urban extension²¹. It is close to the city centre and would contribute to, rather than detract from, the vision of Cambridge as a compact city.

8.74 We found the most dominant feature of this location, as one approaches the city along Trumpington Road, is the very substantial tree belt which fringes the road on its western side. Apart from a couple of gaps where there are views across the relatively flat arable land to Grantchester, the tree belt effectively screens views westwards from the road. The east side of the road is built up and contrasts with the largely undeveloped western side. However, the effect of the tree belt is to limit the effectiveness of the openness on the western side and provide a degree of enclosure to the road. Although Trumpington Road provides one of the main gateways to the historic city, it is our opinion that the main contribution to the particular character of this gateway is provided by the tree belt and not the land beyond. This land does not provide a foreground to the historic city. In that regard, this location differs from land north of Barton Road, which we found to be critical to the setting of the historic city (see later), or land at Fen Ditton, which provides part of the fenland setting to the wider cityscape (see previously).

8.75 In our view, carefully sited and designed development to the rear of, and contained, by the tree belt need not seriously impact on the setting of the city. Very great care would be needed to ensure that, where it is necessary to punch through the tree belt to gain access, the visual containment provided by the trees is maintained as effectively as possible. However, we do not see that the design challenge of this location need be significantly greater than that posed by other locations proposed for release in the Plan.

Effect on Grantchester Meadows

8.76 Walking along the cycleway/footpath which connects Grantchester with the City centre we were aware of the views across the valley to the line of trees along Trumpington Road. It is evident that development on the flattish land which extends from Trumpington Road to the break in the slope which denotes the valley side would be visible from this location, although its impact could be softened very effectively by suitable planting on and above the valley side. We found the photomontage provided at the EIP by one participant, which presented a rather stark impression of what development might look like, to be

²¹ Fig 19 (CD2.9.2)

unrepresentative of what could be achieved by careful design and landscaping to produce a soft edge to any urban extension in this location.

- 8.77 There is a clear visual break between the valley itself forming Grantchester Meadows, which are one of the most important features of the Cambridge setting, and the agricultural land which borders Trumpington Road. This break has been described as a 'shoulder'. In our view, development in the location between the shoulder and Trumpington Road need not have any harmful effect on the quality and value of Grantchester Meadows which are contained by the valley sides. Any development beyond the shoulder would be viewed across what is quite a wide valley and it need not intrude into this corridor of countryside which penetrates the city. We see as potentially beneficial the opportunity which development in this location might have in terms of opening up the eastern side of the valley to provide greater public access.
- 8.78 As to the capacity of this location, this is a matter for the Local Plan to address. Whether or not the location could accommodate development of 1,800 dwellings, as suggested by South Cambridgeshire²², will depend on a detailed assessment of the precise boundaries of the developable area and the scope for achieving higher densities, having regard to the proximity of Trumpington Hall and to sports facilities in the area. In our view, at this stage, the Structure Plan should make only a modest allowance of about 1,000 dwellings for the capacity of the location.

Transportation issues

- 8.79 One of the main benefits of this location is its proximity to the city centre, making it highly sustainable in terms of accessibility by slow modes (walking and cycling). We were advised by the SPAs that the SATURN modelling for the Sub-Region included an element of development in this location, but there is nothing in the current package of measures related to the proposed location to the east and south east of Trumpington which would assist directly in bringing forward land to the west of Trumpington Road. The SPAs have not produced a more detailed assessment for this location as they have done for the other locations in the southern part of the city. Thus, there is insufficient information before us to assess the transportation implications of this location in terms of how, in principle, to deal with the access arrangements, the relationship of this location to the proposals to the east of Trumpington Road and the role of public transport. However, we do not see any reason why land to the west of Trumpington Road need be significantly more difficult to bring forward in transportation terms than any of the others identified in the Structure Plan. We believe it is more a question of when rather than if this location could contribute to meeting the needs of the Sub-Region.

Conclusions

- 8.80 In the light of the uncertainty which surrounds the release of Cambridge Airport for development, we share the view of many participants that, where there are other options which may have the potential to fulfil the requirements of RPG6, those opportunities ought to be identified in the Structure Plan. We believe that land to the west of Trumpington road is one such opportunity which needs further investigation by the SPAs with a view to including it in Policy P9/3c.

²² 1,800 was the figure referred to in South Cambridgeshire DC's statement but at the Examination a figure of 1,700 was mentioned.

Land at Netherhall Farm

- 8.81 This location comprises Netherhall Farm and some surrounding land adjacent to the south eastern edge of the built-up area of Cambridge. The evidence from the three main studies of the Green Belt suggests that this location is not suitable for release from the Green Belt. In the Buchanan Report this general area is identified as three separate parcels of land. The Report concludes that: *'these three sites located to the south east of Cambridge are widely visible from the Gog Magog Hills to the south. Development within these areas would have a significant effect on the existing interface between the urban edge and the countryside which contributes to the setting of Cambridge'*²³. This assessment is reiterated in the LDA Study, which refers to the elevated panoramic views of Cambridge and the value of the undeveloped rural character of the backdrop to Cambridge²⁴. The 'South-West Case Study' in the David Brown Study covers part of this general location. This study finds that development in this location would have an unacceptable impact and undermine the purposes of the Green Belt.
- 8.82 These studies consistently reject this location due to its contribution to the Green Belt. We heard nothing to persuade us to form a different view. Nor did we hear anything to convince us that there were other considerations of sufficient weight to override the harm that strategic development in this location would have on Green Belt purposes. We recognise that this location is well related to the compact city and has potential sustainability benefits due to its proximity to the proposed development to the south of Addenbrooke's Hospital. In this regard, we note the suggestion that preferential treatment might be given to key workers at the Hospital. However, we do not consider any of these matters to be sufficient to outweigh the impact on Green Belt purposes.
- 8.83 The proponents of this location claimed that there was an inconsistency in the interpretation of and weight placed on the three Green Belt studies. We do not agree that this is the case. The contribution of the land to the function of the Green Belt is just one factor to be weighed up against other considerations. Some of the other locations identified for release from the Green Belt are within areas where we recognise that major development would have an impact on the purposes of the Green Belt ie land south of Addenbrooke's and land to the north west of Cambridge. However, in these areas there are specific and overriding reasons for their release.

North West and West Cambridge

- 8.84 Two locations are identified in the draft Structure Plan for release in the North West sector of Cambridge:
- Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road;
 - Land between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road.
- 8.85 Two further locations have been proposed by participants:
- Land to the north of Barton Road;
 - Land north east of Histon.

²³ Page 9-12 of Volume II of the Technical Papers (CD 2.3)

²⁴ See Area 2 on Plan 1641LP/09 (CD 2.9)

Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road

- 8.86 There was general agreement amongst participants that this is a location which has potential for development subject to ensuring that the integrity of Girton village is maintained by appropriate green separation. Indeed, most seem to agree that development in this location has the potential to improve this ‘gateway’ into Cambridge and it could help to rectify deficiencies in the range of services and facilities available to the local population of NW Cambridge. Our attention was drawn to a number of detailed matters such as the need to address drainage issues and the relationship of the location to the A14. However, these are matters which should be addressed at the Local Plan stage when the detailed boundaries of the land to be released and the requirements for its development should be established.
- 8.87 The main issue in relation to this location is whether the Structure Plan should treat this as a reserve location to be brought forward ‘*when required*’ and whether it should be ‘*subject to an assessment of the impact of transport improvements on the A14 corridor and the new settlement*’. We note that when this location was considered by the County Council it was ‘*envisaged that this site could be developed in the relatively short term*’²⁵. Nevertheless, we were told by the SPAs that this location was treated as a reserve in Policy P9/3c because it was envisaged that locations to the south and east would come forward in the early part of the Plan period and that this and the neighbouring University land would not be needed until later.
- 8.88 However, it is agreed that the Airport location is not likely to come forward until towards the end of the Plan period. We have referred earlier to the urgency to raise the build rate in the Cambridge Sub-Region and to start to deliver the revised strategy required by RPG6. It would seem sensible, therefore, that, if this location could make a contribution early in the Plan period, the Structure Plan should not impose an arbitrary limitation on its ability to do so.
- 8.89 As to the relationship to the A14 improvements, and CHUMMS generally, and to the new settlement proposals, we accept that these will have an impact on transportation in this location and we note the concern of those who have drawn attention to the congestion on Histon Road. However, any development proposals in this location would be subject to a Transport Assessment which would need to have regard to other developments and transportation proposals in the area, including the new settlement proposals, the A14 improvements and the developments which are proposed in the Cambridge Northern Fringe. We do not see the need for the policy to expressly refer to this level of detail although it would be helpful to make this clear in the supporting text.
- 8.90 We appreciate that the possible release of this land early in the Plan period may require difficult decisions to be made about demand management. Nevertheless, these are issues which the County and City Councils will have to address in response to the major development proposed by the Structure Plan here and elsewhere in the Cambridge Sub-Region (see Chapter 6 of this report). Indeed, it was suggested that these are matters which should be addressed in an Area Transport Plan for this corridor.
- 8.91 We conclude that there is no reason for the Structure Plan to hold up the possible development of this location, which is agreed by the SPAs to be no less sustainable than those to the south and east.

²⁵ Strategic Planning Service Group meeting on 27 November 2001 (CD1.12)

Land between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road

- 8.92 This location relates to land owned by the University of Cambridge. It is described as the last major land holding of the University. Unlike the land to the north-east of Huntingdon Road, this location was not considered by the Buchanan Study to have potential for development. The land is prominent, being highly visible from the west and it provides an open setting to the village of Girton, which straddles the A14. On this side of the city the approaches along both Madingley and Huntingdon Roads are relatively open and green until quite close to the central core, emphasising the compact nature of the city.
- 8.93 The acceptability of this location is dependent upon:
- the needs of the University;
 - those needs not being capable of being met elsewhere;
 - the needs outweighing the impact on the purposes of the Green Belt.

Need

- 8.94 The need is based on the expansion proposals of the University which are driven by the increasing national focus on higher education and on the growth in research activity which has fuelled the 'Cambridge Phenomenon'. The University anticipates staff and student numbers to increase by an average of 1.75% per annum, such that by 2025 there would be an additional 1,700 undergraduates, 3,400 postgraduates and 2,700 staff. Over the 25 year timescale 2000-2025 the University is looking to provide:
- additional research space, building on the model provided by the West Cambridge development;
 - academic space, notably for the relocation of departments housed in the city centre, such as Earth Sciences;
 - housing for staff, subsidised by general market housing; and
 - new colleges, of which three are expected to be required by 2025.
- 8.95 The vision for the Cambridge Sub-Region includes the concept that it will continue to be a centre of excellence and world leader in the fields of higher education and research and it will foster dynamism, prosperity and further expansion of the knowledge-based economy (see Chapter 7). To meet this vision it can be expected that the University will continue to grow and it is appropriate that this growth should be accommodated as part of the city, so far as that is compatible with meeting the vision of the city as a compact city. On that basis, the Panel are satisfied that there is a general need for land to be available specifically for the expansion of the University.

Alternative locations

- 8.96 The University is currently developing the Western Campus, to the south of Madingley Road. It has been suggested that the University could accommodate many of its needs, such as for key worker housing, on or in the vicinity of the Western Campus. The Panel note that the Western Campus is some 66 hectares in area and it is proposed to accommodate mixed use, University-related development totalling 175,120 square metres. The Masterplan shows that the site is proposed to be relatively densely developed and we accept that there is little scope for accommodating the long-term needs of the University here.

- 8.97 The University carried out a study to assess the potential for accommodating their needs on land in the vicinity of the western campus²⁶. This found that land in North West Cambridge is sensitive, particularly in terms of its relationship to the village of Girton, but that land to the south of Madingley Road and north of Barton Road is more sensitive in terms of its impact on historic Cambridge. We agree with this assessment.
- 8.98 We are satisfied that there is no obvious alternative location which could meet the needs of the University for the scale of development proposed.

Justification for release of Green Belt land

- 8.99 We accept the desirability of propinquity in the context of the ‘Cambridge Phenomenon’, although we feel that this can be overstated in the era of advanced telecommunications. Accordingly, we do not place too much weight on the argument of proximity to the Western Campus and we do not consider this alone is sufficient justification for the release of Green Belt land.
- 8.100 We note that *‘a key driver of the proposed land uses for North West Cambridge is the ability to use the land receipt to cross subsidise the provision of key worker housing, academic space, college accommodation and infrastructure’* (paragraph 9.1 CD 6.15). Ownership of the land in North West Cambridge is seen by the University as critical to delivering the provision of key worker housing and college accommodation as well as enabling funding of the required infrastructure.
- 8.101 We see merit in the future needs of the University being met in a comprehensively planned urban extension which delivers high quality buildings in a high quality landscaped environment. We accept that in terms of delivery there is considerable benefit to be derived from using land in the single ownership of the University. On the basis of there being a need for the University proposals and that this could not be met elsewhere, we are satisfied that there would be justification for the release of Green Belt land in North West Cambridge to meet that need.

Timing

- 8.102 The Structure Plan identified this location as a reserve to be brought forward ‘when required’. We agree that the Green Belt land owned by the University should be husbanded and only brought forward for development when the University can show a clear need for the particular development proposed. Our attention was drawn to the allocation within the Cambridge Local Plan of some 72 hectares of land at West Cambridge for University uses of which 65 hectares are open land.
- 8.103 We note that the University has an ambitious building programme which should see the completion of approximately 9,000 square metres of floorspace by April 2004. However, this represents only about 5% of the total floorspace proposed for the Western Campus. It is unlikely, therefore, that much of the floorspace proposed for the North West area would actually be needed in the short to medium term in order to maintain the growth of the University and its position as a leader in further education and research. The desire to accommodate the wishes of those departments who wish to move out of the centre of the city and any short term need for key worker housing will need to be balanced against the need to safeguard the land to the North West for the longer term needs of the University.

²⁶ University Expansion - North West Cambridge or Alternative Locations? (CD6.15)

These will be matters for the LPAs to consider when they prepare the Local Plan for the Green Belt.

Other matters

8.104 There was some criticism of the indicative development proposals produced by the University to show how a mixed use development could be planned for the North West location²⁷. Concern was expressed that, inter alia, water supply, drainage and wildlife issues are not properly addressed. We are satisfied that none of these matters raise a strategic objection to the potential release of Green Belt land in this location for the special needs of the University. It will be for the Local Plan to specify particular development requirements.

8.105 As to transportation issues and the relationship of future development to the existing communities, these should be addressed in any detailed masterplan produced for the site and major development in this location would be subject to Transport Assessments. As with the Huntingdon/Histon Road location, such assessments would need to have regard to other developments in the area, including the new settlement, and to the A14 improvements. As we conclude above, this is a matter which can be dealt with in the explanatory text to the policy.

Conclusion

8.106 We conclude that the location North West Cambridge which relates to land proposed for university and related uses is suitable for inclusion in Policy P9/3c, but it should only be released from the Green Belt on the basis that the University are able to show a need for the land to be brought forward.

Land North of Barton Road

8.107 The proponents of this location submitted to the Panel some fairly detailed information about its suitability. The Panel has had regard to this material insofar as it is appropriate to the strategic level. In our view, there are two main issues relating to this location. These are:

- the impact of major development in this location on Green Belt purposes;
- the sustainability of the location.

Impact on Green Belt purposes

8.108 There is no dispute that the Barton Road location contributes to the setting of Cambridge although the proponents of the scheme argue that other locations proposed for release in the Structure Plan are equally valuable, such as the University land in North West Cambridge.

8.109 The land at Barton Road falls within the Coton corridor which brings countryside right in to the heart of the city. Viewed from the west the distinctive skyline of the historic centre is seen against the open foreground of land in the Barton Road area. In our view, the relationship between the historic centre and the countryside in this location is critical to the character of Cambridge. Indeed, the Barton Road area of the city is distinctive in creating a very direct interface between city centre and countryside. We have some

²⁷ North West Development Proposals (CD6.16)

sympathy with the view expressed by South Cambridgeshire, that ‘this is the most important location on the edge of the city’.

- 8.110 This interface would be largely lost by major development in the location proposed. Narrowing the Coton corridor to the extent suggested by the indicative Masterplan for this location would render it almost meaningless as ‘countryside’. Accordingly, we see no reason to disagree with the conclusion of the Buchanan Study that development in this location would conflict with the purpose of preserving the unique character of the city. In our view, this conclusion applies equally to land to the north as to land to the south of Barton Road.

Sustainability

- 8.111 There can be no argument with the fact that the proximity of this location to the city centre renders it potentially highly sustainable in terms of accessibility by slow modes (pedestrians and cyclists). Barton Road is also accessible by such modes to significant areas of employment, notably the University’s western campus. However, unlike other locations proposed for release, Barton Road is not on a major transport corridor and there is no public transport at present. Thus, the development would need to support a public transport system.
- 8.112 The strategy proposed by the proponents of the location is for a high frequency service along Barton Road, Sidgwick Street/Silver Street and Madingley Road – to link the Barton Road location with the University employment areas. We have serious doubts about the deliverability of such a proposal. Major development in this location would be at the ‘end of the line’ for public transport services and would need to deliver high levels of patronage to support a high quality public transport system. We question whether this is a likely proposition.
- 8.113 Whilst we consider that there are sustainability benefits in terms of the location’s proximity to services and facilities in the city centre we do not believe it to be particularly sustainable in terms of the provision of public transport. The need for accessibility is not related solely to the city centre and the University employment areas, but is also relevant to other parts of the city where employment opportunities exist such as Cambridge Northern Fringe, Addenbrooke’s and Cambridge Airport. The rather isolated location of the Barton Road area relative to these locations in public transport terms suggests that major development in this location could encourage car dependency, especially given the proximity to J12 of the M11.
- 8.114 We note the argument which has been put to us that there is a need to develop new housing in the west of the city to balance with the available jobs. Whilst we agree in principle with the desirability of achieving a jobs/housing balance so far as practical, we do not consider this to be the appropriate location in which to provide large-scale housing.

Conclusion

- 8.115 In our view, the potential sustainability benefits of this location do not outweigh the potential harm to Green Belt purposes which would result from major development. This location is the most sensitive of those identified on the western side of the city in terms of its impact on the setting of the historic part of the city. South Cambridgeshire District Council suggested that there may be scope for a modest review of the Green Belt boundary in this sector, but any resulting releases would not be of a strategic scale and, thus, are not relevant to the Structure Plan.

Land North East of Histon

8.116 The Panel were asked to consider the identification of land north east of Histon as a readily deliverable urban extension. We were advised that the location referred to lies about 2km north of the A14/B1049 junction and is in fact in Impington. It is not a strategic location and cannot sensibly be considered to form part of the potential Green Belt releases in the North West Cambridge sector. We are satisfied that any proposals to bring forward land in this location is a matter for the Local Plan.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS ON LOCATIONS

8.117 We conclude that the locations which we recommend the SPAs to include in the Structure Plan, together with the Cambridge Northern Fringe, have the potential to meet the vision of Cambridge as *'a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre'*. These locations have the potential:

- to provide high quality, mixed-use development creating four modern communities on the edge of the city to complement the historic central core; and
- to meet the aims of RPG to provide for the short, medium and long term needs of Cambridge up to and beyond 2016.

In doing so, they will deliver the change in strategy required by RPG to focus development on the city and provide a more sustainable development pattern for the Cambridge Sub-Region

RECOMMENDATION 8C

Redraft Policy P9/3c as follows:

Location

Local Plans will make provision for housing and mixed-use development on land to be released from the Green Belt in accordance with the principles set out in Policy P9/3b and in the following locations as shown on the Key Diagram:

- *North of Newmarket Road;*
- *North of Cherry Hinton;*
- *South and West of Addenbrooke's Hospital;*
- *East and south-east of Trumpington;*
- *West of Trumpington Road;*
- *Cambridge Airport;*
- *Between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road;*
- *Between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road.*

Purpose

These areas will include locations for the 8,000 dwellings which will be required by 2016. They will help to deliver the vision of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city by:

- *promoting a sustainable and spatially concentrated pattern of locations for development and sustainable travel patterns;*
- *allowing scope for, rather than constraining, continuing development beyond 2016;*

whilst protecting and enhancing the historic character and setting of Cambridge and the important environmental qualities of the surrounding area.

Phasing

With the exception of the following, all of the above sites should be brought forward as early as possible within the Plan period.

- *Cambridge Airport is unlikely to come forward until towards the end of the Plan period but should be treated as a priority for high density development.*
- *Land between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road should be reserved for predominantly University-related uses and only brought forward when the University can show a clear need for the land to be released.*

Phasing policies will be set out in Local Plans in accordance with Policy P9/2. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council will work together on the form and phasing of the Green Belt releases.

Development requirements

Development within any of these locations will be subject to:

- *Sustainability assessments;*
- *Transport assessments;*
- *Securing transport improvements including those identified in Policy P9/10;*
- *Securing provision of other infrastructure as required by Policies P6/1 and P9/9;*
- *Enhancement to landscape, habitat creation and opportunities for recreation within and adjoining development areas.*

Masterplanning

Strategic Masterplans will be prepared for the following locations:

- *The southern fringe of the city as a whole – the Plan should recognise the interdependence of the Addenbrooke's and the east and south east of Trumpington locations. A green corridor should be retained in the vicinity of Hobson's Brook running from the Shelford area into Cambridge north of Long Road. This will be required in association with the south and west of Addenbrooke's and east and south of Trumpington locations²⁸.*
- *The eastern sector including land to the North of Newmarket Road, to the North of Cherry Hinton and Cambridge Airport. Any land release in this location will need to pay proper regard to the need to maintain the penetration of the countryside into the heart of the city provided by the Teversham green finger which links with Coldhams Common.*

These plans should be in place before the commencement of any development in their respective areas and should include provision for early landscaping, recreation access and

²⁸ This may also need to include the West of Trumpington Road location.

biodiversity improvements, including for those areas which may not be programmed for development until after 2016.

Masterplans or Design Frameworks should be prepared for all individual sites to be released from the Green Belt. The Masterplan for West of Trumpington Road will pay particular attention to the need to protect the quality and character of Grantchester Meadows.

Safeguarding land

Any land that is not required for development by 2016 will be designated as safeguarded land to meet longer term development needs.'

Include the following within the supporting text:

'The release for development of the Cambridge Airport location is dependent on the relocation of the Airport and associated facilities. There is a good deal of uncertainty about the precise timescale for this relocation and it is unlikely that the Airport will come forward for development until towards the end of the Plan period but it will provide scope for longer term development beyond 2016.'

'The Transport Assessments required in association with any development in the North West area of Cambridge will need to take into account the likely impact on transportation in the area and on the development proposals, of the CHUMMS proposals to widen the A14, the new settlement proposals and the development proposals in the Cambridge Northern Fringe.'

'The Strategic Masterplans are to be prepared by or for the relevant Local Planning Authority (or jointly where development straddles administrative boundaries) in conjunction with Cambridgeshire County Council. It is expected that local residents groups will be consulted as appropriate. Where Strategic Masterplans are required these should address those issues where there is an interdependency between different sites, such as concerning access, transportation, etc. Where such Masterplans have been prepared it is expected that Design Frameworks will address the detailed issues relating to the individual sites. Elsewhere, Masterplans for strategic locations such as the University land will be expected to address the relationships between the different uses within the overall site and with other existing and proposed developments in the wider locality, including the need for community facilities and services, as well as more detailed design matters. In order to avoid delays in bringing land forward for development to meet the strategy of the Plan it is expected that the masterplanning process will proceed in parallel with the preparation of the relevant Local Plans.'

Add the location West of Trumpington Road to the Key Diagram Cambridge Inset.