

# Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment Addendum

Assessment of alternative scenario for Parcels RC10 and RC11

# South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council

**Final Report** 

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Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment Addendum

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# **Chapter 1**

## Introduction

#### Reason for addendum

- 1.1 LUC has been commissioned by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council to prepare a short addendum to the Greater Cambridge Green Belt Assessment (abbreviated to GCGBA). Published in August 2021, the GCGBA was a parcel-by-parcel assessment of the variations in harm to the Green Belt purposes that would result from release and development of land within it.
- **1.2** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the role and function of Green Belt and defines five purposes of the designation. These purposes have been applied locally as the three 'Cambridge Green Belt Purposes', which are set out in the 2018 CCC and SCDC Local Plans as being 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.
- 1.3 This addendum provides an assessment of the harm to the Cambridge Green Belt Purposes that would result from a proposed alternative scenario associated with the alignment of Granham's Road, which runs between Babraham Road and the A1301 at Shelford. Greater Cambridge Shared Planning (GCSP) committed to exploring the potential realignment of Granham's Road in an errata statement to the First Proposals Greater Cambridge Local Plan before the next stage in the plan-making process. This Addendum provides evidence to inform this.

- **1.4** The alternative scenario is a realignment of approximately 450m at the northern end of Granham's Road so that it joins Babraham Road around 200m further to the south-east, opposite the edge of the urban area that will result from consented development of land to the north (application 19/1168/OUT and subsequent approvals, now known as Eddeva Park). The alignment of the road which has been assessed is that submitted by consultancy Quod in January, following a masterplanning exercise on behalf of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, in a note titled 'Realignment of Granham's Road'.
- **1.5** The proposed realignment, with associated release and development of intervening Green Belt land, is shown in Figure 1.1 below with the eastern edge of the orange shaded area marking the current course of Granham's Road.

Figure 1.1: Proposed realignment of Granham's Road (from Realignment of Granham's Road by Quod)



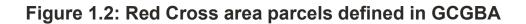
## **Assumptions underlying reassessment**

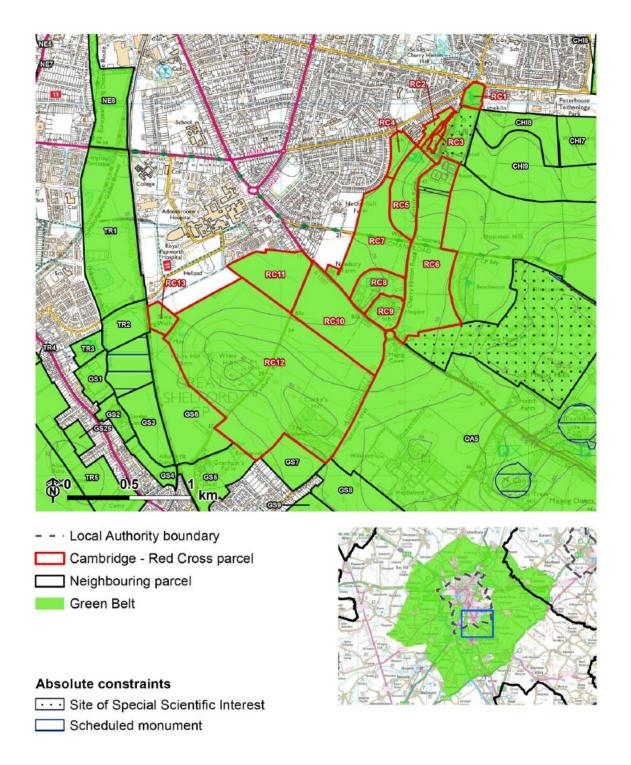
- **1.6** The assessment has been carried out using the same methodology as was used in the original GCGBA. Figure 1.2 shows the parcels defined in this area in the GCGBA. The parcel within which the potential road realignment would take place is RC10, adjacent to its boundary with RC11 ('RC' was the code used for parcels adjacent to the Red Cross suburb of Cambridge). It should be noted, as explained in the methodology chapter of the GCGBA, that assessment parcels were not predefined but were the result of the analysis process. So, parcel boundaries reflect identified variations in the contribution of land to the Green Belt purposes.
- **1.7** The assumption has been made that the section of Granham's Road to be realigned would be removed and become part of the developed area (as shown in Figure 1.1).
- **1.8** The assessment is of an alternative scenario. It does not invalidate the original assessment.
- 1.9 The GCGBA did not look at any masterplan proposals when considering the relationship between released (but not yet developed) land and adjacent Green Belt but assumed that released land would not be open and would retain any physical boundary features. This was in part because different sites were at different stages in terms of their planning and approval, so all were discounted in order to provide a 'level playing field', but also because of the difficulty in judging the impact of future planted boundary landscape features before they have been planted. Paragraph 3.113 stated: "It is necessary to assume that the land will be developed in order to reflect potential adverse impact, but it is recognised that there is potential for mitigation measures such as boundary strengthening and density of development within an inset area to influence this. Although the nature of development on released land could have some bearing on the strength of adjacent retained Green Belt land, it is unlikely to radically alter assessment outcomes."

**1.10** The same approach is to be adopted here, other than the assumption that a realigned Granham's Road will form a physical feature. It is noted from Figure 1.1 that perimeter landscaping measures are also envisaged, but for consistency with the original GCGBA there is no consideration of these.

#### Addendum structure

- **1.11** This addendum presents the findings of the additional analysis, set out as follows:
  - Chapter 2 presents a revised assessment of harm to the Cambridge Green Belt Purposes for release of those parcels affected by the notional realignment of Granham's Road: RC10 and RC11. Outputs are in the same format as those of the original GCGBA.
  - Chapter 3 comments on the difference between the alternative assessment and the original findings for parcels RC10 and RC11.
  - The original findings for RC10 and RC11 are included for reference at Appendix A.





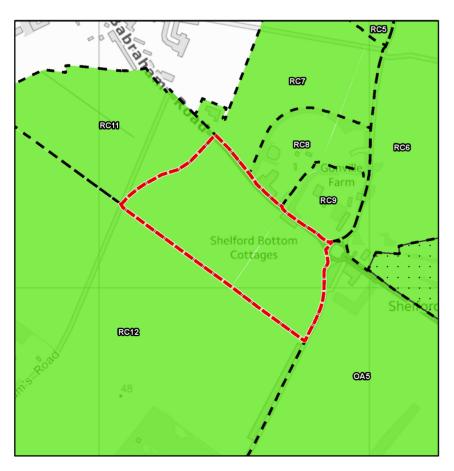
# **Chapter 2**

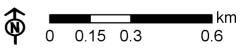
## Assessment of Alternative Scenario

- **2.1** This chapter presents alternative assessments for the two parcels that would be affected by the realignment of Granham's Road: RC10 and RC11.
- **2.2** The GCGBA assessment methodology is not repeated in the addendum see Chapter 3 of the original report for reference.









#### **Parcel location and openness**

Parcel size: 31.98ha

The parcel is located to the southeast of Cambridge (Red Cross), comprising a large agricultural field to the south of Babraham Road and to the east of a line that approximately marks the proposed realignment of Granham's Road. There are several dwellings on Babraham Road, opposite the Park and Ride.

Land is open. There is no development of a scale, character or form that has a significant impact on Green Belt Openness.

## Distinction between parcel and inset area

There is moderate boundary separation between the parcel and the urban area. The realigned Granham's Road, Babraham Road, and land in the adjacent parcel to the west would separate the parcel from Cambridge. The parcel is not contained by urban development, but views are balanced between the main urban area of Cambridge to the northwest and open countryside on other sides. The parcel extends a significant distance from the inset area. The landform and land cover within the parcel do not create any additional distinction from the inset area but, overall, there is strong distinction between the parcel and the urban area.

#### **Contribution to the Green Belt purposes**

 Cambridge Purpose 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre:

Contribution: Significant

The parcel is open and is adjacent to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has strong distinction from the urban area, which increases the extent to which development would be perceived as diminishing Cambridge's compact character. Overall, the parcel makes a significant contribution to Cambridge Purpose 1.

 Cambridge Purpose 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting:

Contribution: Relatively significant

The parcel comprises open farmland that has a strong distinction from the edge of Cambridge (Red Cross), meaning it has a strong rural character which allows an appreciation of the wider rural setting of the city. Although relatively low-lying, its containment by higher ground to the east and south means that it has a strong association with the Gog Magog foothills, and is prominent within key elevated views towards the city from Magog Down and Fox Hill to the south. In these views several landmarks within the historic core of the city (including the University Library, Holy Trinity Church and the Roman Catholic Church spire and St John' Chapel) are visible in the background, although later development in Trumpington and Red Cross on the city edge (including Addenbrooke's Hospital) dominates. Land also contributes to the rural landscape setting experienced on approach to the city along the A1307 (Babraham Road) from the south-east and along the railway line connecting Cambridge with London in the south. Overall the parcel makes a relatively significant contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2.

 Cambridge Purpose 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city:

Contribution: Relatively significant

The parcel is open and lies in a moderate gap between Cambridge (Red Cross) and Great Shelford. Intervening higher ground adds to perceived separation, and urbanising development between the two (on Babraham Road and Hinton Way) reduces it. There is strong distinction between the

parcel and the inset area, which increases the extent to which development would be perceived as narrowing the gap. Overall, the parcel makes a relatively significant contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3.

### Impact on contribution of adjacent Green Belt

· Release of land as an expansion of Cambridge:

Rating: Minor-moderate

With regard to Cambridge Purpose 2, the release this land would slightly impact the rural character of key elevated views towards the city from land to the southeast by adding additional peripheral development to the edge of the city.

The release and development of land in this parcel to the east of the existing inset settlement edge at Newbury Farm (now referred to as Eddeva Park) would reduce the already fragile gap between the urban edge of Cambridge and the Babraham Road Park and Ride. The Park and Ride and adjacent development up to the roundabout would, as a result, lack distinction from the city. This would constitute a more significant perception of urban sprawl, to the detriment of Cambridge Purpose 1, than would be the case if development did not narrow this gap. The release of this land would have some impact on reducing the settlement gap between Cambridge (Red Cross) and Great Shelford, but intervening higher ground would help to retain a sense of separation. The release would increase urbanising visual impact on land to the southeast, and would weaken its boundary separation from the urban edge. The overall impact on adjacent Green Belt would be moderate. Land to the north, west and southwest does not make a stronger contribution to any of the Green Belt purposes. The impact on this land would not therefore increase overall harm.

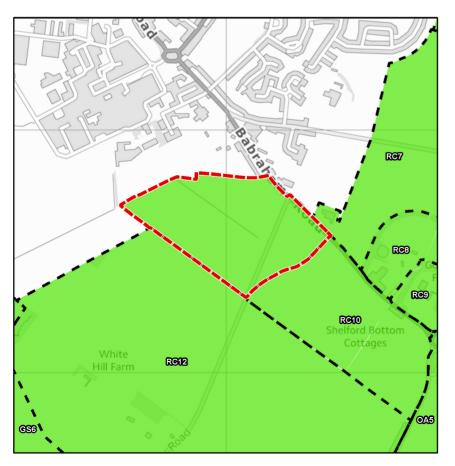
#### Overall harm of Green Belt release

Parcel RC10 makes a significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character, a relatively significant contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city and a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of the release of the parcel would be moderate. Therefore, the harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of Cambridge, would be very high.

#### **Very High**









#### **Parcel location and openness**

Parcel size: 19.53ha

The parcel lies on the southern edge of Cambridge (Red Cross), comprising of an agricultural field. The proposed realigned section of Granham's Road would contain the parcel to the east.

Land is open. There is no development within the parcel.

#### Distinction between parcel and inset area

The parcel is not subject to containment, but views are balanced between the main urban area of Cambridge to the north and open countryside to the south. The tree cover and road to the north of the parcel provde a moderate degree of separation between the parcel and the urban area. The landform and land cover within the parcel do not create any additional distinction from the inset area. Overall, there is moderate distinction between the parcel and the urban area.

#### **Contribution to the Green Belt purposes**

 Cambridge Purpose 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre:

Contribution: Relatively significant

The parcel is open and adjacent to the main urban area of Cambridge.

The parcel has some relationship with the urban area but also has a degree of distinction from it. Overall, the parcel makes a relatively

significant contribution to Cambridge Purpose 1.

 Cambridge Purpose 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting:

Contribution: Moderate

Land comprises open farmland that has a moderate distinction from the edge of Cambridge (Red Cross), meaning it has some rural character. It is visible on the edge of the city within the middle ground of key elevated views from Magog Down and Fox Hill, which allows some appreciation of the city's wider rural setting. In these views several landmarks within the historic core of the city (including the University Library, Holy Trinity Church and the Roman Catholic Church spire and St John' Chapel) are visible in the background, albeit views are dominated by later development on the city edge in Red Cross (including Addenbrooke's Hospital). Land also contributes to the rural landscape setting experienced when approaching the city from the south along the railway line connecting Cambridge with London. Overall the parcel makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2.

 Cambridge Purpose 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city: Contribution: Moderate

The parcel is open and lies in a wide gap between Cambridge (Red Cross) and Great Shelford. Urbanising development between the two reduces the perceived separation. The parcel has some relationship with the urban area, but also has a degree of distinction from it. Overall, the parcel makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3.

The gap between the edge of Cambridge and the Babraham Road Park and Ride (and adjacent urbanising development) is fragile, but release of the parcel would not narrow the gap beyond the consented development edge north of Babraham Road.

### Impact on contribution of adjacent Green Belt land

Release of land as an expansion of Cambridge:

Rating: Minor-moderate

In regard to Cambridge Purpose 2, the release of this land would slightly impact the rural character of key elevated views towards the city from land to the southeast by adding additional peripheral development to the edge of the city. It would also have a minor impact on the strength of the settlement gap between Cambridge (Red Cross) and Great Shelford. The release would weaken the boundary separation of land to the southwest from Cambridge, and would also increase urbanising containment on land to the east.

#### Overall harm of Green Belt release

Parcel RC11 makes a relatively significant contribution to preserving
 Cambridge's compact character, a moderate contribution to maintaining
 and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a moderate
 contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from
 merging with the city. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of
 the release of the parcel would be minor-moderate. Therefore, the harm
 resulting from its release, as an expansion of Cambridge, would be high.

High

# **Chapter 3**

## Comparison with Original Assessment

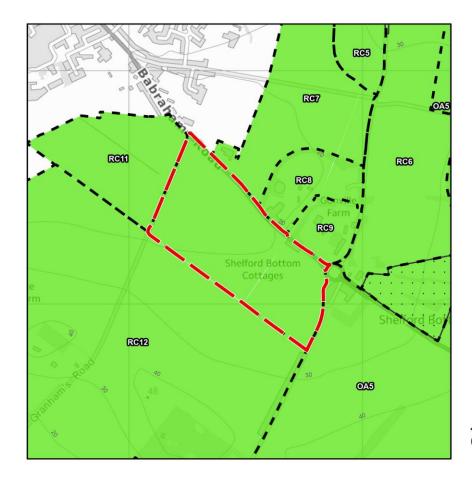
- **3.1** The alternative scenario assessments for parcels RC10 and RC11 suggest that the realigned course of Granham's Road would mark the distinction between land in RC11 that would cause 'high' harm if released from the Green Belt, and land in RC10 that would cause 'very high' harm. These are the same ratings that were assigned to RC10 and RC11 in the GCGBA.
- **3.2** These findings reflect the fact that, with the removal of the current alignment of Granham's Road, the triangle of land between the current and notional alignments of Granham's Road does not have characteristics/features that would warrant assigning a higher level of harm to any of the Cambridge Green Belt purposes. The 'very high' harm rating assigned to this area of land in the GCGBA reflected its location to the east of the only significant boundary feature in the vicinity, Granham's Road, rather than any other features, or distance from the urban edge.
- **3.3** As was suggested in the original RC10 assessment (see Appendix A), the line beyond which impact on adjacent Green Belt land would markedly increase in this location would be the edge of the Green Belt to the north of Babraham Road. Development up to this line would not extend the urban edge closer to the Park and Ride than the housing that is consented to be built on land at Newbury Farm but development beyond it would constitute a more significant urban expansion (to the detriment of Cambridge Green Belt Purpose 1).
- **3.4** Therefore, despite being located further into the open countryside, the realigned Granham's Road would still mark the transition from 'high' to 'very high' harm.

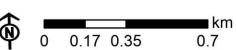
# **Appendix A**

RC10 and RC11 Assessments in GCGBA









#### **Parcel location and openness**

Parcel size: 31.98ha

The parcel is located to the southeast of Cambridge (Red Cross), comprising a large agricultural field to the east of Granham's Road and south of Babraham Road. There are several dwellings on Babraham Road, opposite the Park and Ride.

Land is open. There is no development of a scale, character or form that has a significant impact on Green Belt Openness.

## Distinction between parcel and inset area

There is moderate boundary separation between the parcel and the urban area. Granham's Road, Babraham Road, and land in the adjacent parcel to the west separate the parcel from Cambridge. The parcel is not contained by urban development, but views are balanced between the main urban area of Cambridge to the northwest and open countryside on other sides. The parcel extends a significant distance from the inset area. The landform and land cover within the parcel do not create any additional distinction from the inset area but, overall, there is strong distinction between the parcel and the urban area.

#### **Contribution to the Green Belt purposes**

 Cambridge Purpose 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre:

Contribution: Significant

The parcel is open and is adjacent to the main urban area of Cambridge. It has strong distinction from the urban area, which increases the extent to which development would be perceived as diminishing Cambridge's compact character. Overall, the parcel makes a significant contribution to Cambridge Purpose 1.

 Cambridge Purpose 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting:

Contribution: Relatively significant

The parcel comprises open farmland that has a strong distinction from the edge of Cambridge (Red Cross), meaning it has a strong rural character which allows an appreciation of the wider rural setting of the city. Although relatively low-lying, its containment by higher ground to the east and south means that it has a strong association with the Gog Magog foothills, and is prominent within key elevated views towards the city from Magog Down and Fox Hill to the south. In these views several landmarks within the historic core of the city (including the University Library, Holy Trinity Church and the Roman Catholic Church spire and St John' Chapel) are visible in the background, although later development in Trumpington and Red Cross on the city edge (including Addenbrooke's Hospital) dominates. Land also contributes to the rural landscape setting experienced on approach to the city along the A1307 (Babraham Road) from the south-east and along the railway line connecting Cambridge with London in the south. Overall the parcel makes a relatively significant contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2.

 Cambridge Purpose 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city:

Contribution: Relatively significant

The parcel is open and lies in a moderate gap between Cambridge (Red Cross) and Great Shelford. Intervening higher ground adds to perceived separation, and urbanising development between the two (on Babraham Road and Hinton Way) reduces it. There is strong distinction between the

parcel and the inset area, which increases the extent to which development would be perceived as narrowing the gap. Overall, the parcel makes a relatively significant contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3.

#### Impact on contribution of adjacent Green Belt

Release of land as an expansion of Cambridge:

Rating: Minor-moderate

With regard to Cambridge Purpose 2, the release this land would slightly impact the rural character of key elevated views towards the city from land to the southeast by adding additional peripheral development to the edge of the city.

The release and development of land in this parcel to the east of the existing inset settlement edge at Newbury Farm would reduce the already fragile gap between the urban edge of Cambridge and the Babraham Road Park and Ride. The Park and Ride and adjacent development up to the roundabout would, as a result, lack distinction from the city. This would constitute a more significant perception of urban sprawl, to the detriment of Cambridge Purpose 1, than would be the case if development did not narrow this gap.

The release of this land would have some impact on reducing the settlement gap between Cambridge (Red Cross) and Great Shelford, but intervening higher ground would help to retain a sense of separation. The release would increase urbanising visual impact on land to the southeast, and would weaken its boundary separation from the urban edge.

The overall impact on adjacent Green Belt would be minor-moderate for the release of land to the west of Newbury Farm, and moderate for the release of land to the east.

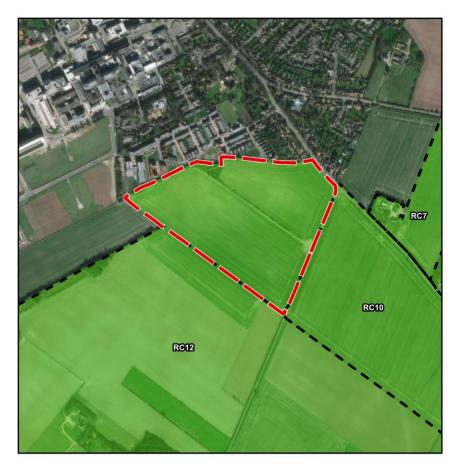
Land to the north, west and southwest does not make a stronger contribution to any of the Green Belt purposes. The impact on this land would not therefore increase overall harm.

### **Overall harm of Green Belt release**

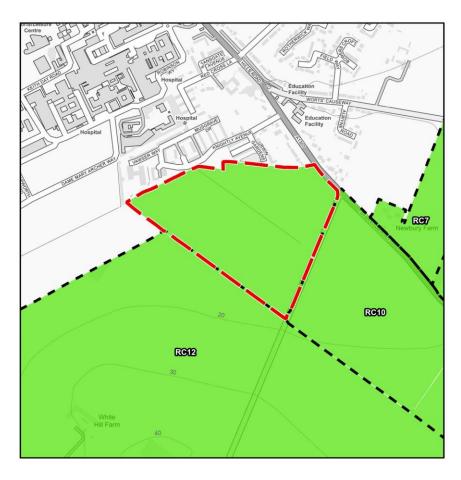
Parcel RC10 makes a significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's
compact character, a relatively significant contribution to preventing
communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city and a
relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality
of Cambridge's setting. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt o
the release of the parcel would be at least minor-moderate. Therefore, the
harm resulting from its release, as an expansion of Cambridge, would be

very high.

## Very High









#### **Parcel location and openness**

Parcel size: 19.53ha

The parcel lies on the southern edge of Cambridge (Red Cross), comprising of an agricultural field. Granham's Road contains the parcel to the east.

Land is open. There is no development within the parcel.

### Distinction between parcel and inset area

The parcel is not subject to containment, but views are balanced between the main urban area of Cambridge to the north and open countryside to the south. The tree cover and road to the north of the parcel provde a moderate degree of separation between the parcel and the urban area. The landform and land cover within the parcel do not create any additional distinction from the inset area. Overall, there is moderate distinction between the parcel and the urban area.

#### **Contribution to the Green Belt purposes**

 Cambridge Purpose 1 - to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre:

Contribution: Relatively significant

The parcel is open and adjacent to the main urban area of Cambridge. The parcel has some relationship with the urban area but also has a degree of distinction from it. Overall, the parcel makes a relatively significant contribution to Cambridge Purpose 1.

 Cambridge Purpose 2 - to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting:

Contribution: Moderate

Land comprises open farmland that has a moderate distinction from the edge of Cambridge (Red Cross), meaning it has some rural character. It is visible on the edge of the city within the middle ground of key elevated views from Magog Down and Fox Hill, which allows some appreciation of the city's wider rural setting. In these views several landmarks within the historic core of the city (including the University Library, Holy Trinity Church and the Roman Catholic Church spire and St John' Chapel) are visible in the background, albeit views are dominated by later development on the city edge in Red Cross (including Addenbrooke's Hospital). Land also contributes to the rural landscape setting experienced when approaching the city from the south along the railway line connecting Cambridge with London. Overall the parcel makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 2.

 Cambridge Purpose 3 - to prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city:

Contribution: Moderate

The parcel is open and lies in a wide gap between Cambridge (Red Cross) and Great Shelford. Urbanising development between the two reduces the perceived separation. The parcel has some relationship with the urban area, but also has a degree of distinction from it. Overall, the parcel makes a moderate contribution to Cambridge Purpose 3.

#### Impact on contribution of adjacent Green Belt

· Release of land as an expansion of Cambridge:

Rating: Minor-moderate

In regard to Cambridge Purpose 2, the release of this land would slightly impact the rural character of key elevated views towards the city from land to the southeast by adding additional peripheral development to the edge of the city. It would also have a minor impact on the strength of the settlement gap between Cambridge (Red Cross) and Great Shelford. The release would weaken the boundary separation of land to the southwest from Cambridge, and would also increase urbanising containment on land to the east.

#### Overall harm of Green Belt release

Parcel RC11 makes a relatively significant contribution to preserving
 Cambridge's compact character, a moderate contribution to maintaining
 and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a moderate
 contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from
 merging with the city. The additional impact on the adjacent Green Belt of
 the release of the parcel would be minor-moderate. Therefore, the harm
 resulting from its release, as an expansion of Cambridge, would be high.

High

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