

Development Strategy

Topic Paper

Appendix 6: Review of “new” new settlement opportunities



Greater Cambridge Local Plan

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Development Strategy Topic Paper 2026 Appendix 6: Review of “new” new settlement opportunities

Introduction

1.1 This appendix to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Proposed Submission 2026 Development Strategy Topic paper identifies potential preferred “new” (as opposed to expanding an existing new settlement) new settlement options. This 2026 version of this appendix has been prepared using the Draft Plan 2025 version and updated to account for relevant updated site evidence submitted to the Regulation 18 Draft Plan consultation.

Outline approach

Evidence based sifting of new settlement proposals

1.2 The Councils identified a long list of new settlement proposals from the Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment. Review of these potential new settlement options has drawn on a range of previously completed evidence referenced below to identify 1) reasonable alternatives, and 2) potential preferred option/s.

Key points to note regarding new settlements review approach

In scope

Approach to new settlement proposals with direct cross-boundary implications

1.3 Two proposals for new settlements submitted to the Call for sites either straddled the boundary of South Cambridgeshire and a neighbouring district, or adjoined land that has been submitted to the respective neighbouring authority that combined could create a larger new

settlement. A further new settlement proposal was within 400m of the boundary of South Cambridgeshire and a neighbouring district.

1.4 We included these sites within the review below. The cross-boundary nature of these sites has been identified but has not affected the conclusions regarding their suitability for allocation.

Approach to new settlement proposals that would result in coalescence with one or more existing settlement

1.5 We included in the new settlements review new settlement proposals that would result in coalescence with one or more existing villages. The impacts of this is discussed further below where relevant to specific proposals.

Out of scope

1.6 This new settlement opportunities review considers only new settlement proposals that could not reasonably form part of an expanded Cambourne, or an expanded Royston. Sites that could form part of an expanded Cambourne have been considered via the Cambourne-specific evidence base.

Sustainability Appraisal

1.7 The Sustainability Appraisal accompanying the First Proposals 2021 consultation noted at [Appendix E, paragraph E.20](#) that “No sites were identified as potential development options through the HELAA, and further new settlements do not form part of the preferred option for the plan following consideration of new settlements through the strategic options testing process. Therefore no sites were included for site specific sustainability appraisal.” Given the updated evidence base position set out in the main body of the Draft Plan Strategy Topic Paper, this position has now changed. As above, to inform the Draft Plan consultation and

Proposed Submission stages, where the long list sifting described above has identified reasonable alternative new settlements, these sites have been subject to site specific consideration for allocation and Sustainability Appraisal.

Identifying reasonable alternatives

Key factors informing identification of reasonable alternatives

Location on High Quality Public Transport (HQPT) corridor

- 1.8 Our [Strategic spatial options appraisal: implications for carbon emissions](#) (p19) identified that “Once outside the most dense and walkable / cyclable urban area, the key to the difference between [the carbon performance of spatial options] is the number of homes that are specified to be on public transport”. Further to this, the emerging Local Plan vision, in line with NPPF paragraph 105, seeks to minimise reliance on the private car.
- 1.9 Additional analysis of GCLP transport evidence modelling undertaken at the strategic spatial options and Preferred Options stages confirmed this point, identifying that car mode shares and car trips per dwelling are lower at new settlements located on a high quality public transport route (i.e.) rail or a stop on a Greater Cambridge Partnership corridor scheme. It also identified that new settlement locations closer to Cambridge perform better for the same metrics, noting that such locations offer greater opportunities for faster journeys into the city by public transport and also by cycle. This latter point is picked up in section 2 below.
- 1.10 In conclusion, to maximise opportunities for sustainable travel, we identified as reasonable alternatives only new settlement opportunities that were located at or very close to a hub/node (i.e. station or stop) on a high quality public transport route (as above being rail or a Greater Cambridge Partnership corridor scheme) that exists now, or has a reasonable prospect of delivery to enable development within the plan period.

Scale

- 1.11 Our Sustainable Settlement Sizes Study (LUC, 2020) identified the following key conclusions:
- a. Overall, we recommend that a settlement of around 4,500 homes would be the minimum to be sustainable in Greater Cambridge and that the most sustainable option is to provide settlements of at least this size even in proximity to Cambridge. This is because a settlement of this size would generate a critical mass of residents that would support everyday services and facilities such as local shops, early years provision, a primary and secondary school, employment, green space, community meeting space, public transport infrastructure, a GP surgery or health centre and recreation facilities, which are required to provide the opportunity to meet needs locally without having to travel elsewhere (i.e. a measure of self-containment). This in turn can help to foster community cohesion and identity.
 - b. However, it is acknowledged that the location and pattern of development of new communities will influence the appropriate size and smaller developments may be appropriate in certain circumstances.
 - c. Larger settlements with an appropriate mix of uses – including employment - are likely to be more sustainable to an extent, as they are likely to be more self-contained, although the goal of self-containment needs to be approached with a degree of realism.
- 1.12 Supporting the above conclusion, as reported in the First Proposals Strategy topic paper, our Transport Evidence Report: Preferred Options Update, August 2021 identified that larger developments accommodating a wide mix of uses allow for more ‘internalisation’ of trips within the site. They are also generally easier to provide viable mitigation for, essentially because more people equals more demand. In terms of trip internalisation within a particular site, the largest freestanding new settlements perform

best, with sites adjacent to Cambridge and in the villages not performing as well.

1.13 Further to the above, noting that the LUC study did not involve engagement with local infrastructure providers that might determine the level of development that would be required to support essential services such as education and healthcare, Cambridgeshire County Council confirmed that to ensure flexibility of provision on standalone new settlements, their preference would be for a minimum of 7FE secondary with post 16 provision on-site, which aligns with a minimum of 4,200 dwellings.

1.14 In conclusion, to support viable provision of onsite infrastructure and services which thereby support internalisation of trips within the site, and to support provision of viable offsite transport infrastructure, we identified as reasonable alternatives only new settlement opportunities that met a 4,200 homes minimum threshold.

1.15 To identify sites meeting the minimum threshold we reviewed the number of units proposed by the promoter and the HELAA capacity assessment. For sites meeting the location on High Quality Public Transport corridor requirement above we also considered sites' potential to reach the minimum threshold capacity by integrating a proposal with one or more adjacent strategic scale development proposals (including cross boundary sites), and by considering whether suitable adjacent land that has not been proposed through the Call for Sites could enable this minimum to be met. Where adjacent sites were physically separated (e.g. by existing roads, rail, watercourses), we considered whether these barriers could be physically and feasibly overcome to deliver a comprehensive and integrated new settlement that would enable good placemaking.

1.16 Further to the above, noting the in principle sustainability of locating

development at existing railway stations, we completed a high level review of site opportunities at such locations, including:

- considering integrating proposals together as a package of sites to meet the minimum size threshold as above
- the impacts of promoting scales of development below the minimum size threshold.

Absolute site-specific constraints

1.17 The HELAA assesses all sites submitted to the GCLP to consider whether they are suitable, achievable and available. Given the inherent scale of new settlement proposals, in terms of suitability the HELAA scored many of them as being unsuitable given their impact on landscape or townscape. However, despite this the Councils recognise that the benefits of an overall spatial strategy placing development in such locations might outweigh some local environmental impacts.

1.18 As such, we used the HELAA findings at this point in order to identify whether any new settlement proposals were affected by absolute constraints that would render such proposals wholly unsuitable for development.

1.19 For this new settlement opportunities review, absolute constraints rendering a site unsuitable for development were defined as per the [Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment 2021](#) methodology as follows:

- Either absolute constraint on development - sites wholly or mostly (>50%) containing a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), SAC, SPA, Registered Park & Garden, and / or ancient Woodland (p21-22); or
- Flood risk score of red - The site is wholly or largely within Flood Zones 2 or 3 such that it cannot accommodate at least 5 additional dwellings or an increase of 500 square metres of employment floorspace and/or

the site is a 'dry island' whereby all potential accesses to the adopted public highway require crossing land that is within Flood Zones 2 or 3 (p32).

Summary of criteria informing the identification of reasonable alternative new settlement opportunities

- 1.20 Drawing on the above, the Councils reviewed the [Site Submissions](#) map and the HELAA database to identify reasonable alternative new settlement options that met the following criteria:
- a) Located on or close to an existing or proposed high quality public transport route
 - b) Could provide 4,200 or more homes
 - c) Not rendered unsuitable by an absolute planning constraint

Summary of review of long list

Location

- 1.21 From the call for sites we identified eleven new settlement proposals (10 prior to Draft Plan stage, and one further proposal submitted to the Draft Plan consultation) that were on or close to an existing or proposed high quality public transport route (as defined above).

Scale

- 1.22 Of these eleven, four (including one being a variation of the same site) met the minimum size threshold. For locations on or close to an existing or proposed high quality public transport route we also considered whether the minimum threshold could be met by bringing together submitted sites with one or more adjacent strategic scale development proposals (including cross boundary sites), or with suitable adjacent land that had not been proposed through the Call for Sites. We did not identify any clear opportunities that could provide reasonable alternatives through this

consideration.

Considering development opportunities at existing rail stations

1.23 As explained above, noting the in principle sustainability of rail stations, we completed a focused review of development opportunities at existing rail stations within rural South Cambridgeshire beyond the Green Belt (ignoring Waterbeach, for which a relocated train station will serve Waterbeach New Town). The findings are set out below:

- **Foxton:** The largest site proposed adjacent to Foxton station is for up to 1,500-2,000 homes, and a limited amount of employment space (40084). A further site in close proximity could provide up to 500 homes (59399). Even taken together the scale of development here would be below the minimum threshold established above. County Council Highways advice is that capacity issues on adjacent links and the A10 railway crossing may bring forward the need for an A10 bridge across the level crossing; the site promoters are proposing to fund this. County Council Education advice is that the site is too small to justify an on-site secondary school. The nearest secondary school is Melbourn Village College. This may have some surplus capacity and could be expanded by 1FE (150 places). However the school is outside the 3 mile safe route to school and would require most of the journey to be along the A10. For this reason the County Council does not consider the secondary education demands of the development can be adequately satisfied. As a result this option was rejected.
- **Shepreth:** Two strategic scale sites were proposed close to Shepreth station:
 - One site was proposed for up to 2,300 homes, and a limited amount of employment space (HELAA ref: 40147). County Council Education advice is that the site is too small to justify an on-site secondary school. While there is potential to expand the nearest secondary school at Melbourn Village college, its expansion capacity is insufficient to meet the needs generated by this proposal, and is at the margins of the

3 mile secondary limit for walking to school. As a result this option was rejected.

- A further site was proposed for 25,000 homes (HELAA ref: 208916), described here as Wetherbrook East. In principle this site meets the criterion of being at or very close to a rail station, with the nearest part of the site boundary being around 150m from Shepreth station. It also meets the scale criterion. However, on review of the HELAA scoring and comments, and based on the very limited information provided by the promoter, this option was not considered to form a reasonable alternative for further assessment, noting the following points:
 - The HELAA transport and roads assessment for this site is RAG rated red, with comments indicating that the roads connecting to the site are unsuitable for the scale of development proposed, with little certainty that the roads could be upgraded. There is limited prospect that the potential impact of development of this scale on the functioning of trunk roads (A10 and the A505, which are already severely congested in peak times) could be mitigated. The site would need significant upgrades in public transport connectivity. It would also need active travel links to the surrounding area, which does not appear to be possible for the development as the development extent does not appear capable of connection to existing active travel routes [without the use of third party land].
 - The station is not adjacent to the proposed development, which would limit the ability of the design of the development to maximise access to it.
 - The form of existing built development and flood risk within and around the site results in a proposed form of development that would harm the distinctiveness, character and separation between villages. This high

level of harm could not be reasonably mitigated.

- **Meldreth:** given the configuration of existing development at Meldreth and Melbourn, there are no opportunities for additional strategic scale development adjacent or very close to Meldreth rail station. As a result this option was rejected.
 - Note that Wetherbrook East (HELAA ref: 208916) referred to previously was also submitted as part of a combined proposal with Wetherbrook West (HELAA ref: 208915 – as above, noting the conclusion that that proposal did not form a reasonable alternative for further assessment) to form Wetherbrook Combined (HELAA ref: 208917). The closest railway station to Wetherbrook West is Meldreth, with the nearest boundary of the site being more than 800m away. Consistent with the above conclusion that there are no opportunities for additional strategic scale development adjacent or very close to Meldreth rail station, both Wetherbrook West and Wetherbrook Combined site proposals were rejected as not forming a reasonable alternative for further assessment.
- **Ashwell and Morden:** a single 10,000 home new settlement proposal was submitted to the Site Submissions Update 2025. It is adjacent to the existing Ashwell and Morden railway station, and the promoters propose to move it along the existing line to be more central to the proposed development. This proposal therefore meets the scale threshold but has significant cross-boundary implications for Royston within North Hertfordshire in that the proposal would be less than 0.5km from, and would be ~1.5 times the size of the existing town. Given that this proposal meets the location and scale tests the site was taken forward for further testing; noting its proximity to Royston we have also explored the cross-boundary implications with North Hertfordshire District Council.
- **Whittlesford Parkway:** considered cumulatively, development proposals adjacent to each other submitted to the Local Plan could

reach the minimum scale threshold identified above, including land within 200m of Whittlesford Parkway station. However, to achieve this scale, and making best use of land closest to the station, would require the coalescence of Whittlesford, Whittlesford Parkway and Duxford villages, which would have significant landscape, townscape and heritage impacts that would be challenging to mitigate. In addition, the majority of the available land close to the station lies within the Green Belt. As a result this option was not considered to form a clear reasonable option for further assessment.

Absolute planning constraints

1.24 No sites reviewed were rendered unsuitable by an absolute planning constraint.

Conclusions: reasonable alternative new settlement opportunities

1.25 The four sites (with one being a variation of the same site) that met the reasonable alternative criteria comprise:

- 40317a Land to the west of Scotland Road, Dry Drayton - described below as Scotland Farm (smaller)
- 56252 / 51608 Scotland Farm (East & West) / Scotland Farm (Non-residential Only), Scotland Road, Dry Drayton (noting that these two site submissions are for the same boundary but with a different mix of development - described below as Scotland Farm (larger))
- 59401 Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307
- 200785 Land north of A505 between Royston and Ashwell and Morden - described below as Ashwell and Morden Garden Town proposal.

Identifying potential preferred options

Summary of approach to identifying potential preferred options

2.1 We drew on the HELAA, the Sustainability Appraisal, and our wider evidence base to review the reasonable alternative options and identify a preferred option. This has been reviewed ahead of Proposed Submission stage to account for the additional evidence prepared relating to Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307. The following analysis is structured around the headings of economic/strategic location issues, environmental and delivery issues.

Review of reasonable alternative options

Economic/strategic location issues

Public transport connectivity

2.2 All of the reasonable alternative options are located at or close to a stop on a proposed or potential high quality public transport route, as follows:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) is located at the proposed Park and Ride associated with the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Cambourne to Cambridge route. A Transport and Works Act Order application for the Cambourne to Cambridge scheme was submitted to the Department for Transport on 12 November 2024 and it an Examination is being held in Autumn 2025.
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 is located across the A11 from the proposed Park and Ride for the Cambridge South East Transport Scheme (CSET). A Transport and Works Act Order application for CSET was submitted to the Department for Transport on 9 January 2025 and it is anticipated an Examination will held in late 2025.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town proposal is adjacent to the existing Ashwell and Morden railway station, and the promoters propose to move it along the existing line to be more central to the proposed development.

Accessibility to existing employment locations

2.3 In terms of accessibility to existing employment locations, including drawing on the above information:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) would have direct access to the West Cambridge campus via the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge Transport Scheme, with onward connections to other employment locations within Cambridge.
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 is situated within walking or cycling distance of Granta Park and Babraham Research Campus. If a segregated connection were to be provided across the A11, it would have direct access to Cambridge Biomedical Campus via the proposed Cambridge South East Transport Scheme with onward connections to other employment locations within Cambridge.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town proposal would have a direct rail connection to employment at Royston, Melbourn and Cambridge Biomedical Campus and central Cambridge via a proposed relocated Ashwell and Morden rail station. It would also be on the rail line to London.

Ability to support internalisation of trips: Opportunity for scale

2.4 Our transport evidence shows that larger sites which can provide a wider range of services and facilities can better meet the day to day needs of the population and reduce the need and distance to travel, resulting in more short journeys remaining within the site.

2.5 All the reasonable alternative new settlement options are large enough to accommodate a good range of services and facilities for people of all ages, including community, sports and leisure facilities, education

and health services, cultural uses and informal open space.

2.6 Differences between the sites include:

- Scotland Farm (larger) could accommodate a mix of 6,200 dwellings and 100,000 square metres employment (site area is 387 hectares)
- Scotland Farm (smaller) is a residential-led proposal for 8,000 dwellings; no employment space is proposed, which would result in external trips to access employment (site area is 267 ha)
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 could accommodate a residential-led 4,500 dwellings (updated at Proposed Submission stage accounting for further evidence – see Sites Topic Paper) and a limited amount of employment (site area is 185 ha)
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town Proposal could accommodate a mix of 10,000 dwellings and 20,000 square metres employment space (site area is 895 ha).

Active travel access to services in Cambridge

2.7 While the reasonable alternative new settlement options would be of a scale to include a range of services and facilities for day to day needs, other needs would be served by major service locations, primarily Cambridge.

2.8 Our transport evidence identified that locations closer to Cambridge generate fewer car trips as these locations can be accessed by active travel modes.

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) is around 8km from central Cambridge – the Cambourne to Cambridge scheme would provide an off-road route to the edge of the city;
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 is

around 9km from central Cambridge - the CSET scheme would provide an off-road route to the edge of the city;

- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town is around 32km from central Cambridge. The proposed Melbourn Greenway would provide a direct active travel route between Royston and the edge of the city.

Environmental issues

Landscape and townscape

2.9 All the of the reasonable alternative new settlement options, by virtue of their scale, have been assessed as having significant negative landscape and townscape impacts (and scored RED).

2.10 Differences between the sites include:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) is located within rolling landscape with wide and local views due to a lack of intervening vegetation and development would result in urbanisation of the rural landscape. The site is adjacent to Dry Drayton with potential for impacts on the setting of the village. The larger Scotland Farm site is located partly within the Cambridge Green Belt.
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 would be visible in long views from the south east. The site is close to Great Abington with potential for impacts on the setting of the village. This location is outside of the Cambridge Green Belt.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town would potentially form an extension to Royston and have a negative impact on the existing landscape. This location is outside of the Cambridge Green Belt.

Historic Environment

2.11 All sites would impact on the historic environment and have archaeological potential.

2.12 Differences between the sites include:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) is within 100m of a Listed asset and an extensive settlement of Iron Age and Roman date is recorded in the area, but impact could be reasonably mitigated.
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 would potentially impact two conservation areas to the west and south, a scheduled monument (Roman Road) along the north eastern boundary, a newly designated scheduled monument (Barrows) in the south of the sites, , and The Grange farmstead (within the centre of the site) has potential for local heritage significance, but impacts could be reasonably mitigated.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town site forms the setting of a listed farmhouse and a number of Non Designated Heritage Assets. The quantum of development proposed would harm both the immediate and wider setting of these assets. Development of the site would cause harm to a designated heritage asset or the setting of a designated heritage asset which cannot be reasonably mitigated.

Flood Risk

2.13 All the of the reasonable alternative new settlement options have been assessed as having some flood risk but this is a small proportion of the available site area such that this does not impact on consideration of development potential.

Biodiversity

2.14 The HELAA assessed all of the reasonable alternative new settlement options as having a detrimental impact on a designated

site(s) for biodiversity and geodiversity.

2.15 Differences between the sites include:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) does not contain designated sites. However, there are habitats (including priority deciduous woodland and water features) which require further assessment for protected species.
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 is adjacent to the Roman Road SSSI which is under recreational pressure. Development of the site may have a detrimental impact on a designated site, or those with a regional or local protection but the impact could be reasonably mitigated or compensated.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town is within 500m of Therfield Heath SSSI within North Hertfordshire. This site is under recreational pressure; North Hertfordshire District Council have agreed with Natural England a [Therfield Heath SSSI Mitigation Strategy](#) sets out the details of the recreational pressures that can impact on the SSSI and the measures that could be used to help change those pressures in the future. Development of the site would have a detrimental impact on designated sites, or those with a regional or local protection which cannot be reasonably mitigated or compensated as appropriate.

Green Infrastructure

2.16 Our Green Infrastructure evidence identifies the existing green infrastructure network and a number of strategic initiatives intended to enhance it. All of the reasonable alternative new settlement options are close to strategic GI initiative areas, thereby providing opportunities for a new settlement to contribute to initiative objectives.

2.17 Differences between the sites include:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) lies between the West Cambridge GI buffer – Coton Corridor and Western Gateway multifunctional GI Corridors strategic GI initiative areas
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 is close to the Gog Magog and Chalkland Fringe strategic GI initiative area.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town lies within the Pollinator Corridor strategic GI initiative area.

Transport: site access and strategic road network capacity

2.18 Given the potential scale of development at each of the reasonable alternative locations, development would have impact on the surrounding road network, and would be expected to provide mitigation to address this. Initial assessments regarding safe access and road network capacity varies as below. Given current uncertainties these have not been used to rule out any of the sites:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger): Safe access confirmed in principle. There are capacity issues on the adjacent A428 links and junction but impacts on the road network could reasonably be mitigated
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307: Safe access confirmed. The site will require mitigation to enable sustainable connections and mitigate vehicular impacts – see more in the Sites Topic Paper.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town would need further investigation including with Hertfordshire County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to confirm the acceptability of the vehicular access from the A505. There are no sustainable transport links to existing sustainable transport infrastructure around the site but development is proposed to be centred upon a relocated Ashwell and Morden rail station; further

engagement would be needed with Network Rail and with Hertfordshire County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to confirm the potential to deliver this, and to reassess the acceptability of transport network impacts in that revised context.

Delivery issues

2.19 All reasonable alternative new settlement options would help to meet local housing needs within Greater Cambridge to a greater or lesser extent.

2.20 Differences between the sites include:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) is wholly within Greater Cambridge.
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 is wholly within Greater Cambridge and close to the rural southern cluster, providing homes close to jobs, in a location that has been identified as an area within Greater Cambridge with significant ongoing growth in jobs but less planned growth in housing provision.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town lies on the edge of Greater Cambridge and is on the boundary of the Cambridge Housing Market Area and Stevenage Housing Market Area ([Housing Market Areas in Bedfordshire and surrounding areas Report of Findings, December 2015 e.g. see Figure 38](#)). It is likely that housing provided here would contribute functionally, at least in part, to meeting housing need within North Hertfordshire. In the same way, housing provided here would not contribute solely to meeting Greater Cambridge's housing needs. In particular, housing provided here would not be well located to provide homes for those taking up the forecast jobs, upon which Greater Cambridge housing need is based.

2.21 Our [Housing Delivery Study](#) highlighted that locating significant

development sites close to each other can negatively impact on housing delivery rates, as nearby sites may be competing for the same market, and/or they may be reliant on the same infrastructure improvements.

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) is in close proximity to strategic scale allocations in the adopted Local Plan 2018 at Bourn Airfield New Village and Cambourne West that are yet to be built out, and the proposed expansion of Cambourne in the emerging Local Plan, all of which are reliant on the Cambourne to Cambridge transport scheme.
- Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307 is close to the committed 1,500 homes at Wellcome Genome Campus expansion, but those homes are specifically for staff at Wellcome such that there shouldn't be the same level of impact on delivery rates were both sites to be for market housing. Grange Farm is reliant on the Cambridge South East transport scheme; the homes at Wellcome are not reliant on this scheme.
- Ashwell and Morden Garden Town is distant from any strategic scale development within Greater Cambridge. It is very close to Royston, but there is no strategic scale expansion proposed here.

Conclusion

2.22 Having explored the planning merits of the reasonable alternative sites as above, the Council's preferred location for a new settlement is at Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307. Providing homes within the Rural Southern Cluster area of significant existing and ongoing growth in employment, will enable more people to live close to their work, in a part of South Cambridgeshire that has not seen significant housing provision in recent plans. More specifically, Land at Grange Farm, east of A11 & north of A1307's location is within walking or cycling distance of established employment locations at Granta Park

and Babraham Research Campus, and will be connected by the Cambridge South East transport scheme - providing public transport and active travel opportunities - to Cambridge Biomedical Campus, where a very significant number of jobs will be focused. None of the other reasonable alternative potential new settlements share this feature. Grange Farm is of sufficient scale to provide a wide range of services and facilities within the development to better meet the day to day needs of the population, and CSETS will also enable faster journeys to central Cambridge for other services, which is within cycling distance of the site. There are no nearby strategic scale open market housing sites that would impact on delivery of housing at Grange Farm. Notwithstanding the above benefits, large scale development at Grange Farm would have harmful environmental impacts, in particular on the Roman Road SSSI and Scheduled Ancient monument, which will require mitigation through careful master-planning. Successful delivery of Grange Farm would be reliant on full delivery of CSET plus a direct connection from CSET to the site.

2.23 In relation to the reasonable alternatives that are not preferred:

- Scotland Farm (smaller and larger) is located at the proposed Park and Ride associated with the Greater Cambridge Partnership's Cambourne to Cambridge route, that would provide direct access to the West Cambridge campus via the proposed Cambourne to Cambridge Transport Scheme, with onward connections to other employment locations within Cambridge. This location is not preferred because it does not have the strategic benefit of Land at Grange Farm, i.e. locating jobs close to homes in a part of South Cambridgeshire that has not seen significant housing provision in recent plans. In addition, Scotland Farm is in close proximity to strategic scale allocations in the adopted Local Plan 2018 at Bourn Airfield New Village and Cambourne West that are yet to be built out, and the

proposed expansion of Cambourne in the emerging Local Plan, all of which are reliant on the Cambourne to Cambridge transport scheme. As such, focusing housing development beyond Cambridge at four separate strategic development sites in close proximity (including Cambourne West, Bourn Airfield, expanded Cambourne and Scotland Farm) would present a risk to delivery, and would likely impact negatively on annual housing delivery on all of these sites.

- Ashwell and Morden new town proposal would have a direct rail connection to employment at Royston, Melbourn and Cambridge Biomedical Campus and central Cambridge. It is also on the rail line to London. It is not preferred because it is distant from jobs close to Cambridge, such that housing here would not meet Greater Cambridge's housing needs alone. It would also dwarf Royston - the settlement to which it most closely relates. The Councils cannot currently demonstrate that the site is deliverable, noting that North Hertfordshire District Council have not confirmed their support for such a proposal, for which housing here would - in part - meet their own housing need. Development here would also likely have significant effects on the adjacent Therfield Heath SSSI, which is under pressure; this impact could be difficult to mitigate.