

Subject: Land West of Cambridge Road, Melbourn
From: Bidwells
Date: June 2026
To: Terry De Sousa (Greater Cambridge Shared Planning)



LAND WEST OF CAMBRIDGE ROAD, MELBOURN

(DRAFT ALLOCATION SITE AND POLICY S/RRA/CR)

CAPACITY TESTING NOTE

Introduction

This Planning Note has been prepared by Bidwells on behalf of Vistry following a meeting held between Bidwells and Greater Cambridge Shared Planning on 21 May 2026. This Note supports and informs a capacity testing exercise relating to Land West of Cambridge Road, Melbourn ('the Site') and should be read alongside the Concept Framework Plans (Refs. MLA-MELB-A3-0201-0201, 0202, 0203) which set out the three Development Options which have been tested, as follows:

OPTION	DRAWING REFERENCE	DEVELOPMENT QUANTUM
A (Eastern Site)	MLA-MELB-A3-0201	72-84 dwellings 1.76ha employment
B (Eastern Site)	MLA-MELB-A3-0202	125 – 140 dwellings 0ha employment
C (Eastern and Western Sites)	MLA-MELB-A3-0203	125 – 140 dwellings 2.30ha employment

The Site as a whole is comprised of two adjacent parcels:

- the 'Eastern Site' comprises the Draft Allocation Site S/RRA/CR: Land to the West of Cambridge Road, Melbourn ('the Draft Allocation') which comprises of 6.65 hectares (ha) of greenfield agricultural land and is draft allocated within the Regulation 18 Greater Cambridge Local Plan (GCLP)(2025) for approximately 120 dwellings and 8,000sqm (GIA) employment uses.
- The 'Western Site' comprises of approximately 7.56ha greenfield agricultural land and is immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the Eastern Site.

In support of Representations submitted in January 2026, pursuant to Regulation 18 consultation, a Commercial Business Floorspace Occupational Market Report was prepared by Bidwells which details the employment floorspace market in Melbourn and the surrounding area. The Report concludes that Melbourn and surrounding villages are well supplied in terms of commercial floorspace with good availability for occupiers today with further schemes currently on site delivering additional speculative space throughout 2026 in addition to a significant quantum of consented schemes that can deliver a future pipeline of commercial floorspace subject to improved market conditions. Overall, the Report finds that there is no foreseeable need for additional commercial floorspace in the short and medium term and unlikely prospects in the longer term.

Notwithstanding the above and noting the Council's current vision for mixed use development to come forward on the Site, Option A of the capacity testing comprises a quantum of employment development on the Eastern Site which

reflects the approach of Draft Policy S/RRA/CR. At this stage, this assumes a broad mixture of Class E employment floorspace, primarily consisting of office and R&D uses.

To ensure the capacity testing reflects accurate and appropriate land use scenarios, the following assumptions have been built into Concept Plans for each option:

- Principle of retaining established hedgerows along the perimeter of the Site and the hedgerow that intersects the two fields on the Eastern Site;
- The application of appropriate densities for residential development at between 30 and 35dph and employment uses taking into account the established precedent set within neighbouring residential development in Melbourn and at Melbourn Science Park and the TTP Campus;
- Taking into account surrounding context to apply a maximum height of 2 – 2.5 storeys; and
- The assumption that development will include delivery of all green and blue infrastructure on-site including SuDS and biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements.

Option Testing

Option A – Mixed Use Development (Residential and Employment) of the Eastern Site

Option A is recognised as the closest ‘fit’ to the land use mix proposed for the Eastern Site under Draft Policy S/RRA/CR. In terms of good placemaking, it is considered preferable to locate the proposed employment development closest to Melbourn Science Park (located immediately to the south of the Eastern Site) and as such the employment component in this scenario occupies the southern field. The residential component occupies the northern field, to the north of the retained hedgerow. Option A includes 1.76ha of employment land, which is considered the absolute minimum land requirement to accommodate 8,000sqm (GIA) of employment floorspace when taking into account the context of the Site and density precedents set by TTP and Melbourn Science Park.

Option A has been designed to accommodate on-site delivery of BNG, open space, green and blue infrastructure (including SuDS features).

Taking account of the above, there only remains a residential developable area of 2.4ha on the northern field. When applying a density of 30-35 dwellings per hectare (dph), which is based on a survey of existing residential development in Melbourn and considering the Eastern Site’s location on the village edge, this gives a yield of approximately 72-84 dwellings. Notably this is far below the quantum proposed in Draft Policy S/RRA/CR of 120 dwellings, which would require residential densities of circa 50 dph and is considered out of keeping with the character of Melbourn.

Option B – Residential Development of the Eastern Site

Option B removes the employment component and provides residential development only within the Eastern Site. Option B maintains the principles established in Option A of retaining established hedgerows across the Site and providing for the on-site delivery of BNG, green/blue infrastructure and SuDS alongside the incorporation of an appropriate density of 30–35 dph. This scenario results in a yield of 125-140 dwellings; this is broadly in accordance with the quantum of residential development anticipated under Draft Policy S/RRA/CR but would not provide any land for employment purposes.

Option C – Mixed Use Development (Residential and Employment) including the Eastern and Western Sites

Option C incorporates both the Eastern and Western Sites to achieve the development quantum envisioned under Draft Policy S/RRA/CR of both approximately 120 dwellings and 8,000sqm (GIA) employment floorspace. As identified under Option A, this quantum of development cannot be accommodated within the Eastern Site alone.

Vistry has both the Eastern and Western Sites under option agreement and advocates increasing the extent of the Draft Allocation Site so that there is sufficient land allocated to achieve the draft policy aspirations whilst ensuring that meaningful open spaces in the region of 7 ha can be provided. As a settlement, Melbourn has experienced an historic shortfall in the provision of accessible public open space ([South Cambs Recreation and Open Space Study, July](#)

2013). In the absence of updated evidence on this topic, the [Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework](#) indicates a continued shortfall in accessible greenspace in the village. Hence, Option C could additionally meaningfully contribute towards this strategic local need in addition to meeting the objectives of Draft Policy S/RRA/CR.

In similar vein to Option B, Option C proposes to accommodate all built residential form on the Eastern Site, including all supporting infrastructure. However, Option C then proposes to accommodate the employment provision – equating to approximately 8,000sqm (GIA) – on the Western Site. As indicated on the concept masterplan, this would provide primary access through the Eastern Site into the Western Site, with additional opportunities for permeability, connectivity and integration into Melbourn.

The concept masterplan accommodates the employment component provision closest to TTP, which subject to future design could take reference and inspiration from the TTP landscape-led approach.

We note that the Western Site has been promoted through the 2019 Call for Sites and was assessed within the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) (2025) (Site Reference 40489) and Sustainable Assessment (SA) (2025). The HELAA identified potential constraints relating to flood risk (part of the Western Site being located within Flood Zones 2 and 3) and landscape and visual impact.

Option C has been specifically developed to respond to these constraints and take account of the Site's environmental considerations and thus directly respond to the HELAA commentary and previous reasoning for discounting the Site:

- In terms of landscape impact, the concept masterplan accommodates all employment built form within the southern part of the Western Site, adjacent to TTP and significantly set back from the rural frontage to the north and west. It is envisaged that employment development on the Western Site would reflect the massing, heights and landscape-led approach of the TTP campus, which is considered to successfully integrate within its surrounding context. In addition, significant areas of open space and landscaping would aid in screening the employment development and filtering views to mitigate landscape and visual effects with the extensive area of open space to be provided to its north and a building line not extending as far northwards as the neighbouring TTP campus.
- In terms of flood risk, the concept masterplan restricts all built form from the areas of the Site that fall within Flood Zones 2 and 3 – again, following the approach at TTP. Furthermore, the inclusion of these areas within the Site provide the opportunity for a holistic approach to green and blue infrastructure provision whilst also offering the function of informal sizable open space and recreation routes.

It is considered that the inclusion of the Western Site delivers a significant number of additional benefits compared to just the Eastern Site in isolation, substantially improving the overall sustainability of this new community. In particular, these include landscape, green and blue infrastructure, public open space and recreation route benefits – along with improved permeability, integration and placemaking, whilst also facilitating the mixed-use development quantum that is envisaged under Draft Policy S/RRA/CR.

Summary and Conclusion

This Note has been prepared to be read alongside the capacity testing work set out in the attached Concept Framework Plans. Primarily this Note identifies that the quantum of development identified within Draft Policy S/RRA/CR cannot be accommodated within the Draft Allocation Site (Eastern Site) unless very high residential densities and tall buildings are taken forward. Evidence indicates limited demand for additional employment land in this location.

The three options assessed demonstrate the following:

- the Eastern Site (Draft Allocation Site S/RRA/CR) cannot accommodate the quantum of development envisaged under Draft Policy S/RRA/CR, with the inclusion of the employment element significantly reducing the number of dwellings that could be delivered;
- the Eastern Site can only deliver the quantum of residential development envisaged under Draft Policy S/RRA/CR if the employment element is excluded; and

- the Western Site comprises a suitable, available and achievable location to accommodate the employment uses envisaged within Draft Policy S/RRA/CR, whilst the Eastern Site delivers the residential use element. The environmental considerations of flood risk, landscape and visual effects associated with the Western Site can all be appropriately mitigated whilst also delivering significant public open space and recreation routes and meaningfully address the open space provision and recreational requirements of the village.


















A quantitative summary comparison of the three Options is set out in the table below:

	RESI AREA (HA)	UNITS MIN	UNITS MAX	DPH MIN	DPH MAX	EMPLOYMENT LAND (HA)	OPEN SPACE (HA)
Option A	2.4	72	84	30.0	35.0	1.76	1.91
Option B	4.17	125	140	30.0	33.6	0	1.9
Option C	4.17	125	140	30	33.6	2.3	7.16

We are of the view that Option C offers the best opportunity for placemaking, delivering a mixed use development that includes the full quantum of residential and employment uses envisaged in Draft Policy S/RRA/CR and additionally delivers significant open space and recreational value, improving integration with the village whilst responding to the rural fringe context via a landscape-led approach and providing land for ecology and biodiversity net gain on site.

APPENDICES: CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLANS



- KEY**
-  Red Line Boundary
 -  Residential Developable Area
 -  Residential Frontage
 -  Proposed Feature Building
 -  Vehicle Access
 -  Active Travel Access
 -  Primary Green Street
 -  Secondary Street
 -  Tertiary Street
 -  Existing Bus Stop
 -  Proposed Public Open Space & Biodiversity Zone
 -  Existing Flood Zones 2 & 3
 -  Proposed Play Area
 -  Proposed Recreational Path
 -  Melbourn Greenway
 -  Existing Hedge / Vegetation
 -  Proposed SuDS Feature

PLANNING ISSUE, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Rev.	Date	Details
1		

GENERAL
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All dimensions to be checked on site.
 This plan is to be read with all accompanying documentation.
 © Bidwells 2026

Vistry VISTRY
 Countryside House, The Drive, Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3AT



















BIDWELLS Masterplanning, Landscape & Assessment
 Bidwell House, Trumpington Road, Cambridge, CB2 9LD

LAND NORTH OF CAMBRIDGE ROAD, MELBOURN
 CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLAN - OPTION A

SITE 6.07 HA APPROX.	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPABLE 2.4 HA	DWELLINGS 72-84	OPPORTUNITY TO VARY DENSITY ACROSS SITE	EMPLOYMENT 1.76 HA	OPEN SPACE 1.91 HA
-----------------------------	---------------------------------------	------------------------	--	---------------------------	---------------------------

Bar Scale: NOT TO SCALE
 Project Phase: PLANNING Date: 27.05.2026
 Job Code: VISTRY - MELB DP
 OS License Number: 100017734
 Checked By: TB
 Drawing Number: MLA-MELB-A3-0201
 Revision:



- KEY**
-  Red Line Boundary
 -  Residential Developable Area
 -  Residential Frontage
 -  Proposed Feature Building
 -  Vehicle Access
 -  Active Travel Access
 -  Primary Green Street
 -  Secondary Street
 -  Tertiary Street
 -  Shared Route, Alongside Primary Green Street
 -  Existing Bus Stop
 -  Proposed Public Open Space & Biodiversity Zone
 -  Existing Flood Zones 2 & 3
 -  Proposed Play Area
 -  Proposed Recreational Path
 -  Melbourn Greenway
 -  Existing Hedge / Vegetation
 -  Proposed SuDS Feature

PLANNING ISSUE, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Rev.	Date.	Details.

GENERAL
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All dimensions to be checked on site.
 This plan is to be read with all accompanying documentation.
 © Bidwells 2026



Vistry VISTRY
 Countryside House, The Drive,
 Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3AT

BIDWELLS Masterplanning,
 Landscape & Assessment
 Bidwell House, Trumpington Road,
 Cambridge, CB2 9LD

LAND NORTH OF CAMBRIDGE ROAD, MELBOURN
 CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLAN - OPTION B

SITE 6.07 HA APPROX.	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPABLE 4.17 HA	DWELLINGS 125-140	OPPORTUNITY TO VARY DENSITY ACROSS SITE	OPEN SPACE 1.9 HA
-----------------------------	--	--------------------------	--	--------------------------

Bar Scale: NOT TO SCALE
 Project Phase: PLANNING
 Date: 27.05.2026
 Job Code: VISTRY - MELB
 Drawn By: DP
 OS License Number: 100017734
 Checked By: TB
 Drawing Number: MLA-MELB-A3-0202
 Revision:



- KEY**
- Red Line Boundary
 - Residential Developable Area
 - Residential Frontage
 - Proposed Feature Building
 - Employment Developable Area
 - Vehicle Access
 - Potential Employment Vehicular Access
 - Active Travel Access
 - Primary Green Street
 - Secondary Street
 - Tertiary Street
 - Shared Route, Alongside Primary Green Street
 - Existing Bus Stop
 - Proposed Public Open Space & Biodiversity Zone
 - Existing Flood Zones 2 & 3
 - Proposed Play Area
 - Proposed Recreational Path
 - Melbourn Greenway
 - Existing Hedge / Vegetation
 - Proposed SuDS Feature

PLANNING ISSUE, NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

Rev.	Date	Details

GENERAL
 Do not scale from this drawing.
 All dimensions to be checked on site.
 This plan is to be read with all accompanying documentation.
 © Bidwells 2026

Vistry VISTRY
 Countryside House, The Drive,
 Brentwood, Essex, CM13 3AT

BIDWELLS Masterplanning,
 Landscape & Assessment
 Bidwell House, Trumpington Road,
 Cambridge, CB2 9LD

LAND NORTH OF CAMBRIDGE ROAD, MELBOURN
 CONCEPT FRAMEWORK PLAN - OPTION C

SITE 13.63 ^{HA} APPROX.	RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPABLE 4.17 ^{HA}	DWELLINGS 125-140	OPPORTUNITY TO VARY DENSITY ACROSS SITE	EMPLOYMENT 2.30 ^{HA}	OPEN SPACE 7.16 ^{HA}
--	---	--------------------------	--	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

Bar Scale: NOT TO SCALE
 Project Phase: PLANNING
 Date: 27.05.2026

Job Code: VISTRY - MELB
 Drawn By: DP
 Checked By: TB

OS License Number: 100017734
 Drawing Number: MLA-MELB-A3-0203
 Revision: