



Cambridge Past, Present & Future
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Response to 26/00610/OUT: Outline planning application for up to 110 houses at land between Hinton Way and Mingle Lane

Cambridge Past, Present & Future is Cambridge's largest civic society. We are a charity run by local people who are passionate about where they live. We operate in the greater Cambridge area and working with our members, supporters and volunteers we:

- Are dedicated to protecting and enhancing the green setting of Cambridge for people and nature.
- Care about Cambridge and are an independent voice for quality of life in the strategic planning of Greater Cambridge.
- Are working to protect, celebrate and improve the important built heritage of the Cambridge area.
- Own and care for green spaces and historic buildings in and around the city for people and nature, including Wandlebury Country Park, Coton Countryside Reserve, Cambridge Leper Chapel & Barnwell Meadows, Bourn Windmill and Hinxtton Watermill.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future (CPPF) objects on the following grounds:

1. Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt

The application site is located entirely within the Cambridge Green Belt and outside the established development framework boundary. Under the **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) Policy S/4**, there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposal does not meet any of the "very special circumstances" required to justify such a departure from policy. Furthermore, while the applicant argues the site is "Grey Belt," CPPF maintains that it remains functional Green Belt land that serves to prevent the merger of settlements and preserve the setting of historic Cambridge.

2. Conflict with the Adopted and Emerging Local Plan

The site is not allocated for housing in the adopted 2018 Local Plan. Although it was initially considered in the "First Proposals" of the emerging Local Plan, it was explicitly excluded from the Draft Local Plan because the Council determined it was neither necessary nor appropriate to allocate additional sites within the Green Belt. Approving this speculative application would undermine the plan-led system and the Council's emerging spatial strategy.

3. Housing Land Supply

The applicant's argument that the Council lacks a five-year housing land supply is contested. Recent data indicates the Council can demonstrate a **5.6-year supply**, meaning the policies in the 2018 Local Plan are considered up to date and carry full weight. There is no "tilted balance" in favour of this development under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

4. Harm to Settlement Character

The proposal would significantly erode the character of Great Shelford, transforming it from a 'Rural Centre' into a suburban extension of Cambridge. This "nibbling" away at the Green Belt boundaries creates a precedent for further sprawl, leading to a loss of the distinct identity of the village.

5. Inadequate Biodiversity and Public Benefit

While the applicant proposes a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), CPPF considers this insufficient for a development of this scale on Green Belt land. To ensure genuine public benefit and to align with the higher standards expected in the Cambridge area. Furthermore, the proposal relies on off-site habitat units, which does not mitigate the direct loss of local natural space. Should permission be granted, we advocate for a minimum of 20% BNG, and for any off site units to be provided within the vicinity of the application site. The latter being in accordance with Stapleford & Great Shelford Neighbourhood Plan Policy S&GS 10.

We support the Wildlife Trust and Natural England in the issues and objections they raise.

Conclusion

This application represents speculative development on protected land that is not required to meet current housing targets. It is contrary to **Policies S/4 (Green Belt)** and **S/7 (Development Frameworks)**. We urge the Council to refuse this application to protect the integrity of the Green Belt and the character of Great Shelford.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer