

Greater Cambridge Share Planning Service

By Online Planning Register

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Cambridge Past, Present & Future  
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## **Response to 26/01016/OUT: Outline planning application for the erection of up to 80 dwellings at Land at Pendrick Close Coton**

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.

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Cambridge Past, Present and Future object to this proposal as it represents speculative development that is contrary to both adopted and emerging local planning strategies.

Our objection is based on the following grounds:

### **1. Inappropriate Development in the Green Belt:**

The application site is located outside the development framework boundary and within the Cambridge Green Belt. According to **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) Policy S/4**, there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development in these areas. The applicant's characterisation of the site as "Grey Belt" is contested by CPPF; we maintain that the land serves essential Green Belt purposes and that the proposal does not present the "very special circumstances" required for an exception.

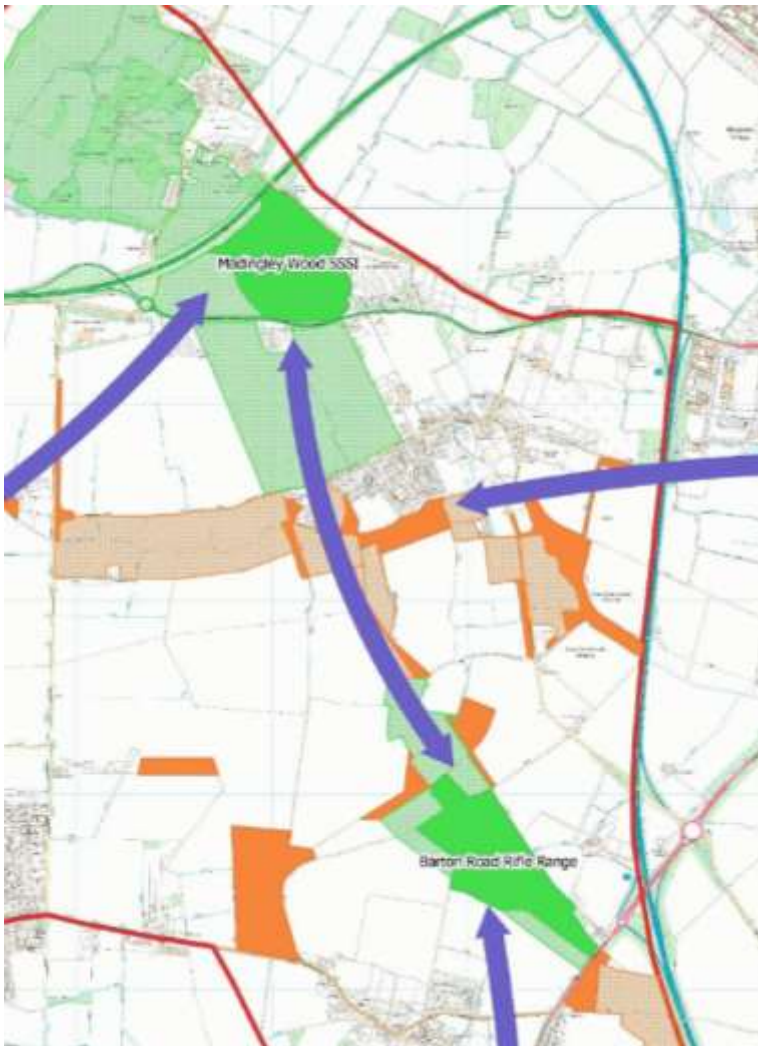
The size of the development will contribute only marginally to the supply of houses given the large scale developments that have already been approved in the district and therefore does not warrant the harm that would be caused to greenbelt countryside next to a nature reserve.

### **2. Conflict with Local Plan and Housing Supply:**

The site is not allocated for housing in either the adopted or the emerging Local Plan. While the applicant argues a lack of a five-year housing land supply, recent data confirms the Council can demonstrate a **5.6-year supply**. Consequently, the 2018 Local Plan policies are up-to-date, and there is no "tilted balance" or presumption in favour of this sustainable development as claimed by the applicant.

### **3. Impact on the Coton Countryside Reserve and Wildlife:**

The development site immediately adjoins the Coton Countryside Reserve to the south and a block of woodland to the west. Whilst we welcome the proposed southern buffer (which is needed), this area has been identified in the [Cambridge Nature Network](#) (p81) as having the opportunity for a north-south wildlife corridor that connects Maddingley Wood SSSI with the Rifle Range wood to the south.



We have significant concerns regarding the detrimental impact on wildlife habitat and the corridor, including:

- **Noise, light, and pet disturbance:** The introduction of 80 homes will significantly increase human-related wildlife disturbance to the woodland to the east and to Coton Reserve to the south. There is an insufficient buffer between the eastern woodland and the property gardens. The impact of the development would undermine the important north-south corridor function that this woodland provides.
- **Insufficient Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG):** The proposed 10% BNG is insufficient for a green field Green Belt site in a sensitive wildlife location; in-line with the emerging Local Plan and the aspiration for development around Cambridge to help deliver the Cambridge Nature Network, any development in this location should be required to provide for a minimum of **20% BNG** ideally on-site, but with off-site units being located within the vicinity.

#### 4. Harm to Settlement Character:

Coton is defined as a 'small village'. The scale of this development is entirely disproportionate to the existing settlement and would significantly harm its rural character.

**5. Access and Highway Safety** The site is served by a single point of access along a narrow road. All vehicles will have to travel along High Street which is the location of the school and the Comberton Greenway, meaning that vehicles will be in conflict with cyclists/pedestrians/children. This includes construction traffic and once the development is built out, new residents and vehicles servicing the new residents. This presents a safety concern in terms of traffic accidents.

It also means that if the High Street has to be closed for maintenance or an emergency there is no means of vehicle access to the new development.

### **Conclusion**

This application is a speculative proposal contrary to **Policies S/4 (Green Belt)** and **S/7 (Development Frameworks)** of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. It would cause significant harm to the Green Belt, local village character, and the Cambridge Nature Network. We urge the Council to refuse this application.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

*Sarah Nicholas*

Principal Planning Officer