



Cambridge Past, Present & Future
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Response to 26/02534/OUT: Development of up to 230,000 m² GIA of employment floorspace at Land East Of Junction 25 Of The A14 Huntingdon Road Bar Hill

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 Hinxton Watermill.

Cambridge Past, Present & Future acknowledges that this prominent countryside site forms part of the emerging allocation (Policy S/RRA/SHF) in the Submission Greater Cambridge Local Plan to meet demonstrated local and sub-regional employment needs. However, CPPF wishes to ensure that crucial policy, scale, transport and environmental requirements are addressed before permission is granted.

1. Prematurity, Policy Context, and Risk of National Logistics Hub Use

The applicant asserts that existing restrictive employment policies within the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) are out of date, relying heavily on market reports and Policy S/12 (Phasing, Delivery and Monitoring) to justify early release. CPPF is concerned about bypassing the statutory Local Plan process.

While the site is identified under emerging Policy S/RRA/SHF, the Regulation 19 Local Plan has only recently been published and has not yet undergone public consultation or independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate and therefore only has limited weight as a material consideration. CPPF is keen to ensure that this site delivers what this policy intends i.e. restricting the site to meeting demand for local warehousing and logistics and manufacturing and offer sustainable last-mile delivery and servicing opportunities. It is important that these key policy parameters are formally tested at Inquiry so that the site does not become a national distribution hub.

Allowing a speculative outline application of up to 230,000 m² GIA with building heights reaching up to 21.5 metres risks circumventing adopted Policy E/11 (Large Scale Warehousing and Distribution), which explicitly restricts large-scale regional and national distribution hubs. This location must serve Greater Cambridge's sub-regional economy and local employment rather than expanding into an unrestricted regional distribution hub. We urge the Council not to compromise on these restrictive conditions prior to the Local Plan examination.

Should officers consider that there is justification to recommend approval, we raise the following points for consideration.

2. Requirement for Enforceable Masterplanning, Transport Mitigation, and Monitoring

Under the emerging Policy S/RRA/SHF part 22 (and aligned with adopted Policy HQ/1 and Policy TI/2), major allocations must deliver a comprehensive Masterplan, a Strategic and Local Transport Mitigation Plan, and a Traffic Management Plan prepared in coordination with the Local Planning Authority, Highway Authority, and National Highways.

To ensure the site does not operate as a national distribution hub over time, CPPF recommends that the Council require the applicant to commit to an Enforceable Monitoring Framework secured via Section 106 agreement / planning conditions. This framework must require periodic reporting on occupier profiles, unit sizes, freight traffic patterns, and servicing activities to demonstrate ongoing compliance with sub-regional delivery objectives.

3. Active Travel Connections and Active Travel Opportunities

CPPF welcomes the proposal's active travel ambitions but notes critical existing deficiencies in active travel links to Cambridge City, particularly regarding compliance with Policy TI/2 (Planning for Sustainable Travel).

While a cycleway runs alongside the A14, its connection into Cambridge breaks down at the bridge over the A14 near Girton College. Cyclists are currently set down near a public footpath where cycling is legally prohibited and physically unsuitable. While adjacent proposals near Girton College may upgrade sections toward Eddington, a gap of approximately 100–150 metres of narrow roadway remains unsurfaced for safe cycling.

CPPF urges the Council to view this application as a positive opportunity to secure developer contributions to deliver a fully integrated, continuous, and high-quality cycle link between the site and Huntingdon Road.

4. Landscape Buffering and Tree Maturity Requirements

The development occupies a prominent countryside position on the Fen-Edge, presenting potential visual impacts on surrounding landscape settings and nearby historic context (Policy NH/14 and Policy HQ/1). To adequately mitigate the visual scale of structures up to 21.5m in height, landscape screening must be designed with sufficient breadth.

CPPF recommends that all structural landscape buffer planting—both around the site perimeter and along internal green corridors separating development zones—must adhere to a strict minimum width of 30 metres. Large forest-scale trees required to visually break up large industrial footprints require mature canopy spreads of up to 30 metres; a buffer narrower than 30m will prevent trees from reaching full maturity and fail to achieve long-term screening objectives.

5. Conclusion and Key Conditions Requested

In conclusion, CPPF requests that the following requirements are fully secured:

- Sub-regional Restriction & Monitoring: Enforceable legal restrictions and a long-term Monitoring Framework ensuring the site functions exclusively for local/sub-regional servicing and "last-mile" delivery.
- Active Travel Infrastructure: Planning conditions securing off-site active travel infrastructure improvements ensuring high quality routes connecting the site into Cambridge.
- Landscape Buffers: A condition stipulating a minimum 30-metre width for all perimeter and internal green corridor landscape buffers.

I trust that you will take our comments into consideration.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Nicholas

Principal Planning Officer