

Greater Cambridge Partnership

CAMBRIDGE EASTERN ACCESS

Green Belt Option Assessment

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APPENDIX 1 - PROPOSED SCHEME 'AREA OF SEARCH'

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INTRODUCTION 1.

1.1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1.1. WSP UK Ltd (WSP) has been commissioned by the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) to provide support to Phase A of the Cambridge Eastern Access (CEA) Project, comprising improvements to Newmarket Road (Elizabeth Way to Airport Way) and the relocation of Newmarket Road Park and Ride (P&R) (herein as the Proposed Scheme).
- WSP Landscape have been commissioned to produce a Green Belt Option Assessment to provide 1.1.2. an assessment of the development of a P&R facility on the 5 no. short listed sites identified in the 'Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report' (May 2022), to consider potential conflicts with the Green Belt purposes contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)¹ 2021 and the relevant local development plan (The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (SCLP)2).
- 1.1.3. WSP have prepared the 'Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report' (May 2022) that identifies an 'Area of Search' for the Proposed Scheme. This report concludes that the Proposed Scheme will require a Green Belt location to achieve its objectives and demonstrates compliance with the national policy test on the requirement for a Green Belt location as set out in the NPPF.
- 1.1.4. This Green Belt Option Assessment considers the comparable potential conflicts with the purposes of the Green Belt (national and local planning policy) as a consequence of a new P&R facility located at each of the 5 no. short-listed site options. The assessment provides information to allow an informed decision to be made on a final site option for the P&R site as part of the MCAF process.
- Within the 'Area of Search' identified in the 'Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and 1.1.5. Appraisal Report' (May 2022), a long list of 12 potential P&R site locations were identified. A proportionate appraisal was undertaken to discount locations that were too small, restricted by adopted Local Plan planning policies or located in close proximity to sensitive environmental receptors. This sift resulted in the short list of 5 no. potential P&R site. A multi-criteria appraisal (MCAF) of the remaining sites was then undertaken using publicly available data. This Green Belt Option Assessment forms part of the MCAF with its findings to be considered as part of the wider findings of the MCAF.
- 1.1.6. This Green Belt Option assessment is limited at this stage to highlighting potential conflicts with the purposes of the Green Belt (national and local planning policy) but does not address the national policy test on the issue of 'openness' that would require detailed site survey data and a more mature level of design for a P&R facility. This further assessment should be undertaken at the next stage of design when a preferred option(s) has been arrived at and would accompany any future application for planning permission.
- 1.1.7. This report should be read in conjunction with the Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report (May 2022) and the Planning Policy Appraisal & Consenting Report (December 2021) prepared by WSP on behalf of the GCP in respect of the CEA Project.

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2021, National Planning Policy Framework

² South Cambridgeshire Council, 2018, Local Plan



1.2. STRUCTURE OF ASSESSMENT

- 1.2.1. The remainder of this assessment is structured as follows:
 - Section 2 includes a summary of the Project and Proposed Scheme with the relevant site options.
 - Section 3 provides the wider environmental context;
 - Section 4 provides a detailed Green Belt policy context for the site options;
 - Section 5 sets out the need for a Green Belt Option Assessment and a methodology for same;
 - Section 6 provides the findings of assessment considering potential conflicts with the Green Belt purposes as set out in the policy context; and
 - Section 7 provides a summary of the findings.



2. THE PROJECT AND PROPOSED SCHEME

2.1. THE CEA PROJECT

- 2.1.1. The CEA Project is comprised of two elements:
 - Improvements to the existing Newmarket Road; and
 - The relocation of the existing Newmarket P&R (The Proposed Scheme).
- 2.1.2. This Green Belt Option Assessment considers only the relocation of the existing Newmarket P&R (the Proposed Scheme) as the improvements to the existing Newmarket Road will be located outside of the designated Green Belt.

2.2. THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 2.2.1. The Proposed Scheme proposes the relocation of the existing Newmarket P&R site, that is located on the A1303 Newmarket Road, approximately 625 metres west of the Airport Way junction. The existing site forms one of five existing P&R sites located on key radial routes into Cambridge to intercept movements from the north, south, east and west of the city respectively.
- 2.2.2. GCP are seeking to expand provision of the existing Newmarket P&R site to a 2,000 space facility along the A1303 Newmarket Road corridor, in the general area between Airport Way and Junction 35 of the A14. To facilitate this increased provision a relocation of the P&R site is required.
- 2.2.3. To inform the site identification process a high-level specification for the proposed P&R facility was provided by the GCP. The key components of the relocated P&R facility are:
 - Surface car parking for up to 2,000 cars (which will include allocated spaces for disabled, parent and child and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging spaces);
 - A bus waiting, pick-up and drop-off zone;
 - Site access junction(s) and associated bus and vehicle access roads;
 - A single storey P&R building to provide a waiting area and welfare facilities;
 - Space for cycle parking and cycle lockers;
 - Landscaping and screen planting for visual mitigation; and
 - Sustainable Drainage System.
- 2.2.4. Considering these key components, WSP has estimated that the minimum site size for the relocated P&R facility is between **5.0 and 5.5 hectares**.
- 2.2.5. The Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report (WSP May 2022) has identified 12 no. potential site options that could achieve the objectives of the Proposed Scheme.).
- 2.2.6. The 'Area of Search' for the Proposed Scheme (see Appendix 1) is situated to the east of Airport Way covering several sites south of Newmarket Road, between High Ditch Road and the A14, and further east, north of the A14. The potential to expand the existing Newmarket P&R is also considered as part of the Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report (WSP May 2022).
- 2.2.7. This long list was refined through the noted MCAF process down to a short list of 5 no. options. Noting the objectives and the resulting 'Area of Search' these are all located within the designated Green Belt around Cambridge (see Appendix 2).
- 2.2.8. Each of the 5 no. short listed sites context is described in more detail in Section 6 below.



3. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

- 3.1.1. As noted all 5 no. short listed sites are located within the designated Green Belt.
- 3.1.2. There are no sites designated under National landscape designations (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty etc.) within the 'Area of Search' or 1km buffer of same.
- 3.1.3. A full set of environmental baseline maps are provided in Appendix E of the 'Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report' (WSP May 2022) with these considered further within the MCAF process.
- 3.1.4. A high-level summary of the environmental constraints within the Area of Search using a 1km buffer is provided below where they are considered pertinent to the Green Belt Option Assessment, notably peoples enjoyment and use thereof.

3.2. STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES AND ASSETS

ECOLOGY

3.2.1. Wilbraham Fens Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is also located within the Area of Search to the south of Newmarket Road and the A14.

HERITAGE

- 3.2.2. There are multiple listed buildings within Area of Search and within the 1km buffer zone. These predominantly comprise Grade II listed buildings, however there are also several Grade II* listed buildings present.
- 3.2.3. One scheduled monument is present within the 1km buffer zone the Moated site at Manor Farm (reference: 1019180) approximately 0.9km south of the Area of Search.

WATER

3.2.4. A number of areas of high flood risk (Flood Zones 2 and 3) are noted to bisect the Area of Search.

3.3. NON-STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES AND ASSETS

ECOLOGY (INCLUDING ARBORICULTURE)

3.3.1. There is no ancient woodland within the 1km buffer zone, however, a number of Priority Habitat Inventory 'main habitats' are present including Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, Deciduous woodland, and Traditional orchard. Apart from four small areas of deciduous woodland along the northern part of the P2 Site, the P&R sites do not intersect any of these areas.

HERITAGE

3.3.2. There are no Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the Area of Search and the 1km buffer zone.

3.4. OTHER

CYCLEWAYS

3.4.1. According to the online National Cycleway Network OS map, Sustrans route 51 (long-distance traffic free route on the National Cycle Network) runs east-west through the CEA P&R Area of Search.



PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

- 3.4.2. Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) which run through the CEA P&R Area of Search are listed below:
 - 229/3 Path Number 3 (footpath);
 - 229/6 Path Number 6 (footpath);
 - 218/1 Path Number 1 (footpath);
 - 218/2 Path Number 2 (footpath);
 - 218/12 Path Number 12 (footpath);
 - 95/15 Path Number 15 (footpath);
 - 260/6 Path Number 6 (bridleway);
 - 85/9 Path Number 9 (footpath); and
 - 85/10 Path Number 10 (footpath).



4. GREEN BELT PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY – GREEN BELT

THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (2021)

- 4.1.1. Government policy on the Green Belt is set out in Chapter 13 of the NPPF 2021 *Protecting Green Belt Land*.
- 4.1.2. Paragraph 137 of the NPPF 2021 states that "the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence".
- 4.1.3. This is elaborated in NPPF 2021 paragraph 138, which states that Green Belts serve five purposes, as set out below:
 - 1. To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - 2. To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - 3. To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - 4. To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - 5. To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 4.1.4. Paragraph 147 of the NPPF 2021 states that 'inappropriate development' is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in <u>very special circumstances</u>.
- 4.1.5. One of the key paragraphs to consider in relation to the 'appropriateness' of development is Paragraph 150 of the NPPF 2021 which states the following:
 - 'Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are...:
 - (c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location'.
- 4.1.6. The proposed development of a P&R facility, as local transport infrastructure may therefore be considered to fall within the list of developments within paragraph 150 of the NPPF 2021, provided that it can be considered to:
 - 1. Demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location,
 - 2. Preserves the openness of Green Belt and
 - 3. Does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE

4.1.7. In addition, the National Planning Practice Guidance, which is a web based resource bringing together all planning guidance into one place, is a relevant consideration. In particular, at Paragraph: 002 Reference ID: 64-002-20190722 PPG states that:

'Where it has been demonstrated that it is necessary to release Green Belt land for development, strategic policy-making authorities should set out policies for compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of the remaining Green Belt land. These may be informed by supporting evidence of landscape, biodiversity or recreational needs and opportunities including those set out in local strategies, and could for instance include:



- new or enhanced green infrastructure;
- woodland planting;
- landscape and visual enhancements (beyond those needed to mitigate the immediate impacts of the proposal);
- improvements to biodiversity, habitat connectivity and natural capital;
- new or enhanced walking and cycle routes; and
- improved access to new, enhanced or existing recreational and playing field provision'.

SURPASSED NATIONAL PLANNING PRACTICE GUIDANCE (PPG 2)

- 4.1.8. There have been several recent appeal decisions relating to the interpretation of 'inappropriate development' within the Green Belt and the tests that should be applied. These are considered relevant to whether the Proposed Scheme can be considered to be 'not inappropriate' development within the Green Belt or whether 'Very Special Circumstances' are required to apply. A wider summary of the relevant appeal decisions is provided in Appendix 3 of WSP's Cambridge Eastern Access Planning Policy Appraisal & Consenting Report (December 2021).
- 4.1.9. Notable is the Supreme Court decision on the Samuel Smith Case, where the Judge cited the relevance of the now surpassed Planning Practice Guidance notes (PPG) 2 in relation to the development of a P&R facility in the Green Belt.
- 4.1.10. Importantly, in relation to the interpretation of paragraphs 89-90 (NPPF 2012) (now paragraphs 149 to 150 of the 2021 NPPF), the Supreme Court judgement references that the NPPF replace a rather fuller statement of policy for the "Control of Development" in section 3 of PPG 2³. It is stated in the Supreme Court judgement that section 3 of PPG 2 covers substantially the same ground respectively as the NPPF (paragraphs 149 and 150 of the NPPF 2021), but in rather fuller terms. PPG 2 is therefore a useful guide to testing any future development of a P&R site within the search area.
- 4.1.11. In this regard paragraph 3.17 of PPG 2 sets out 5 tests, whereby P&R development is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The section states:

'The countryside immediately around urban areas will often be the preferred location for park and ride schemes. In many instances, such land may be designated as Green Belt. The Government's commitment to maintaining the openness of the Green Belt means that when seeking to locate park and ride development, non-Green Belt alternatives should be investigated first. However, there may be cases where a Green Belt location is the most sustainable of the available options. Park and ride development is not inappropriate in Green Belts, provided that:

- a thorough and comprehensive assessment of potential sites has been carried out, including both non-Green Belt and, if appropriate, other Green Belt locations, having regard to sustainable development objectives, and the need to be flexible about size and layout;
- the assessment establishes that the proposed green belt site is the most sustainable option taking account of all relevant factors including travel impacts;
- the scheme will not seriously compromise the purposes of including land in Green Belts, as set out in paragraph 1.5 (of PPG 2);
- the proposal is contained within the local transport plan (or in Greater London the Local Implementation Plan) and based on a thorough assessment of travel impacts; and

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³ http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/pdf/PG05 PlanningPolicyGuidance2-GreenBelts.pdf



 new or re-used buildings are included within the development proposal only for essential facilities associated with the operation of the park and ride scheme'

4.2. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

- 4.2.1. All 5 no. short listed options are located within the administrative area of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 4.2.2. Any application for planning permission would be decided in line with the National Planning policies above and those of the adopted development plan. The adopted development plan for South Cambridgeshire provides the local land use policies which planning applications in South Cambridgeshire are determined against. This comprises the following relevant documents:
 - South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018);
 - Cambridge East Area Action Plan (2008) (excluding CE/3 and CE/35 which are replaced by Local Plan Policy 13);
 - Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021); and
 - Adopted Policies Map (2018).

RELEVANT LOCAL GREEN BELT PLANNING POLICY

- 4.2.3. In addition to the five purposes set out in paragraph 138 of the NPPF 2021, local planning policy also states that the fundamental aim of the Green Belt (SCLP Policy S/4) is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and a specific function of some Green Belts, such as the one around Cambridge, is to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. This policy sets out the established purposes of the Green Belt as follows:
 - 1. Preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre;
 - 2. Maintain and enhance the quality of its setting; and
 - 3. Prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city.
- 4.2.4. Section 2.31 of the local plan states that:

'A number of factors define the special character of Cambridge and it's setting, which include:

- Key views of Cambridge from the surrounding countryside;
- A soft green edge to the city;
- A distinctive urban edge;
- Green corridors penetrating into the city;
- Designated sites and other features contributing positively to the character of the landscape setting; The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages; and
- A landscape that retains a strong rural character'.
- 4.2.5. SCLP Policy NH/8 provides a further requirement for new development in the Green Belt in addition to SCLP Policy S/4. It states that:
 - Any development proposals within the Green Belt must be located and designed so that they do not have an adverse effect on the rural character and openness of the Green Belt.



- Where development is permitted, landscaping conditions, together with a requirement that any
 planting is adequately maintained, will be attached to any planning permission in order to ensure
 that the impact on the Green Belt is mitigated.
- Development on the edges of settlements which are surrounded by the Green Belt must include careful landscaping and design measures of a high quality.
- 4.2.6. In addition to the national policy considerations above, this Green Belt Option Assessment considers these Local polices further.



5. GREEN BELT OPTION ASSESSMENT AND METHODOLOGY

5.1. NEED FOR A GREEN BELT OPTION ASSESSMENT

- 5.1.1. The need to undertake a Green Belt Option Assessment to inform the development of the Proposed Scheme is driven by the 'Tests' set out in national and local planning policy as set out above.
- 5.1.2. The importance of undertaking a thorough site selection process and a Green Belt Option Assessment in line with the above national and local policy (with reference to the previous PPG 2 guidance) is highlighted by an existing application by Cambridgeshire County Council for planning permission for the Cambridge South West Travel Hub in June 2021 that consists of a new P&R site within the Cambridge Green Belt (Planning Ref: CCC/20/040/FUL). It is understood that this application may be called in for a decision by the Secretary of State (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) based on its location within the Green Belt and the resulting harm to the Green Belt. This application should be kept under review noting the similarity of use and issues with Green Belt location.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK - GREEN BELT TESTS

5.1.3. The Proposed Scheme includes the development of a P&R facility, that is considered to be a form of development that is 'not inappropriate' in the Green Belt as set out in paragraph 150 of the NPPF 2021 – part c) which states

'local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location'.

5.1.4. This is however subject to the three national policy tests as set out below.

National Policy Test 1

5.1.5. Paragraph 150 of the NPPF 2021 firstly requires that the requirement for a Green Belt location is demonstrated i.e. sites located outside of the Green Belt have been ruled out first.

National Policy Tests 2 and 3

- 5.1.6. Once the requirement for a location within Green Belt has been demonstrated as set out in national policy test 1, Paragraph 150 of NPPF 2021 goes on to require that any Proposed Scheme:
 - 2. Preserves the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - 3. Demonstrates that it does not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The purposes of including land within the Green Belt are those set out in paragraph 138 of the NPPF 2021, shown here in Section 4.1.3.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY GREEN BELT TESTS

5.1.7. The 'Area of Search' is located to the south of Newmarket Road and east of Airport Way and lies wholly within the administrative are of South Cambridgeshire District Council. A further set of local policy tests as set out in the SCLP (Policy S/4 and Policy NH/8) shown here in Sections 4.2.3 to 4.2.6.



5.2. GREEN BELT OPTION ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

5.2.1. This Green Belt Option Assessment has been undertaken to assess the potential impacts of the 5 no. short listed sites against the above national and local planning policy tests. This section sets out the methodology that was used to undertake the assessment.

NATIONAL POLICY TEST 1 – REQUIREMENT FOR A GREEN BELT LOCATION

- 5.2.2. The requirement for the potential location of the Proposed Scheme within the Green Belt has been assessed in the 'Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report' (See section 5.5 of that report for the outcome of the site selection process).
- 5.2.3. In summary, for the Proposed Scheme, to be attractive it needs to achieve the objectives of the scheme that in summary is (1. to be easily accessible from the strategic road network and (2. For the onward journey time by P&R bus or active travel modes to be attractive when combined with the overall site access journey time.
- 5.2.4. The analysis presented in Section 5 of the 'Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report' (May 2022) based on the objectives of the Proposed Scheme, has demonstrated that a Green Belt location is required.
- 5.2.5. The report then identified an initial long list of sites within the 'Area of Search' utilising aerial mapping in GIS, with the broad site locations identified in an initial workshop attended by the project team and the GCP. This resulted in a long list of 12 no. broad locations for the Proposed Scheme (numbered as sites P1 to P12). This initial long list was then appraised in more detail using a bespoke MCAF, the outcome of which was a short list of 5 no. sites.

NATIONAL POLICY TEST 2 – PRESERVATION OF OPENNESS

- 5.2.6. The term 'openness' as it relates to the Green Belt relates to lack of 'inappropriate built development' rather than to visual openness; thus, both undeveloped land which is screened from view by landscape elements (for example tree cover) and development which is not considered 'inappropriate', are still 'open' in Green Belt terms. Visual openness is however still relevant when considering the degree of distinction between an urban area and the wider countryside.
- 5.2.7. In the absence of a more detailed survey data for each of the 5 no. short listed sites (existing site levels/topography, field structure, layout and boundary treatments, onsite trees, hedgerows and vegetation or sensitive visual viewpoints) and more mature design information for the Proposed Scheme (final layouts of internal road network and access points as well as ancillary infrastructure and importantly buildings), it is considered too early provide definite commentary on any design options preserving the openness of the Green Belt at the short listed sites.
- 5.2.8. It would be considered that elements of the Proposed Scheme, notably that of any buildings or boundary treatments related to the P&R may impact the openness of the land within the Area of Search. Careful consideration would therefore need to be given to the development of a sympathetic site layout that responds to the site specific conditions and that a robust landscaping (including maintenance) and boundary strategy are developed to ensure the policy requirements are met.
- 5.2.9. It is advised that a detailed assessment of the impact on openness is undertaken when further survey detail and design options for layouts are developed for the preferred option(s) and that a site visit is undertaken.



NATIONAL POLICY TEST 3 - CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND WITHIN THE GREEN BELT

- 5.2.10. The focus of this assessment is therefore to assess the potential for each of the 5 no. short listed sites and their redevelopment as a P&R facility to conflict with the Green Belt purposes
- 5.2.11. The identification of potential conflicts with purposes is underpinned by an assessment of the contribution that the Sites make to those purposes. Criteria were defined for the assessment of contribution to each of the purposes.
- 5.2.12. The assessment methodology employs a multi-step process, initially focusing on the Site, identifying how relevant each Site is to the Green Belt purposes. The relevance of a Site to the Green Belt purposes considered factors specific to each Green Belt purpose that affect the extent to which each purpose is 'relevant' to any given location.
- 5.2.13. Having considered in general terms the variations in the relevance of each of the Green Belt purpose, the next step in the assessment process identifies more localised variations in the relationship between the Sites and development within Cambridge or surrounding settlement.
- 5.2.14. The process considers the site location in relation to Cambridge City and surrounding settlements, its character, visibility, and landform, as well as existing development near the site. The contribution of the Sites to each Green Belt purpose is assessed based on a combination of relevance and distinction using professional judgement to determine an overall contribution.
- 5.2.15. The variation in conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt are assessed by considering the contribution of each of the 5 no. short listed sites to the purposes considering the scale, location and nature of a P&R facility at each Site. A stronger contribution to multiple purposes, a very strong level of distinction from nearby settlement (resulting in a particular strong contribution to one or more purposes) and the impact from a P&R facility within each Site will typically increase potential conflicts, whilst a weaker contribution and lower impact will reduce conflicts.
- 5.2.16. Potential conflicts with the purposes of the Green Belt were rated using a five-point scale ranging from very high to low potential conflicts, with very high potential conflicts associated with a significant contribution to Green Belt purposes combined with a development of a significant scale, location, and nature. The five-point scale is shown below in Figure 5:1.



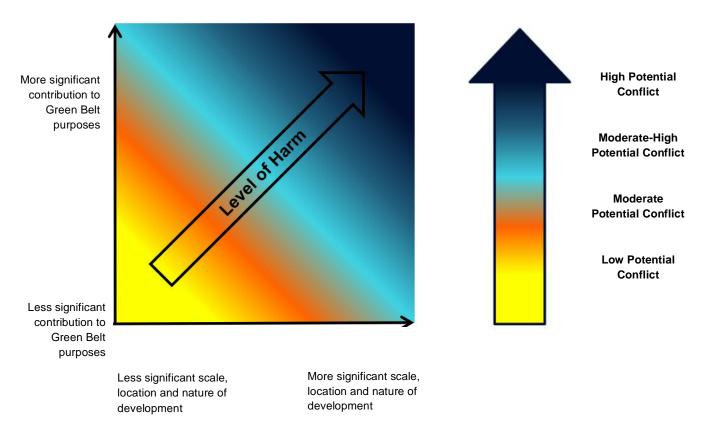


Figure 5:1: Rating of Potential Conflicts

- 5.2.17. It should be stressed that, rather than simply combining loss of contribution ratings and the impact of a P&R facility ratings in a mechanical/mathematical way, professional judgement was used in each individual case to consider and evaluate how much weight to attach to each contributing element.
- 5.2.18. The assessment assumes a P&R facility that would require approximately 5.5ha of land with appropriate landscape mitigation opportunities included to limit intervisibility and integrate with the surrounding landscape. It is also assumed that all remaining land within each Site would be retained as 'open'.
- 5.2.19. For the purposes of this assessment consideration is limited to the conflict that a P&R facility would have on the Green Belt purposes as whole with specific impacts on adjacent areas of Green Belt not considered noting the lack of design detail in terms of layouts etc.



6. ASSESSMENT OF SHORT LISTED SITES

6.1. SITE P1 - EAST OF AIRPORT WAY

- 6.1.1. This Site comprises approximately 16 hectares of land that is bound to the east by Airport Way and to the north by Newmarket Road (see Figure 6:1). Site P1 comprises predominately greenfield agricultural land to the north of the village of Teversham and the southern part of the Site is covered by SCDC Local Plan Policy CE/21(1) Country Park. There are no environmental designations within or within close proximity to the Site.
- 6.1.2. The Site extends across two existing fields. The field to the north is bound on all sides by hedgerow and mature trees limiting intervisibility with the surrounding area. The field to the south is also bound be hedgerow and trees but to a lesser extent and has moderate visibility from the south and west. The Site has been assessed as part of the MCAF meeting the size requirements for the P&R facility and is currently understood to be available (owned by Marshalls).



Figure 6:1: Park and Ride Site P1

6.1.3. There is no development of a scale, character or form that has an impact on Green Belt openness at this location and that while the landform and land cover within the parcel do not create any additional distinction from Teversham settlement there is, overall, strong distinction between the parcel and the settlement area.



- 6.1.4. The land is open and adjacent to the main urban area of Cambridge, which is due to develop further with the Cambridge Airport strategic development. It has a strong distinction in character, however, from the urban area, which increases the extent to which development would be perceived as diminishing Cambridge's compact character. Overall, the Site is considered to make a significant contribution to NPPF Purpose 1 (To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas), 3 (To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment), and 5 (To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 1 (To preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre).
- 6.1.5. The land forms part of the wider rural landscape lying to the east of the city. Intervisibility with the site is anticipated in some slightly elevated distant views from the east and north-east (including from Little Wilbraham Road and Newmarket Road). In these views several landmarks are visible in the distance including St John's Chapel, All Saints Jesus Lane, the University Library, and the Roman Catholic Church spire, albeit beyond large scale development on the edge of the city. The land also contributes to the rural setting experienced when approaching Cambridge from the east along the A1303 (Newmarket Road). The Site has some visual connection with the Church of All Saints (Grade II* listed building) Teversham, which is a prominent landmark within the historic part of the village. As such the land is seen to allow an appreciation of the rural character and setting of Teversham, which in turn contributes to the wider rural setting of Cambridge. Overall, the Site is considered to make a moderate contribution to NPPF Purpose 4 (To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 2 (To maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting).
- 6.1.6. The land is in a narrow gap that maintains clear separation between Cambridge and Teversham. There is strong distinction between the Site and the urban area, which increases the extent to which development would be perceived as narrowing the gap. Overall, the Site makes a significant contribution to NPPF Purpose 2 (To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 3 (To prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city).
- 6.1.7. The P&R will essentially be an area of hardstanding of approximately 5.5 ha within the P1 subset area to the northern end the Site within the northern field boundary. Access is possible off Airport Way or Newmarket Road. Any remaining land, approximately two thirds of the Site, would be retained as open land. It is assumed that existing vegetation would be retained where possible and that appropriate mitigation will be included in the form of boundary and internal landscape planting so that intervisibility will be limited to the surrounding areas.
- 6.1.8. The Site makes a significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character, a moderate contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a significant contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes, considered alongside the scale and nature of a P&R, result in the potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt at Site option P1 as **Moderate-High**.

6.2. SITE P2 - SOUTH OF NEWMARKET ROAD

6.2.1. This Site comprises approximately 28 hectares of land that is bounded to the north by Newmarket Road and the west by Site P1 (See Figure 6:2). The Site is predominately greenfield agricultural



land with the eastern boundary located near Wilbraham Fens SSSI. Four small areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland are located on the northern boundary of the site. There are no other designations within the Site. There is mature boundary vegetation on all sides including a belt of woodland visually separating the Site from Newmarket Road. This is interrupted by Longfield Farm at the centre of the Site. The Site is considered in the short list of identified P&R sites as it meets size requirements and is available (owned by Cambridgeshire County Council).



Figure 6:2: Park and Ride Site P2

- 6.2.2. The site character is of open farmland with no significant urbanising development. The area has strong distinction from any settlement within the Green Belt or Green Belt edge settlement. This is a result of the presence of strong boundary features, distance from any smaller settlement, and a lack of urbanising visual influences.
- 6.2.3. The Site is not closely associated with the built-up area of Cambridge and as such is likely to have limited to no contribution to NPPF Purpose 1 (To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas), 3 (To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment), and 5 (To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 1 to preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre.
- 6.2.4. Site P2 is open arable farmland that has a strong distinction from the edge of the urban area or any settlement, meaning it has a strong rural character. The Site is characteristic of the open low-lying fenland landscape situated to the north and east of Cambridge and features Wilbraham Fen SSSI to



the east. The Site also forms the intervening agricultural landscape visible within distant low-level views towards Cambridge from slightly elevated land in the east and northeast (including from the vicinity of Little Wilbraham Road and Newmarket Road), which allows the wider rural setting of the city to be appreciated. Overall Site P2 makes a moderate contribution to NPPF Purpose 4 (To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 2 (To maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting).

- 6.2.5. The entire parcel is considered to make at least a moderate (and generally higher) contribution to maintaining the separation between East Cambridge, Teversham, Stow-cum-Quy, Bottisham, Little Wilbraham and Fulbourn. Site P2, while still making a contribution to maintaining the separation, is considerably smaller in scale and as such development here would likely be less detrimental in the maintenance of this separation. Overall, the Site is considered to make a relatively limited contribution to NPPF Purpose 2 (To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another) and Cambridge Purpose 3 (To prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city).
- 6.2.6. The P&R will be an area of approximately 5.5 ha of hardstanding to the north of the Site with access off Newmarket Road. It is assumed that opportunities to mitigate any impact would be included in the site design with landscape planting to limit intervisibility with the surrounding areas. Any remaining land within the Site, approximately 23ha would be maintained as open arable land.
- 6.2.7. The Site makes no contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character, a moderate contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a relatively limited contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the Site result in a potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt at Site option P2 as **Moderate**.

6.3. SITE P3 - NORTH OF HIGH DITCH ROAD

6.3.1. This Site is located to the east of Cambridge (Barnwell) and to the northeast of the existing Cambridge P&R and comprises approximately 10 hectares of land that is bound to the north by the A14 and the south by High Ditch Road (see Figure 6:3). The Site comprises predominately greenfield agricultural land with boundary hedgerows providing some visual separation, particularly to the north and east. The Site boundary has excluded the CE/32 Cambridge Airport Safety Zones located to the west of the site. The Site is within the shortlist of P&R sites as it meets size requirements and is owned by a single private landowner. There are no designations within the site.



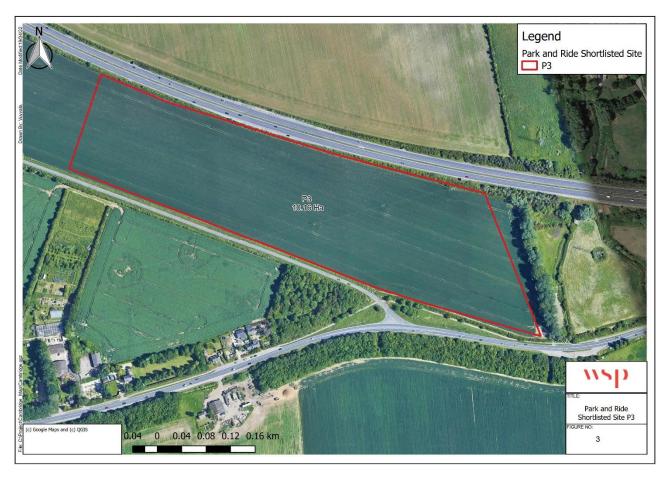


Figure 6:3: Park and Ride Site P3

- 6.3.2. There is no development within the Site of a scale, character or form that has a significant impact on Green Belt openness. The Site is also not contained by urban development and extends a significant distance into the rural setting to the east.
- 6.3.3. High Ditch Road and the associated hedgerows are considered a moderate boundary feature between the Site and Cambridge with neither the countryside nor the urban area dominating views. The landform is flat and open and landcover is restricted to the Site boundary. As such neither landform nor land cover within the Site create additional distinction from Cambridge and there is strong distinction between the Site and the urban area. Overall, the Site is considered to make a significant contribution to NPPF Purpose 1 (To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas), 3 (To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment), and 5 (To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 1 (To preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre).
- 6.3.4. The Site has a strong distinction from the edge of Cambridge (Barnwell), meaning it has a weak relationship with the urban area. It is also open and land use is not associated with the urban area, meaning it has a strong rural character. The Site also contributes to the rural setting experienced when approaching the wider city along the A14 from the east, creating positive perceptions of the city on arrival. Overall Site P3 makes a relatively significant contribution to NPPF Purpose 4 (To



- preserve the setting and special character of historic towns) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 2 (To maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting).
- 6.3.5. The Site lies in a moderate gap between Fen Ditton and Stow-cum-Quy, but the A14 and the A1303 Newmarket Road are significant connecting features that reduce perceived separation. There is strong distinction between the Site and the urban area, which increases the extent to which development would be perceived as narrowing the gap. Overall, the Site is considered to make a significant contribution to NPPF Purpose 2 (To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 3 (To prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city).
- 6.3.6. The P&R will be 5.5 ha, taking up approximately half of the eastern side of the Site. The western side of the site closest to Cambridge would be retained as open land. Intervisibility with the surrounding areas will be reduced where possible through retention of existing vegetation and mitigation planting.
- 6.3.7. The Site makes a significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character, a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a significant contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the Site result in a potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt at Site option P3 as **High**.

6.4. SITE P10 - NORTH OF A14 EAST

- 6.4.1. This Site comprises approximately 16 hectares of land that is bound to the north by Newmarket Road and to the south by the A14 (see Figure 6:4). The Site comprises predominately open greenfield agricultural land with boundary hedgerows providing some visual separation, particularly to the south from the A14. Wilbraham Fens SSSI is located near the southern boundary, separated by the A14, while two listed buildings are located near the northern boundary along Newmarket Road. There are no designations within the site. The boundary vegetation along Newmarket Road is low and interspersed, providing occasional filtered views through to the Site. There is no development of a scale, character or form that has an impact on Green Belt openness.
- 6.4.2. Sections of the northern boundary of the site are allocated as Local Green Space, Policy NH/12 in the South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan 2018. The Site is within the shortlist of site options as it meets size requirements, is available (owned by Cambridgeshire County Council) and only the northern boundary of the site covered by SCDC local Plan Policy NH/12 Local Green Space.





Figure 6:4: Park and Ride Site P10

- 6.4.3. There is a slight urbanising visual influence due to the location close to Stow-cum-Quy, however, the Site is not contained by development and extends from the any developed areas into the rural setting. The hedgerows to the north and Newmarket Road combine to create separation between the Site and the settlement and the landform, falling to the south within the Site, provides some additional distinction from Stow-cum-Quy.
- 6.4.4. While the Site is closely associated with the settlement of Stow-cum-Quy it is not close enough to the main urban area of Cambridge to be associated with it and therefore makes no contribution to NPPF Purpose 1 (To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas), 3 (To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment), and 5 (To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 1 (To preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre).
- 6.4.5. The Site is open farmland with a strong rural character and a strong distinction from the edge of Stow-cum-Quy. This contributes to the rural landscape setting experienced when approaching the wider city along the A14 and Newmarket Road from the east. The assessment notes the slightly elevated topography to the north and northeast of the Site (around Newmarket Road) which also affords some distant low-level views south-west towards Cambridge, albeit the views are generally of later development on the edge of the city in Barnwell and Cherry Hinton (including large scale development at Cambridge Airport). Overall, the parcel makes a relatively significant contribution to



- NPPF Purpose 4 (To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 2 (To maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting).
- 6.4.6. The Site is open and is separate to a small gap between Stow-cum-Quy and Bottisham that lacks any significant separating features. There is strong distinction between the Site and the Stow-cum-Quy settlement area, which increases the extent to which development would be perceived as narrowing the gap. Overall, the Site makes a relatively significant contribution to NPPF Purpose 2 (To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another) and Cambridge Purpose 3 (To prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city).
- 6.4.7. The P&R will be approximately 5.5 ha of the Site located to the west and is likely to have limited intervisibility with the surrounding areas due to existing and proposed mitigation planting. The remaining two thirds of the Site to the east would be retained as open land.
- 6.4.8. The Site makes no contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character. It does, however, make a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the site result in a potential conflict with purposes of the Green Belt at Site option P10 as **Moderate-High**.

6.5. SITE P11 - NORTH OF A14 WEST

6.5.1. This Site comprises approximately 37 hectares of land that is bound by Quy Waters to the west and north, and to the east by Stow-cum-Quy. The A14 road forms the southern edge (see Figure 6:5). The site comprises greenfield agricultural land with boundary vegetation and areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland located at the northern Site boundary. Sections of the south-eastern boundary of the site are allocated as Local Green Space, Policy NH/12 in the SCDC Local Plan. The Site is considered in the P&R site options shortlist as it meets size requirements, is available (not allocated for development) with only the south-eastern boundary of the Site covered by SCDC local Plan Policy NH/12 – Local Green Space.





Figure 6:5: Park and Ride Site P11

- 6.5.2. Land is open and there is no development of a scale, character or form that has an impact on Green Belt openness. Land extends a significant distance from Stow-cum-Quy and is not contained by any other development. However, the residential hedgerows to the east of the Site create little boundary separation between the Site and Stow-cum-Quy resulting in some urbanising visual influence. The landform and land cover within the Site do not create any additional distinction from Stow-cum-Quy. The land is closely associated with the settlement of Stow-cum-Quy; however, it is not close enough to the main urban area of Cambridge to be associated with it and therefore makes no contribution to NPPF Purpose 1 (To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas), 3 (To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment), and 5 (To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 1 (To preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre).
- 6.5.3. The Site has some relationship with the settlement area of Stow-cum-Quy and it comprises open farmland and therefore is rural in character. The land contains no features/aspects that contribute specifically to the quality of Cambridge's setting. Overall, the Site makes a moderate contribution to NPPF Purpose 4 (To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 2 (To maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge's setting).
- 6.5.4. Land is open and lies in a moderate gap between Stow-cum-Quy and Cambridge (Barnwell), but the A14 and the A1303 Newmarket Road are significant connecting features that reduce perceived separation. The Site has some relationship with the settlement area, but also a degree of distinction from it. Overall, the Site makes a relatively significant contribution to NPPF Purpose 2 (To prevent



- neighbouring towns merging into one another) and SCLPPS/4 Purpose 3 (To prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city).
- 6.5.5. The P&R will be approximately 5.5 ha of the Site located to the southeast and accessed from Church Road. It is likely to have limited intervisibility with the surrounding areas due to existing and proposed planting which would help the P&R to integrate into the landscape. The remaining approximately 32 ha of the Site to the west and north would be retained as open land.
- 6.5.6. The Site makes no contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character. It does, however, make a moderate contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a relatively significant contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the site result in a potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt at Site option P11 as **Moderate**.



7. SUMMARY

7.1.1. This assessment sets out and considers the national policy tests required to accompany applications for development that are considered not inappropriate subject to the following:

7.2. THE REQUIREMENT FOR A GREEN BELT LOCATION

7.2.1. WSP have prepared the 'Newmarket Road Park and Ride Site Selection and Appraisal Report' (May 2022) that identifies an 'Area of Search' for the Proposed Scheme. This report concludes that the Proposed Scheme will require a Green Belt location to achieve its objectives and demonstrates compliance with the national policy test on the requirement for a Green Belt location as set out in the NPPF.

7.3. THE PRESERVATION OF OPENNESS

7.3.1. In the absence of a more detailed survey data for each of the 5 no. short listed sites (existing site levels/topography, field structure, layout and boundary treatments, onsite trees, hedgerows and vegetation or sensitive visual viewpoints) and more mature design information for the Proposed Scheme (final layouts of internal road network and access points as well as ancillary infrastructure and importantly buildings), it is considered too early provide definite commentary on any design options preserving the openness of the Green Belt at the short listed sites.

It is advised that a detailed assessment of the impact on openness is undertaken when further survey detail and design options for layouts are developed for the preferred option(s) and that a site visit is undertaken.

7.4. CONFLICT WITH THE PURPOSES OF INCLUDING LAND WITHIN THE GREEN BELT

- 7.4.1. The five short-listed P&R Site options assessed have been considered in the context of their contribution to the NPPF and Cambridge Green Belt purposes (SCLPPS/4). The five sites vary considerably in size and as such their respective contribution to the Green Belt purposes reflect this. The Proposed Scheme, however, would be limited to approximately 5.5 ha irrespective of site location. It has also been assumed that the P&R, irrespective of site location would be appropriately mitigated with boundary and internal landscape planting. The assessment has considered the potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt for each site relative to the scale and nature of a P&R facility at these locations.
- 7.4.2. Site P1 is the Site closest to the edge of Cambridge. It is considered to make a significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character, a moderate contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a significant contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The scale of the P&R facility within this Site is relatively low, taking up approximately one third of the site within P1 subset. There is also significant existing vegetation, which is assumed would be retained and provide a visual buffer to the surrounding areas. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the site result in the potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt as **Moderate-high**.
- 7.4.3. Site P2 is a 28 ha area of land south of Newmarket Road and near Wilbraham Fens SSSI. It makes no contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character, a moderate contribution to



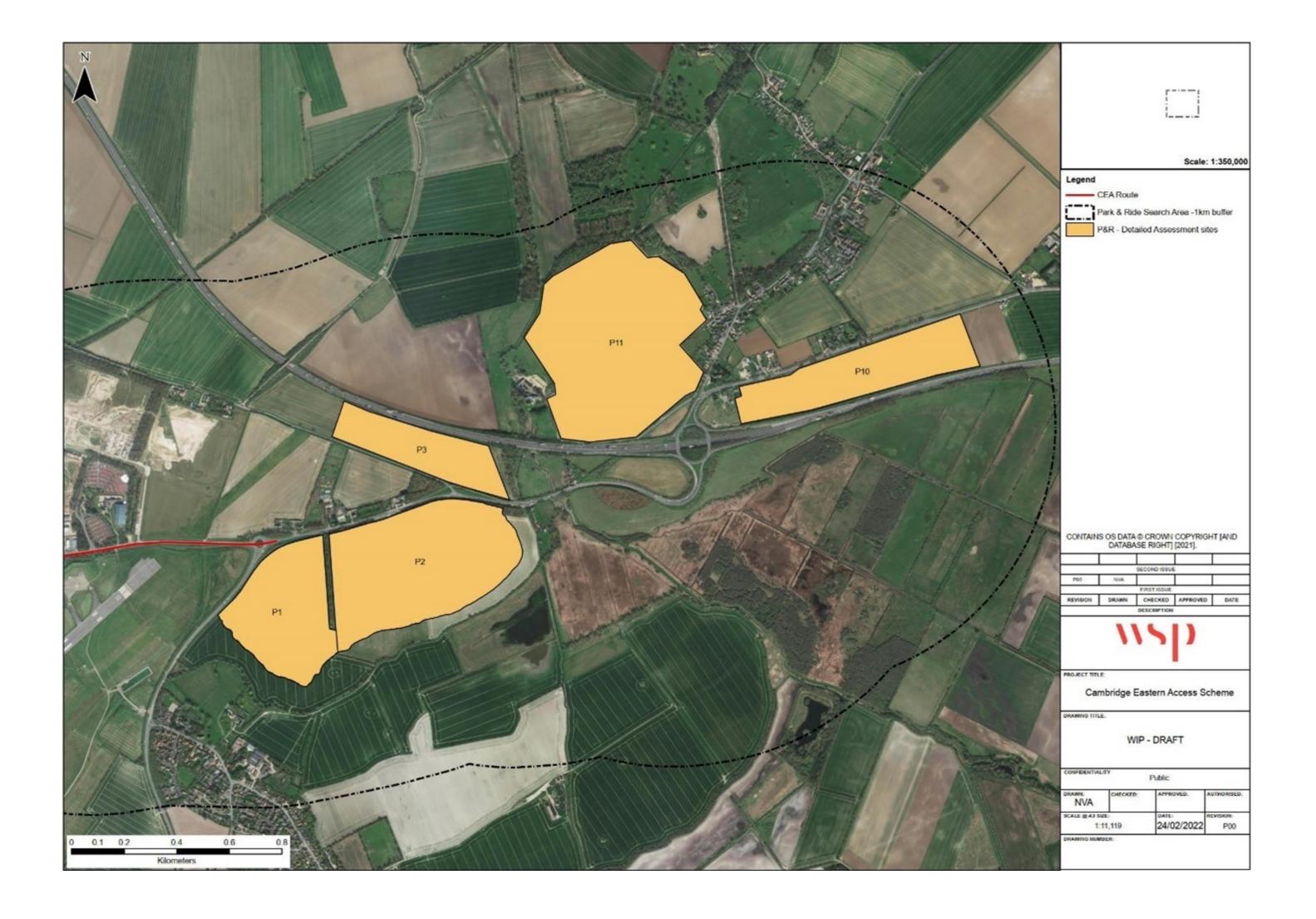
maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a relatively limited contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The scale of the P&R facility in the Site is low, only taking up one fifth of the total site area and away from the SSSI. The belt of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland to the north of the Site is assumed to be retained along with existing boundary vegetation. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the site result in the potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt as **Moderate**.

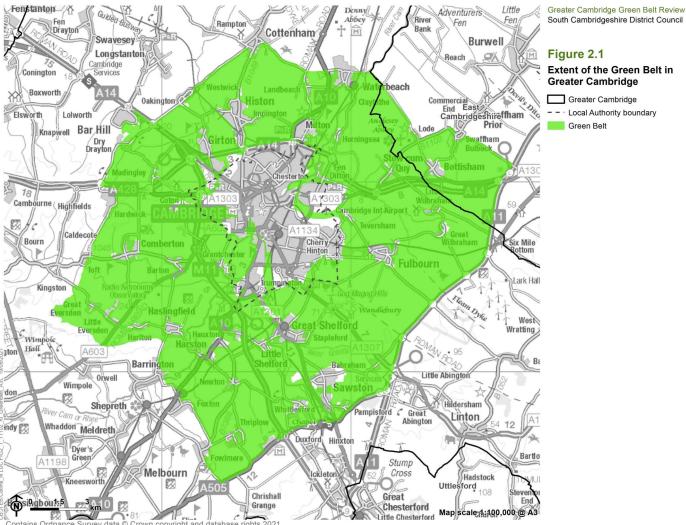
- 7.4.4. Site P3 is a linear site between High Ditch Road and the A14 on the edge of Cambridge. It is considered to make a significant contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character, a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a significant contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The scale of the P&R facility is moderate to high as it will make up over half of the Site to the east. There is some existing boundary vegetation with a strip of tall trees to the east assumed to be retained. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the site result in a potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt as **High**.
- 7.4.5. Site P10 is another linear site further east towards Stow-cum-Quy between Newmarket Road and the A14. The landform falls to the south and the Site has some existing boundary vegetation. The Site makes no contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character. It does, however, make a relatively significant contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The P&R facility will be located to the west of the site and make up approximately one third of the Site total area. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the site result in potential harm to the purposes of the Green Belt as **Moderate-high**.
- 7.4.6. Site P11 is the largest Site covering 37 ha west of Stow-cum-Quy and north of the A14. The existing vegetation on Site includes boundary hedgerows and areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland to the north. The Park and Ride will make up 5.5 ha and be located in the southeast of the Site. It makes no contribution to preserving Cambridge's compact character. It does, however, make a moderate contribution to maintaining and enhancing the quality of Cambridge's setting, and a relatively significant contribution to preventing communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging with the city. The scale of the P&R facility is very low with approximately 32 ha of the Site retained as open land. The Site contribution to the Green Belt purposes along with the scale and nature of the P&R within the Site result in the potential conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt as **Moderate**.

Appendices 1 & 2

PROPOSED SCHEME 'AREA OF SEARCH' AND THE CAMBRIDGE GREEN BELT







South Cambridgeshire District Council



Extent of the Green Belt in



4th Floor 6 Devonshire Square London EC2M 4YE wsp.com