

**South Cambridgeshire Local Plan
Examination**
Matter SC4: Natural and Historic
Environment

On behalf of Grosvenor/Wrenbridge (ID. 21321)

24 November 2016

Matter SC4: Natural and Historic Environment

SC4B - Do the Policies in Chapter 6 of the Plan accord with Section 9 of the Framework which relates to protecting Green Belt land?

iv. Given that the provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and recreation is not inappropriate development within the Green Belt, should Policy NH/10 be more specific as to which purposes (objectives) of the Green Belt set out in paragraph 80 of the Framework would be prejudiced by cumulative sports and recreation facilities?

1. This statement seeks to respond to the Inspector's question and supplements Grosvenor/Wrenbridge's previous representations on Policy NH/10 and supporting text.
2. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF sets out the five purposes that the Green Belt serves. Purpose 4 is the primary purpose for the Cambridge Green Belt, namely, *"to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns"*. The established purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt, as set out in paragraph 2.29 of the emerging Local Plan, align closely with this national purpose:
 - *"Preserve the unique character of Cambridge as a compact, dynamic city with a thriving historic centre;*
 - *Maintain and enhance the quality of its setting;*
 - *Prevent communities in the environs of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the City."*
3. Therefore, the other national objectives are less relevant when interpreting Policy NH/10 and the policy should specifically refer to the need to preserve the setting and special character of Cambridge, being the primary purpose for which the Cambridge Green Belt was established.
4. The following revisions to the policy are recommended to better reflect the relevance of the National Green Belt purpose that the Cambridge Green Belt serves and to ensure that the policy meets the requirement to plan positively, as set out in paragraph 157 of the NPPF.
5. Paragraph 2 of policy NH/10 should be replaced with the following text:

"The Council will approve applications for appropriate facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation where it considers that the proposals will preserve the Green Belt and the setting and special character of the historic City of Cambridge."
6. These amendments will ensure that the policy is consistent with the principles set out in the NPPF (as required by paragraph 151 of the NPPF) and that it provides sufficient clarity to satisfy paragraph 154 of the NPPF which states that:

"Only policies that provide a clear indication of how a decision maker should react to a development proposal should be included in the plan."
7. It is important that the Council plans positively to provide sporting facilities to meet current deficiencies and future growth. There is currently a shortage of non-Green Belt land available for development and new outdoor sports and recreation facilities require large areas of land. Therefore, it is highly likely that in order to meet need, these facilities will need to be provided in the Green Belt.

8. This is recognised by the existing wording in paragraph 6.38 of the emerging plans which acknowledges that With the growth proposed in the extensions around the City in the Cambridge Green Belt it is likely that land will become more intensively used, which could result in uses such as playing fields being relocated to, or specifically developed on Green Belt land.

9. Paragraph 81 of the NPPF states that:

"Once Green Belts have been defined, local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land."

10. It is considered that the wording and supporting text of policy NH/10 currently fails to meet this requirement to 'plan positively' due to the negative language used. Further support for the need to plan positively sport and recreation can be found at paragraphs 70 and 73 of the NPPF:

"To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:

- *plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments..." (para. 70)*

"Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities..." (para. 73)

11. Furthermore, paragraph 6.38 should be deleted and replaced with the following text:

"The NPPF requires that local planning authorities should plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, including through providing for outdoor sport and recreation. Outdoor sport and recreation is a characteristic of the Cambridge Green Belt, and given the limited opportunities available for meeting sporting needs in Cambridge and the villages close to the City, this local plan positively seeks to bring forward land within the Green Belt for outdoor sport where doing so would continue to preserve the setting and special character of Cambridge."

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