

**South Cambridgeshire Strategic Housing Land Availability
Assessment (SHLAA) Report
August 2013**

**Appendix 7ii: Assessment of sites arising from the Issues &
Options 1 Consultation**

Index of Comberton Site Assessment Proforma

Site Number	Site Address	Site Capacity	Page
Site 326	Land at Bennell Farm, Comberton	90 dwellings	2352

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Review
Site Assessment Proforma

Factual Background	
Proforma Created	December 2012
Proforma Last Updated	August 2013
Location	Comberton (in Toft Parish)
Site name / address	Land at Bennell Farm, West Street, Comberton
Category of site:	A village extension i.e. a development adjoining the existing village development framework boundary (Sustainable villages focus)
Description of promoter's proposal	Residential development for around 90 dwellings
Site area (hectares)	6.27ha
Site Number	326
Site description & context	The site comprises a grassed field with trees, surrounded by robust hedges with trees. A number of vehicular access points exist to West Street. A surfaced road runs across the site giving access to Bennell Court just to the north of the site), where a series of farm buildings have been converted to a variety of employment uses primarily of an office nature. Comberton Village College is located to the south of West Street.
Current or last use of the site	Agricultural, field used for grazing
Is the site Previously Developed Land?	No
Allocated for a non-residential use in the current development plan?	No
Planning history	1995 – Permission granted for change of use of farm offices to B1, B2 and B8 use and conversion of part of farm buildings to farm offices.
Source of site	Issues and Options Consultation 2012

Tier 1: Strategic Considerations	
Green Belt	<p>The site is within the Green Belt.</p> <p>Green Belt Purposes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains and enhances the quality of Cambridge's setting • Prevents coalescence between settlements and with Cambridge <p>Function with regard to the special character of Cambridge and it's setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages • A landscape which retains a strong rural character <p>Development of the site would have an adverse impact on Green Belt purposes and functions. It would reduce the separation between Toft and Comberton, and expand the scale of Comberton which would have some limited impact on the character of the village. It would also have a small impact on the rural character of the landscape.</p>
Is the site subject to any other considerations that have the potential to make the site unsuitable for development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Tier 1 conclusion:	- Adverse impacts capable of partial mitigation

Tier 2: Significant Local Considerations

Designations and Constraints	
Heritage considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation Area – Approximately 180m from the Conservation Area and separated from it by modern suburban housing. The impact on the setting of the Conservation Area is likely to be small, provided the existing mature boundary landscaping around the site is retained. • Listed Buildings – 57 West Street lies approximately 190m to the east, listed Grade II and separated from it by modern suburban housing. The impact on the setting of the Listed Building is likely to be small, provided the existing mature boundary landscaping around the site is retained. • Non-statutory archaeological site - Cropmarks to the north indicate the location of enclosures of probable late prehistoric or

	Roman date. We would recommend evaluation prior to the determination of any planning application.
Environmental and wildlife designations and considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biodiversity features - Claylands – These landscapes support species and habitats characterised by hedgerows, mature trees, ponds, small watercourses, and rough grassland with species such as skylark and grey partridge. Flooded gravel and clay pits diversify the semi-natural habitats and provide habitat for various waterfowl and the great crested newt. Hedges, isolated trees and woods can give a wooded feel and provide habitat for song thrush, bullfinch and corn bunting. Hay meadows may include flower species such as knapweeds and crested dog's-tail grasses. Relict parkland and large hedgerow trees particularly of oak with associated bats, lichens and turtle doves occur. Arable farming dominates the landuse and provides habitat for skylarks, grey partridge and brown hare. Any development proposals should show how features of biodiversity value have been protected or adequately integrated into the design. Agricultural land of high grade (i.e. Agricultural Land Classification Grade 1, 2, 3a) – Grade 2
Physical considerations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None
Townscape and landscape impact?	<p>The South Cambridgeshire Village Capacity Study (1998) refers to the landscape setting of Comberton as characterised by large arable fields, with smaller enclosed fields and paddocks close to the north and south of the village. The land rises to the north, whilst to the south it slopes down to Tit Brook before rising to an east-west ridge crested by St Mary's Church. The village edges are generally soft and green except on the north eastern boundary where open arable fields abut linear estate housing. The pastures between Barton Road and Swaynes lane create a particularly rural area in the heart of the settlement which is a particular characteristic.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by mature boundary landscaping comprising hedgerows and trees which effectively hide it from view. From the west these features are viewed across arable fields on both sides of the road as a soft green line. After this line is past, views of Comberton Village College to the south can be seen which mark the entrance to the village. Development of this site if carefully designed with development set back from the road would have little impact on the landscape setting of the village. The townscape impact would also be minimal if the site were to be developed at a low density to merge into this part of the village which is characterised by low density housing with large gardens, with mature hedges and trees.</p> <p>Development in this location would not impinge upon the linear nature of development in the most historic parts of the village.</p>
Can any issues be mitigated?	Yes

Infrastructure	
Highways access?	The site can be accessed with some mitigation measures. Two existing access points to West Street.
Utility services?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity - No significant impact on existing network • Mains water - The site falls within the CWC Eversden Reservoir distribution zone, within which there is a minimum spare capacity of 540 properties based on the peak day for the distribution zone, less any commitments already made to developers. There is insufficient spare capacity within the Eversden Reservoir Distribution Zone to supply the total number of proposed properties which could arise if all the SHLAA sites within the zone were to be developed. CWC will allocate spare capacity on a first come first served basis. Development requiring an increase in capacity of the zone will require either an upgrade to existing boosters and / or a new storage reservoir, tower or booster plus associated mains. • Gas - Comberton does not have a gas supply • Mains sewerage - There is sufficient capacity at the Haslingfield works to accommodate this development site. The sewerage network is approaching capacity and a pre-development assessment will be required to ascertain the specific capacity of the system with regards to this site. If any mitigation is deemed necessary this will be funded by the developer.
Drainage measures?	No FRA provided
School capacity? (Update August 2013)	<p>Comberton has one primary school with a PAN of 50 and school capacity of 350, and lies within the catchment of Comberton Village College with a PAN of 300 and school capacity of 1,500 children. In their 2011 submission to the South Cambridgeshire and City Infrastructure Study, the County Council stated there were 181 surplus places in Comberton taking account of planned development in Comberton, and a deficit of 352 secondary places taking account of planned development across the village college catchment area which currently includes Cambourne.</p> <p>After allowing for surplus school places, and the construction of a new secondary school in Cambourne to relieve the deficit of places at Comberton VC, development of this site would only require an increase in school capacity in combination with other development sites. This may require the expansion of existing schools and/or the provision of new schools.</p> <p>Update– County Education Officers indicate there is currently sufficient capacity at the village primary school to mitigate the demand from development of this scale. It is unlikely that additional capacity or refurbishment would be needed. The demographic forecasts would however, need to be kept under review. Comberton VC currently operates at capacity – however there is some capacity at the school to meet in-catchment demand of this scale due to out-of-catchment applications to the school. It is unlikely that additional capacity or refurbishment would be needed. The demographic</p>

	forecasts would however, need to be kept under review.
Health facilities capacity?	Comberton Surgery, 58 Green End, Comberton with no physical capacity to expand. The Appletrees Dental Practice, 3 West Street, Comberton
Any other issues?	Development could also provide for community facilities including a football pitch, changing rooms and car parking.
Can issues be mitigated?	In Part

Tier 2 Conclusion:	0 No impacts / neutral impacts or adverse impacts capable of full mitigation
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Tier 3: Site Specific Factors

Capacity	
Developable area	4.7ha
Site capacity (updated August 2013)	Submitted proposal for 90 dwellings at a density of 22.5 dph. Site capacity of 30 dph would be 141 dwellings. A low density of development would be appropriate on this site with a dwelling capacity between 90 and 141 dwellings. A mid point capacity of 115 dwellings was included in the Issues and Options Report 2013. A lower figure of 90 dwellings has been included in the Proposed Submission Local Plan. This reflects that a substantial part of the site will be used to provide a community football pitch with changing rooms, and car parking to serve both the community and Comberton Village College.
Density	30dph

Potential Suitability	
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is potentially capable of providing residential development taking account of site factors and constraints.

Availability	
Is the land in single ownership?	Yes
Site ownership status?	Yes
Legal constraints?	None known

Is there market interest in the site?	The site is being promoted by Hill Residential
When would the site be available for development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The site is available immediately.

Achievability	
Phasing and delivery of the development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first dwellings could be completed on site in 2011-16
Are there any market factors that would significantly affect deliverability?	None known
Are there any cost factors that would significantly affect deliverability?	None known
Could issues identified be overcome?	No issues identified
Economic viability?	<p><u>Viability Category 1 Most viable sites</u></p> <p>This viability assessment is provided independent of any policy or other assessment as to whether the site should be allocated for development. The references to planning policy only relate to those existing policies governing how a site would be developed, not whether it should be allocated in the new Local Plan.</p> <p>Having undertaken an assessment of this site the local planning authority do not have any major concerns as to why the landowner would be unable to deliver a development that complies with current planning policy in respect of density, mix and the provision of onsite facilities whilst still delivering the necessary level of affordable housing, planning obligations and potential community infrastructure levy payments.</p> <p>In summary this site is not considered to have any barriers, in terms of development viability alone, to restrict it coming forward within the next 5 years (new settlements and other very large developments may take longer than 5 years to come forward).</p>

Tier 3 Conclusion:	+++ Potentially suitable with good availability and achievability
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Site Assessment Conclusion
Site with development potential. This does not include a judgement on whether the site is suitable for residential development in planning policy terms, which will be for the separate plan making process.

Status of Site in Proposed Submission Local Plan 2013
Allocated for development (Policy H1/h); Inside proposed Development Framework.