



Independent Examinations

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire Local Plan

MCC1B/5289

Matter CC1B - Open Space and Natural
Environment and 1B.2 Appendix C (Designations
Schedule (Policy 67))

Rep 27254

**Emmanuel College and Gonville & Caius College
(5289) Rep no 27254**

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Matter 1B.1

Issues

- 1.1 Does the Plan adequately set out a strategic approach, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure as required by paragraph 114 of the Framework?**
- 1.1.1 The Plan does not adequately take account of the requirement for the NPPF to be 'taken as a whole' (paragraph 6). Whilst Draft Policy 67 responds to paragraph 114, it fails to respond to the requirement of the NPPF at paragraph 154 for 'Local Plans to be aspirational but realistic' with the draft policy being too restrictive and not taking account of the requirement of the Framework to ensure that Plans are deliverable (paragraph 173).
- 1.2 i. Policy 67: The Council's Open Space and Recreation Strategy and the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy were both prepared in 2011 having regard to then extant Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation which pre-dated the Framework. Nonetheless, does the Council consider that the documents are consistent with paragraph 73 of the Framework which requires that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space and sports and recreation facilities?**
- 1.2.1 Paragraph 158 of the NPPF makes clear that local planning authorities should ensure that Local Plans are based on adequate, up-to-date and relevant evidence and this is reiterated specifically with regard to open spaces by paragraph 73.
- 1.2.2 The Council's Open Space and Recreation Strategy cannot be considered robust in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 73 due to the criteria and quality scoring which the strategy uses to identify the recreational and environmental important areas of open space being flawed and biased as some criteria are duplicated (i.e. where trees also make up the boundary treatment of a site); while others are irrelevant to the quality of the space, such as 'litter bins', which is not relevant to the recreational or environmental importance of sites.
- 1.2.3 The quality score tries to quantify quality. However, it takes only those qualities which are applicable for scoring. Therefore, if a site had only one applicable quality – litter bins for example and had a score of five "numerous for the size of site and in good condition" the Quality Score would be 100%. The quality score is meaningless and cannot be used to compare or assess sites.
- 1.2.4 The 2011 Open Space Strategy is based on the guidance and typologies as set out in PPG 17 and the assessment methodology is based on the Companion Guide to PPG 17. The author understands the 'Quality Assessment' undertaken by the Council equates to the grounds maintenance assessment as set out in the Companion Guide to PPG 17, and which is a tool for formal amenity open space to identify possible areas of enhancement. It is not for assessing whether the site makes a major contribution to character and environmental quality.
- 1.2.5 Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy does not identify specific needs or the quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities as required by paragraph 73.

1.3 ii. Policy 67: Is the policy too onerous in relation to the proximity requirement for replacement open space?

- 1.3.1 This requirement does not respond to the need for Plans to be aspirational but realistic (NPPF paragraph 154) as set out above and also fails to acknowledge paragraph 10 of the NPPF which sets out that plans need to take local circumstances into account, so that they can respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development in different areas.
- 1.3.2 Given the built form of Cambridge, it is unrealistic that any re-provision of open space will be able to be relocated within 400m of the original site therefore making the policy undeliverable which is also contrary to the requirements of paragraph 173 of the Framework.
- 1.3.3 Additionally, the requirements of draft policy 67 are not in accordance with paragraph 74 of the NPPF which requires that "the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a sustainable location". As drafted, policy 67 does not meet the requirements of the Framework and cannot therefore be considered to be in accordance with this.
- 1.3.4 The draft policy therefore needs to be amended to allow some flexibility in the consideration of development proposals. The current policy wording is a blight on good and appropriate development opportunities for the city. The policy should allow sensible development that will bring positive impacts to Cambridge.

1.4 iii. Policy 67: Is the inclusion of the term "educational need" in the 3rd paragraph of the policy overly restrictive? Is its inclusion necessary or should it be clearly defined? Should any definition include student accommodation?

- 1.4.1 The inclusion of this term unduly limits development within sites. For example, within College or school grounds additional development legitimately required in order to support these educational facilities may not be strictly educational in nature, this could include student accommodation but also administrative functions or complimentary facilities such as galleries and theatres, but essential for the continued efficient and effective operation of these facilities. Such developments would be contrary to draft policy 67 as currently drafted which would unduly and unnecessarily restrict such developments.
- 1.4.2 It is therefore considered that the terms educational should be removed as any definition will act as a restriction to the development of a wide range of ancillary facilities, which is not limited to student accommodation, which are necessary to facilitate the continued exceptional educational offer within the city of Cambridge.

Matter 1B.2 Appendix C: Designations Schedule (Policy 67)

Newnham Ward

1.1 **x. Should the Cambridge Tennis & Hockey Club (SPO06) and the Emmanuel College Playing Field (SPO16) be reviewed against the criteria for designation as POS in respect of the proposed residential development and replacement recreational facilities?**

1.1.1 As set out above with regard to question 1B.1 (i) the criteria used by the Council to designate POS cannot be considered robust as it does not meet with the requirements of paragraph 73 due to the criteria and quality scoring which the strategy uses to identify the recreational and environmental importance of areas of open space being flawed and biased as some criteria are duplicated (i.e. where trees also make up the boundary treatment of a site); while others are irrelevant to the quality of the space, such as 'litter bins', which is not relevant to the recreational or environmental importance of sites.

1.1.2 The quality score tries to quantify quality. However, it takes only those qualities which are applicable for scoring. Therefore, if a site had only one applicable quality – litter bins for example and had a score of five “numerous for the size of site and in good condition” the Quality Score would be 100%. The quality score is meaningless and cannot be used to compare or assess sites.

1.1.3 The 2011 Open Space Strategy is based on the guidance and typologies as set out in PPG 17 and the assessment methodology is based on the Companion Guide to PPG 17. The author understands the 'Quality Assessment' undertaken by the Council equates to the grounds maintenance assessment as set out in the Companion Guide to PPG 17, and which is a tool for formal amenity open space to identify possible areas of enhancement. It is not for assessing whether the site makes a major contribution to character and environmental quality.

1.1.4 In the absence of the LPA using any NPPF compliant methodology, if we consider sites SPO06 and SPO16 against criteria for the designation of open space (taken from the Council's Appendix I as set out below):

1.1.5 Questions used to assess whether open space meets the criteria for environmental importance:

a. Does the site make a major contribution to the setting, character, structure and environmental quality of the city?

i. Does it make a major contribution to the setting of Cambridge?

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) submitted with the previous representations clearly describe the contribution which the site makes to the setting of the city and confirms that the site does not make a major contribution to the setting of the city.

ii. Does it have positive landscape features and/or a sense of place sufficient for it to make a major contribution to the character of the city?

The submitted LVA confirms that the positive landscape features of the site are not sufficient for them to make a major contribution to the character of the city.

iii. Is the site an important green break in the urban framework?

The proposal site does form a break within the built form when viewed along Wilberforce Road. It does not form a key feature within views when looking back towards the city.

iv. Does it have significant historical, cultural or known archaeological interest?

The site is within a conservation area but it is not in itself of any significant historical, cultural or known archaeological interest.

b. Does the site make a major contribution to the character and environmental quality of the area?

i. Does it have positive features such as streams, trees, hedgerows or meadowlands which give a sense of place sufficient to make a major contribution to the character of the local area?

The site is largely devoid of the features described above due to its use as playing fields. The submitted LVA describes the hedgerows and trees which exist on site and makes clear that these cannot be considered to make a major contribution to the character of the area.

ii. Is it an important green break in the framework of the local area?

The proposal site does form a break within the built form when viewed along Wilberforce Road. It does not form a key feature within views when looking back towards the city.

iii. Does it form part of a network of open spaces in the local area?

There are incidental open spaces throughout Newnham although these are not connected to form a network of open spaces.

iv. Is it enjoyed visually on a daily basis from public places (e.g. footpaths, vantage points)?

The sites are visible from public vantage points.

v. Does it have local historical or cultural interest?

The site is within a conservation area but is not in itself of any local historical or cultural interest.

c. Does the site contribute to the wildlife value and biodiversity of the city?

i. Does it have any nature conservation designation?

The sites have no nature conservation designation.

ii. Is it adjacent to or an important link to sites with nature conservation designation?

The Ecology Report submitted with the representation promoting this site confirms that it is not adjacent to and do not form important links to sites with nature conservation designations.

iii. Does it contain important habitats or species sufficient to make it worthy of consideration for any nature conservation designation?

The submitted Ecology Report confirms there are no habitats or species present on site to make it worthy of consideration for any nature conservation designation.

iv. Is it an important wildlife oasis in an area with limited wildlife value?

The submitted Ecology Report confirms that the site is not an important wildlife oasis.

1.1.6 Questions used to assess whether open space meets the criteria for recreational importance

d. Does the site make a major contribution to the recreational resources of the city as a whole?

i. Is it of a size, quality and accessibility such that people would travel to use it for recreational purposes, no matter where they live, work or study in the city?

The site provides sports facilities for Cambridge Tennis and Hockey Club and Emmanuel College. The size, quality and accessibility of the provision is suitable for the Club and College.

ii. Is it an important part of the network of significant recreational open spaces?

The sites do not provide significant recreational open spaces. The sites do not enable public use.

iii. Is it part of the sports provision which help to meet demand from people throughout the city, no matter where they live, work or study?

The sites provide private space for sport and do not therefore contribute to the demand for sports provision throughout the city.

e. Does the site make a major contribution to the recreational resources of the local area?

i. Is it of a size and accessibility such that people who live, work or study in the local area do or could use it for recreational purposes?

The sites provide private recreational opportunities and do not therefore make a major contribution to the recreational resources of the local area.

ii. Is it an important part of the network and hierarchy of recreational facilities in the local area?

The sites are standalone facilities and do not, therefore, contribute to a network of facilities.

iii. Is it a significant linkage between recreational areas?

The site does not form any linkage between recreational areas.

1.1.7 From the above assessment it is clear that the designation of sites SPO06 and SPO16 as POS is unjustified and unnecessary.

1.1.8 The site represents a sustainable location where residential development (with public open space) could be brought forward to assist in addressing housing need within the city whilst re-providing new recreational facilities on a site which benefits from planning permission for this purpose; and which would meet the reasonable requirements of amended draft Policy 67. The omission site objections (27257, 28104 and 28105) will be heard at a later hearing session under Matter CC8 (CC8B).