Appendix F

Land south of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus
Council's Assessment of Evidence
Policy E1/B

Council agreed on 23 March 2016 that a decision on whether to identify the site as a proposed modification should be deferred, in order to obtain further evidence regarding surface water flood risk, groundwater hydrology (including flow and quality), biodiversity and scope for mitigation and enhancement and transport impacts.

Subsequently officers have been working with the landowner to secure evidence on these issues. Additional evidence has now been received and is included within Appendix E to the Portfolio Holder report, in the following order:

a. Covering letter from Carter Jonas summarising the evidence documents (pages 1-5). The summary is considered to be accurate and is not repeated in this assessment.
b. Indicative masterplan (page 6)
c. Flood Modelling and Drainage Strategy Report (with a Geotechnical / Groundwater appraisal included as Appendix D) (pages 7-53)
d. Site Access Study (pages 54-103)
e. Landscape and Visual Appraisal (pages 104-152)
f. Ecological Appraisal (pages 153-186)
g. Arboriculture Assessment (pages 187-209)

The evidence has been considered in consultation with relevant specialists within the Council, and with the County Council as Lead Flood Management Authority and Local Transport Authority. The key issues are addressed in the table below with the key evidence report findings and the Council's assessment.

Issue	Key evidence report findings	Council's assessment
Surface water flood risk	Flood Modelling and Drainage Strategy No substantive fluvial flood risk identified (paragraph 2.3.3). Surface water flood risk can be mitigated by SUDS (paragraphs 4.3.9 and 5.2.3) and a new boundary ditch around the eastern, southern and western site boundaries (paragraph 3.3.3).	The proposals to mitigate surface water flood risk are supported. The report confirms that the site is not at risk of fluvial (watercourse) flooding. The ditch and SUDS features will also help to control and limit pedestrian access to and from the site, add to biodiversity, reduce building site coverage and secure the provision of open spaces to help retain staff on site. These features are shown on the indicative masterplan.
Groundwater hydrology	Flood Modelling and Drainage Strategy (section 2.2 and Appendix D) Appendix D identifies groundwater	The report conclusions of the report

Issue	Key evidence report findings	Council's assessment
	levels beneath the site at between 6-7 metres below ground level in the underlying West Melbury Marly Chalk formation. The springs arise from a different strata in the Tottenhoe Stone Member and Zig Zag chalk formations which overly the West Melbury Marly chalk to the south of the site where the ground water is sufficiently high to allow for springs to exist. The report concludes that there are unlikely to be impacts on the chalk springs at Nine Wells.	appear logical and are supported by the available evidence. The chalk springs are fed from a rock formation which does not underlie the proposed development site. The study finds that the springs are fed from higher ground away from the site which is why no impact on the springs is expected. Previous reports on the springs have noted that the rate of water abstraction by Cambridge Water from a groundwater pumping station 3 miles to the south east of the site towards Babraham has a direct impact upon the flow rates at the springs which adds further weight to this finding. Any planning application to develop the site would still be bound by the proposed plan policy which requires a development to demonstrate that there would be no adverse impact on the springs.
Biodiversity	Ecological Appraisal The majority of the site is an arable field of low ecological value although supporting farmland birds for which there would be some loss of habitat. Existing hedges and ditches are to be retained and reinforced and two permanent ponds and a large SUDS area would be provided to ensure an overall net increase in biodiversity across the site. The boundary ditch and hedge/woodland together with the on-site open spaces will both deter pedestrian movement to the Nine Wells LNR and provide attractive green areas to retain staff on-site during work breaks.	The proposed allocation is considered to be acceptable from an ecological perspective subject to a number of detailed matters concerning mitigation which would be addressed at planning application stage. These would include such matters as site management, external lighting, mitigating farmland bird impacts and ensuring no convenient pedestrian links from the site to the Nine Wells LNR. A number of modifications to the provisional policy are proposed to address these policy concerns.
Landscape and visual impacts	Landscape and Visual Appraisal The report concludes that adverse landscape and visual impacts would be localised and limited and capable of mitigation through masterplanning and landscaping. A series of photographs show the site from a number of viewpoints	There would be some local harm to the local landscape and visual receptors but not such that would mean that the site could not be developed along the lines of the indicative masterplan. The impact of development can be mitigated through

Issue	Key evidence report findings	Council's assessment
		masterplanning, the height and placement of buildings and by setting development back away from the south western corner of the site nearest to Nine Wells LNR. A further proposed change to the provisional policy is proposed to address some of these concerns. Others would fall to be addressed by other plan policies.
Transport impacts	Site Access Study The report concludes that the site is suitable for development for approximately 30,685 sqm of laboratory and office space from a highways and transport perspective.	This part of Cambridge already experiences significant traffic congestion. The Highways Authority therefore calls for any development to be built around sustainable travel modes and controlling on-site car parking in accordance with a travel plan.
Arboriculture	Arboriculture Assessment The report concludes that there is scope for all of the existing tree cover to be retained, incorporated and enhanced through new tree planting. This would increase tree cover, provide greater habitat biodiversity and reinforce landscape screening between the development and the surrounding landscape.	The conclusions and findings of the report are supported.

Conclusion

The Green Belt Study commissioned by the Councils and published in November 2015 identified an area of land south of Cambridge Biomedical Campus (CBC) as having potential for development "without significant long-term harm to Green Belt purposes". The studies conducted since Spring 2016 have confirmed that the site is capable of allocation and development without significant impacts regarding flood risk, groundwater hydrology, biodiversity, landscape, access and trees. Scope exists for development to lead to greater tree cover, and a net increase in biodiversity.