

Dear Parish Clerk/Chair

I am writing to update and reassure you following proposals for a new town in South Cambridgeshire which have been published by Thakeham at [www.southwestcambridgeshire.com](http://www.southwestcambridgeshire.com). Their aspirations are for a 25,000-home development, including a new town with a series of connected new villages, on land around Barrington, Bassingbourn cum Kneesworth, Foxton, Melbourn, Meldreth, Orwell, Shepreth, Whaddon and Wimpole. I understand that proposals like this can cause alarm or concern, especially when they are close to home. In this case, I fully appreciate that these proposals suggest large scale development within, or very close to, your parish.

Firstly, I want to emphasise that these early proposals have no planning status at all, and it is far too early to say whether the location is suitable for such a development.

Secondly, as you know, the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service is in the process of developing a new joint Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire District and Cambridge City Councils. This will set out the planning policies needed to create great places to live, work, play and study during the next 20 years and beyond. When eventually completed in the years ahead, after extensive consultation with residents, it will outline where new homes and jobs will come forward.

One of the first steps in creating a Local Plan is to ask people to put forward land they could make available for development if needed. This is called a 'call for sites' and took place in 2019-20 with over 650 sites put forward – far more than we could possibly need. Thakeham did not put forward their site as part of this process, and have not currently submitted their proposals to us as a late submission either.

Assuming they submit more information to us, Thakeham's proposal will be subjected to stringent tests including assessment of impacts on the local landscape and townscape, neighbouring properties, water supply, transport and roads. Sites also need to be compatible with the spatial strategy for the Local Plan, which is being developed in response to strong support in the First Conversation consultation last year for the 'big themes' of climate change, the natural environment, wellbeing and maintaining high quality places.

The sites that we feel are most suitable and sustainable will be put forward for public consultation as part of the Preferred Option stage of the Plan, in summer/autumn 2021. All parishes, and all members of the community, will be able to tell us your views on the proposed spatial strategy and site selection at that point in time.

You may be interested to note that, during the creation of South Cambridgeshire's current Local Plan, around 400 sites were put forward and only approximately 10 percent were actually chosen to be developed.

Yours faithfully,

Stephen Kelly  
Director of Greater Cambridge Shared Planning