



Local Plan Representations

Produced in relation to the Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) Consultation being undertaken by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning

Site

Land north of Pampisford Road, Great Abington

Landowner(s)

Trustees of the C Y Nutt Deceased Will Trust

Date

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1. Land north of Pampisford Road, Great Abington

- 1.1 Cheffins has been instructed by Charlotte Sawyer Nutt and Garry Wiles as Trustees of the Christopher Young Nutt Deceased Will Trust ("**the Landowner**") to promote their interests in Land north of Pampisford Road, Great Abington ("**the Site**") as part of the ongoing Regulation 18 consultation of the Greater Cambridgeshire Local Plan.
- 1.2 The Site has previously been submitted to Greater Cambridge Shared Planning ("**the Council**") for consideration as part of the previous "call for sites" process. The supporting *Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment* (HELAA) includes a high-level assessment of the sites that have been put forward for allocation within the forthcoming Local Plan; the Site was assessed as part of the HELAA and granted the following reference number: **HELAA 40539**.
- 1.3 The Site was a number of sites considered within the parish of Great Abington. However, no sites have been allocated within the draft Local Plan.

Physical Context

- 1.4 The Site represents a highly sustainable location for residential development, with employment opportunities, key local services and facilities being only 500m from the village shop, post office, pub, hall, playing fields, primary school and pre-school within easy reach via public transport, foot, and cycle. The site is accessible by public transport, cycle and foot to major employment hubs on the south side of Cambridge including Granta Park, Babraham Research Campus, Wellcome Genome Campus, Addenbrokes Hospital and Cambridge Biomedical Campus.
- 1.5 The Site comprises circa. 11.6ha of surplus agricultural land located to the north of Pampisford Road, Great Abington adjoining the existing settlement envelope of Great Abington. The total developable area is circa. 5.37ha with the remaining land to be allocated as chalkland grassland open space. To the north is residential development (Larkfield) and community allotments, to the east agricultural fields, to the south by Pampisford Road and to the west by existing residential development. The Site is considered to be suitable, available and achievable within a 5-year period. The indicative site capacity included within the HELAA is between 135-175 dwellings, which would appear to be reasonable (pending more detailed assessment and masterplanning).
- 1.6 The Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan designates Great Abington as a Group Village – one of the smaller less sustainable settlements in the district. However, The Settlement Hierarchy Study (Appendix 1H of the Development Strategy Topic Paper) notes that Great Abington is served by good sustainable transport links with the Linton Greenway located to the north of the proposed Site, and the CSET travel hub which is approximately 2.5 miles from the proposed site. Great Abington is also host to key services, including local shops, a post office, pub, a village hall and

Institute, playing fields, Great Abington Primary School and Great Abington Pre-School.

- 1.7 The Site has excellent accessibility to key local services, transport and employment opportunities by a range of modes of transport. Development of the Site would provide a sustainable level of residential development, including affordable and starter homes, proximal to rapidly expanding employment hubs south of Cambridge, making commuting via active travel a more viable option for incoming employees that move to the local area.
- 1.8 As recognised by the HELAA Summary of Sites, the Site is not situated within designated Green Belt land, does not form part of Countryside Protection Zones, does not form part of any protected open spaces or historic parklands, and does not form part of any protected ecological sites (e.g. sites of special scientific interest, nature reserves, ancient woodlands, and local wildlife sites).

Comments on the HELAA Assessment of the Site

- 1.9 The HELAA assesses 13 individual planning constraints for every site. In the case of the Site (**HELAA 40539**), three constraints were given a “green” rating, 9 constraints were given a “amber” rating with one constraint given a “red” rating. The constraints that were granted an “amber” and “red” rating comprise the following:
- Adopted Development Plan Policies RAG 2025 – albeit the assessment concludes that whilst the site has some potential policy constraints, these could be overcome through the planning application process.
 - Settlement development limits (the land is adjacent to the existing settlement boundary)
 - Landscape sensitivity¹
 - Flood Risk²
 - Biodiversity³
 - Archaeology⁴
 - Accessibility⁵

¹ Red – erosion of the linear nature of Great Abington and loss of rural landscape character.

² Amber – Site is wholly in Flood Zone 1. Surface water flooding 1% lies in a 1 in 30-year event, 1% lies in a 1 in 100-year event and 1% lies in a 1 in 1000-year event.

³ Development may have a detrimental impact on a designated site, or those with a regional or local protection but the impact could be reasonably mitigated or compensated.

⁴ Amber – potential for archaeology

⁵ Amber – Adequate accessibility to key local services, transport and employment opportunities.

- Site Access⁶
 - Transport⁷
 - Noise, Vibration, Odour and Light Pollution⁸
 - Contaminated Land⁹
- 1.10 With regards to the Council's assessment that development of this site would erode the linear nature and result in the loss of the rural landscape character, we would disagree with this assessment.
- 1.11 We acknowledge that whilst the landscape character of the Site will be altered due to its change in use, the "loss of local rural character" can be mitigated through careful landscape-led design, responding to the Site's context, character and distinctive qualities, the development of this Site would not cause wider adverse effects.
- 1.12 The retention and enhancement of the existing vegetative cover that would screen or filter urban disturbance is also key to the preservation of a sense of tranquillity experienced in the country lanes and local footpath network.
- 1.13 The urban fabric of Great Abington is diverse, and the pattern of development extends between Little and Great Abington. The recent Larkfield development (constructed in 2020/21) to the north of the Site has created a linear sprawl along Linton Road which has altered the historic village shape. Development of this Site with established development on the northern and western boundaries would reinstate the nucleated character of the village, reconnect the urban area to the eastern part of the village and create a positive rural edge with expansive green open space to the south and east.
- 1.14 The February 2025 HELAA submission for the Site was accompanied by a Landscape & Visual Study (prepared by Stone & Meadow – February 2025) setting out the key design principles to mitigate any visual impact and demonstrating how the nuclear character of development can be readily incorporated into the landscape. (see Figure 1 below).

⁶ Amber – Acceptable in principle, subject to further detail. Infrastructure required outside the site boundary to encourage more sustainable transport links. Unclear whether these sustainable links can be achieved within the local available constraints.

⁷ Amber – Site will need to provide high-quality local non-motorised user routes linking to the Linton Greenway and proposed Granta Park Travel Hub and routes to Cambridge. Travel Plan required.

⁸ Amber – Site capable of being developed to provide healthy internal and external environments through careful site layout, design and mitigation.

⁹ Amber – Potential for historic contaminations and planning conditions will be required.



Figure 1: Indicative Masterplan

Source: Stone and Meadow Landscape Visual Appraisal

1.15 As categorised in the HELAA the site sits wholly within Flood Zone 1, and low risk of surface water. Likewise, archaeology, contamination, noise, vibration, odour and lighting, biodiversity can all be mitigated through technical surveys and assessments and incorporating any mitigation and enhancement measures required through careful site layout and design. These constraints are not considered to present a barrier to development.

- 1.16 In terms of the proposed Site access from Pampisford Road, the HELAA states that this is acceptable in principle subject to the detailed design at a planning application stage. Likewise there is no evidence to suggest that the development of the Site would result in a significant impact on the strategic road network. The geometry of the Site access and internal roads will accord with Cambridgeshire County Council General Principles for Development.
- 1.17 The main site access via the Larkfield development at the northern end of the Site provides connectivity to the Linton Greenway which routes along Linton Road and the A1307 to the north of the Site. This is a high-quality active travel route which connects Linton in one direction and Cambridge in the other direction. There are existing pedestrian access routes to the communal allotments adjacent to the northern Site boundary, to the residential estate adjoining the western boundary and to the existing footway on Linton Road all of which provide connectivity on foot to the village centre. Many residents would naturally therefore opt to travel to work via train or bicycle. Car use could be further reduced through the detailed design of the development and appropriate measures (e.g. cycle parking and storage, low car parking provision, facilities for homeworking and the implementation of a detailed Travel Plan).
- 1.18 Development could also be phased if necessary over the plan period, allowing opportunities to monitor the cumulative highway impacts of the proposal and the success of the measures imposed to encourage sustainable travel.

Summary

- 1.19 The landowner disagrees with the Council's assessment of the Site.
- 1.20 The Site scores green on three constraints –
- Policy – the site is not on a protected open space designation. Any impact of the proposed development can be reasonably mitigated or compensated.
 - Historic Environment – there are no heritage related issues that would be affected by the proposed development
 - Air Quality Management Area – the site does not lie within an AMQA and there will be minimal traffic impact on the AQMA.
- 1.21 The amber constraints can easily be overcome by undertaking technical surveys and reports to support a future planning application.
- 1.22 The Site scored red on only one constraint – Landscape sensitivity. Stone & Meadow Landscape and Visual Study (February 2025) demonstrates how any loss of the rural landscape character can be mitigated through appropriate landscape-led design principles, including a nucleated development combined with a substantial chalk grassland open space, the preservation and enhancement

of vegetation and creation of positive urban edge and interface with the contextual rural landscape.

- 1.23 The Site is considered to be suitable, available and achievable within the first 5 years of the plan period and should be reconsidered for site allocation in the Local Plan.
- 1.24 For these reasons, the allocation of Land North of Pampisford Road, Great Abington (HELAA 40539) for 130-175 dwellings is required to allow for an appropriate level of growth and to maintain the vitality and rural growth in the village.

2. General Comments on the Draft Local Plan

Draft Policy S/DS: Development Strategy

- 2.1 Draft Policy S/DS focuses on a hierarchical approach to new housing within the district, with a descending order of preference given to development mainly on new settlements and urban extensions rather than a wide range of medium/smaller sites.
- 2.2 With regards to the delivery of small and medium site the draft supporting text states: *"To support delivery of small and medium sized sites, national planning policy requires and to be identified to accommodate at least 10% of the overall housing requirement on sites no larger than one hectare, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this 10% target cannot be achieved. For Greater Cambridge, this means identifying sufficient land to accommodate 4,820 homes on sites of up to one hectare. Our existing commitments, proposed new allocations and the windfall allowance are anticipated to deliver 6,976 dwellings, which is in excess of 10% of our housing requirement. Of these, 1,694 homes are on specific identified sites, comprising approximately 3.5% of the 48,195 homes that is our housing requirement.*
- 2.3 *This is the appropriate response to this requirement for Greater Cambridge, as allocating the full amount on specific identified sites would need us to identify large numbers of small sites across the rural area. Not only would this be extremely challenging, but it would also compromise our development strategy by directing a significant portion of growth to less sustainable locations where levels of car use would be higher, negatively impacting our response to the challenges of net zero carbon and Climate Act obligations and undermining our vision and strategic priorities. It may also necessitate more sites being released from the Green Belt as most of the larger and better served villages are located within the Green Belt, conflicting with our aim to protect the Cambridge Green Belt.*
- 2.4 *It would also be difficult to deliver the infrastructure needed to make the developments sustainable. As such, it is considered that existing commitments, proposed new allocations and the windfall allowance have a good prospect of meeting the overall aim of this aspect of national planning policy, and would not generate the negative consequences of identifying specific allocations for 10% of our housing requirement on small sites."*
- 2.5 The risk with the proposed development strategy is that the majority of the housing requirements comprises larger/strategic sites which require more substantial upfront infrastructure, typically get delayed and could therefore significantly impede housing delivery, threatening the ability to meet the Plan's housing targets.
- 2.6 Allocating sites with existing housing commitments also does not represent an efficient and forward-thinking strategy for development in the district, as advocated by the NPPF.

- 2.7 Furthermore, proposed allocation draft Policy S/NEC: North East Cambridge, which is proposed to allocate 8,350 homes, is reliant on the relocation of the Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Council have even stated that "*delivery of this vision would be subject to alternative funding being found to enable the relocation of the Cambridge Waster Water Treatment Plant.*"
- 2.8 The Council's evidence shows that villages should only play a limited role in meeting future development needs to support delivery and vitality of villages. Alongside rolling forward several existing housing sites, the Council have identified a limited number of new sites for housing within their more sustainable villages.
- 2.9 On behalf of the landowner, we would argue that there is insufficient support for rural growth and vitality with minimal allocations in rural communities which will result in stagnating growth in these areas.
- 2.10 Great Abington is in close proximity to major employment hubs on the edge of Cambridge, is located on an established active travel route and accessible to the CSET travel hub, which makes it a good location for some development.
- 2.11 By not encouraging growth in the smaller villages in the settlement hierarchy, this places barrier to growth and does not assist those already living in these locations to either stay in a place they live; enable people to downsize or upsize, therefore limiting and stagnating the market. A Site of this size would also provide affordable housing for younger adults who want to stay in the village they grew up in.
- 2.12 Despite the Council acknowledging the complexities of alternative funding for the wastewater treatment works, there still seems to be a reliance on the delivery of this, when it is publicly known there is no funding available for the scheme. Therefore, the allocation of development needs to be distributed across other locations within the District.
- 2.13 If the Local Planning Authority fail to consider other sites for development, it could lead to restrict the delivery of development in the Cambridgeshire region to the detriment of its growth potential. We therefore consider there is a need to reconsider the allocation of sites such as this, in order to deliver growth. Without doing so the Local Plan could fail when heard by the Inspector.

Policy S/DE: Defined development extents

- 2.14 Although much of the Greater Cambridge area has a dispersed settlement pattern, the draft Local Plan does not support the 'organic' growth of smaller settlements. There are minimal allocations in rural communities which will lead to stagnating growth in these areas. To ensure that local housing needs can be fulfilled and prevent any further loss of key local services, a more flexible and tolerant approach is needed towards development in the rural area.
- 2.15 The supporting text states that "*defined development extents define where policies for the built-up areas of settlements give way to policies for the countryside. This is necessary to ensure that the countryside is protected from gradual encroachment, but in particular they help guard against incremental growth in unsustainable locations. An important element of the development strategy is to focus growth in more sustainable locations, and defined development extents help achieve this aim.*"
- 2.16 Through the application of tightly drawn settlement boundaries, development is strictly controlled on sites in the 'open countryside'. It is not logical to treat all sites equally in policy terms. Although sites within sensitive valued landscapes and the green belt should receive a high level of protection, the sensitive development of some sites on the edge of a village would cause no significant harm such as group villages like Great Abington.
- 2.17 Furthermore, the current strategy to restrict developments to an indicative maximum scheme size of 8 dwellings within the defined development extents of Group Villages and up to 15 dwellings where this would make the best use of a single brownfield site. These prescriptive restrictions will not deliver the quantum of development required to meet the existing need for affordable homes or the projected need that could follow nearby business park extensions.
- 2.18 A carefully worded criteria-based policy which is supportive of organic growth adjacent to existing built-up areas should not perpetuate unfettered incremental growth.
- 2.19 Overall, the above commentary indicates that, in order to focus district-wide housing delivery in sustainable locations and to ensure delivery is appropriately distributed across Greater Cambridge, further consideration of small to medium sites on edge of rural settlements such as Great Abington is needed.



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