

Local Plan Examination – South Cambridgeshire District Council

Matters and Issues for South Cambridgeshire and Local Plan Specific
Hearing Sessions

Matter SC1-1.4 H Great Abington and Little Abington Omission Sites – Is
the plan unsound without the allocation of the following sites for housing
development, or other uses
specified below, and if so why?

a) Linton Road – (housing with community orchard and allotments)

May 2017



Cheffins Planning and Development
Clifton House1 and 2 Clifton Road
Cambridge CB1 7EA
01223 271985

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			JJ	04.05.17

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2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 These representations have been submitted by Cheffins Planning and Development on behalf of Ms C Sawyer-Nutt, Ms B Gorna and Hill Residential in relation to their interests at land South of Linton Road. This site is proposed for allocation by virtue of Policy H/1:i, a major modification to the emerging local plan. These representations are made in response to question ii raised by the Inspector in relation to Matter SC1 -1.4 H Great Abington and Little Abington.
- 2.2 It is important to note that a full application for 45 dwellings, community orchard and children's play area was submitted on the 16th December 2016 under planning application reference S/3543/16/FUL. This application is currently awaiting determination by the District Council. Whilst the total site area proposed for allocation is 4.11ha, the application site covers an area of 2.62ha, with the community woodland measuring 0.18ha of this total. The development will provide 40% affordable housing, which equates to 18 dwellings.
- 2.3 The allotments referred to in the proposed policy are retained between the application site and the western edge of the village.

3. QUESTION MATTER - SC1 – 1.4H

Question ii Omission Sites – Is the plan unsound without the allocation of the following site for housing development, or other uses specified below and if so why?

- 3.1 My clients consider that the plan would be unsound without the allocation of the site known as land to the south of Linton Road. In 2011 The Parish Councils of Great Abington and Little Abington carried out a joint housing needs survey which identified the extent of housing need in both Parishes. Following this survey the two Parish Councils formed a Committee for Abington Housing (CAH). The CAH carried out a public consultation exercise during autumn 2013. The purpose of this consultation was to gauge the community response to the CAH intention to request that the emerging SCDC Local Plan should include modest housing development sites within The Abingtons. The Parish Councils were concerned that the emerging Local Plan was focusing development in major new settlements and extensions to larger towns and villages, an approach which was considered to offer very little in the way of any new development or community benefits within The Abingtons. In addition, there was some resistance to earlier proposals by developers/landowners for land to be allocated in Great Abington, with sites for up to 337 dwellings being put forward in the initial call for sites.
- 3.2 The CAH identified three possible sites for housing that could meet local housing need. These were:
- Land at Linton Road, Great Abington;
 - Land at High Street/Pampisford Road, Great Abington; and
 - Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington.
- 3.3 The response form contained in the CAH consultation leaflet included questions about the merits of including each of the above sites as future housing allocations. A substantial majority of those that responded to the questions supported residential development of all three sites. In addition to the consultation leaflets sent out to all local residents, the CAH also consulted a number of external stakeholders, including: Natural England, Anglian Water, UK Power Networks, English Heritage (now Historic England), Cambridgeshire County Council and the Environment Agency. No substantive objections or major issues were raised by these stakeholders.
- 3.4 Both Parish Councils subsequently requested that SCDC should include these potential housing sites in the Local Plan Submission. However, as the emerging Local Plan was closed to submission at the start of 2014 it did not prove possible to include these sites as formal housing allocations and the District Council submitted its plan without these inclusions.
- 3.5 Following further work requested by the inspectors, South Cambridgeshire proposed and consulted on a number of major modifications to the submitted local plan, including the addition of a site H/1i on land at Linton Road, Great Abington. A number of the major modifications are in response to specific changes put forward as Parish Council-led proposals for housing development in their villages. They are proposed on the basis that the Parish Councils concerned have carried out consultation with their local communities and key stakeholders, since the Proposed Submission Local Plan consultation, that demonstrates support for their proposals, under the District Council's approach to Localism.
- 3.6 From the above it is clear that this site will meet the aspirations of both the Parish Council and CAH and ensure that development is provided which meets the needs of Great Abington and Little Abington, whereas the larger strategic allocations proposed will not meet the needs of the smaller, albeit very sustainable villages. Sites such as Linton Road also have advantages in that they can be brought forward quickly without the delays associated with delivering large scale housing sites and their infrastructure. The Council cannot demonstrate a deliverable five year housing land supply and the early delivery of this site will help to address this shortfall, until the larger allocations start to be delivered.

- 3.7 The provision of this scale of development will help to complement rather than overload local facilities and services and the constraints associated with the site can be readily addressed. The acceptability of the proposal is evidenced by the support which has been offered by the local community to this site. Whilst the application S/3435/16/FUL is for 45 dwellings, the scale and density of development is considered to represent the efficient use of the development land, especially when compared with the indicative 35 dwelling figure within the emerging policy. The scale of development has been endorsed by the Council in pre-application discussions pertaining to the current application. The proposed community orchard will also meet the requirements of the emerging policy and, whilst it is located on the eastern site boundary rather than the southern boundary, it has been agreed with the Council that this will also meet rather than compromise the objectives of the emerging policy.
- 3.8 This allocation clearly accords with paragraph 50 of the National Planning Policy Framework in that it is seeking to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. The Parish Council and CAH have also worked with their community and the site owner to identify the size, tenure and range of housing that is required in this particular location, reflecting local demand. The proposed allocation of the site fulfils this objective.
- 3.9 The allocation of this site clearly meets the objective of paragraph 69 of the NPPF in that it represents an example of a shared vision. This paragraph states that *“Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. To support this, local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans and in planning decisions, and should facilitate neighbourhood planning”*.
- 3.10 The failure to allocate this site would be in clear contradiction of the advice at paragraph 69 and would not deliver the facilities that the Parish Council as the local community would wish to see including affordable housing and a community orchard and in turn render the plan unsound, by the failure to allocate development to all tiers of the settlement hierarchy.

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the plan unsound without the allocation of the following sites for housing
development, or other uses
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b) Bancroft Farm, Church Lane (SHLAA site 028)

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Cheffins Planning and Development
Clifton House 1 and 2 Clifton Road
Cambridge CB1 7EA
01223 271985

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2. INTRODUCTION

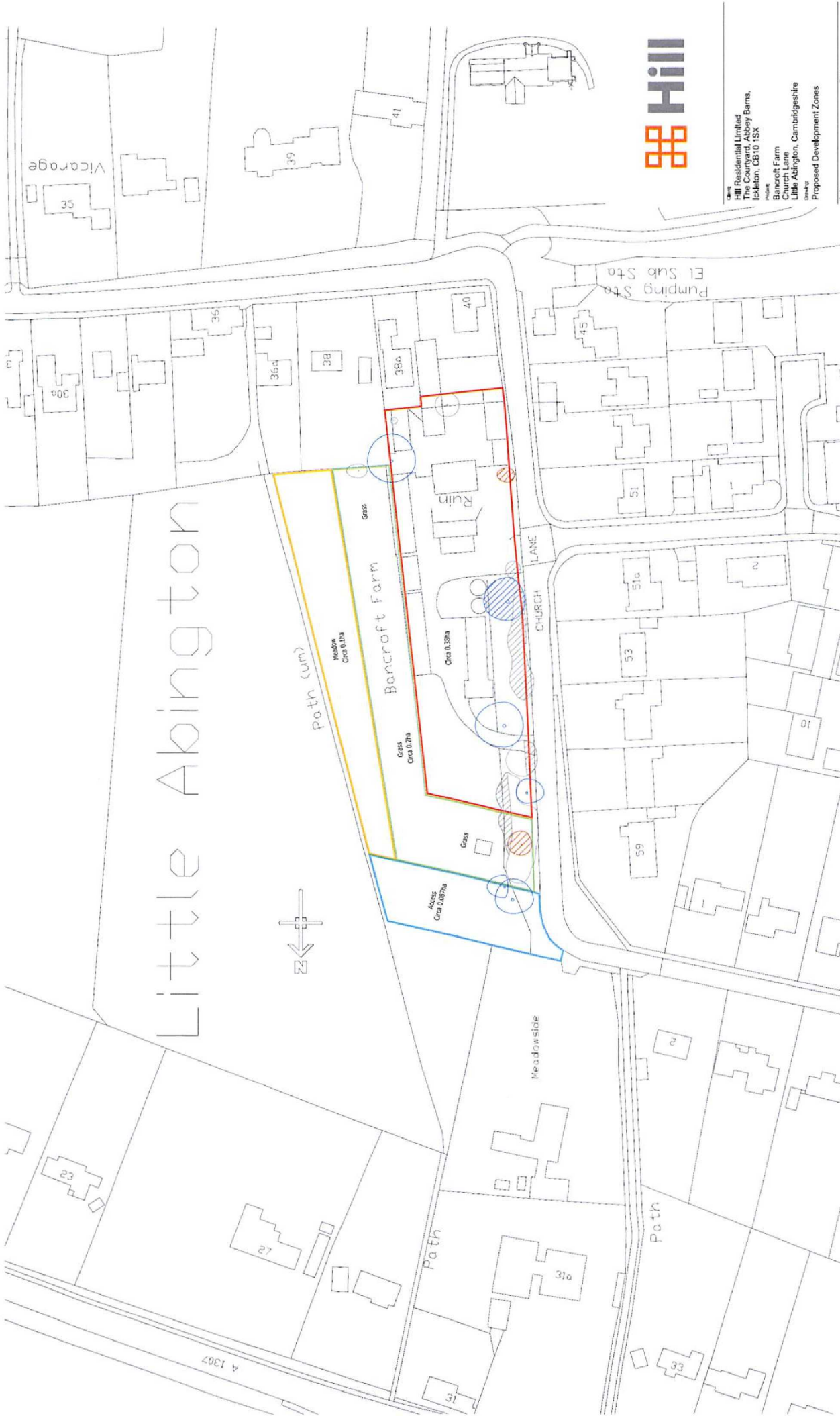
- 2.1 These representations have been submitted by Cheffins Planning and Development on behalf of Ms C Sawyer-Nutt, Ms B Gorna and Hill Residential in relation to their interests at land at Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington. This site is proposed for allocation by virtue of Policy H/1:k, a major modification to the emerging local plan. These representations are made in response to question ii raised by the Inspector in relation to Matter SC1 -1.4 H Great Abington and Little Abington.
- 2.2 The brownfield site comprises of derelict farm buildings of poor quality and in a state of disrepair measuring 0.42ha and has an indicative dwelling capacity of 6 dwellings. The owners/developers of the site are committed to proposing a development which enhances the Conservation Area and retains the flint boundary wall adjacent to Church Lane. The proposal to create a landscape buffer comprising of garden spaces and meadowland along the rear of the site to provide a soft green edge is the main area of difference between the Council and the site promoters. This is particularly as a result of the narrow width of the site, coupled with meeting the objectives of this allocation. As detailed in the following representations the provision of garden spaces to the east of the allocation site for the proposed house will allow wider community benefits to be realised as well as the enhancement of the Conservation Area and the landscaping setting of the site. In proposing changes to the allocation site boundary we are mindful of the Interim Findings of the Local Plan Inspector on the 16th March 2017 questioning the suitability of this land as Local Green Space by virtue of Policy NH/12 of the emerging South Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

3. QUESTION MATTER - SC1 – 1.4H

Question ii Omission Sites – Is the plan unsound without the allocation of the following site for housing development, or other uses specified below and if so why?

- 3.1 My clients consider that the plan would be unsound without the allocation of the site known as land at Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington. In 2011 The Parish Councils of Great Abington and Little Abington carried out a joint housing needs survey which identified the extent of housing need in both Parishes. Following this survey the two Parish Councils formed a Committee for Abington Housing (CAH). The CAH carried out a public consultation exercise during Autumn 2013. The purpose of this consultation was to gauge the community response to the CAH intention to request that the emerging SCDC Local Plan should include modest housing development sites within The Abingtons. The Parish Councils were concerned that the emerging Local Plan was focusing development in major new settlements and extensions to larger towns and villages, an approach which was considered to offer very little in the way of any new development or community benefits within The Abingtons. In addition, there was some resistance to earlier proposals by developers/landowners for land to be allocated in Great Abington, with sites for up to 337 dwellings being put forward in the initial call for sites.
- 3.2 The CAH identified three possible sites for housing that could meet local housing need. These were:
 - Land at Linton Road, Great Abington;
 - Land at High Street/Pampisford Road, Great Abington; and
 - Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington.
- 3.3 The response form contained in the CAH consultation leaflet included questions about the merits of including each of the above sites as future housing allocations. A substantial majority of those that responded to the questions supported residential development of all three sites. In addition to the consultation leaflets sent out to all local residents, the CAH also consulted a number of external stakeholders, including: Natural England, Anglian Water, UK Power Networks, English Heritage (now Historic England), Cambridgeshire County Council and the Environment Agency. No substantive objections or major issues were raised by these stakeholders.
- 3.4 Both Parish Councils subsequently requested that SCDC should include these potential housing sites in the Local Plan Submission. However, as the emerging Local Plan was close to submission at the start of 2014 it did not prove possible to include these sites as formal housing allocations and the District Council submitted its plan without these inclusions.
- 3.5 Following further work requested by the inspectors, South Cambridgeshire proposed and consulted on a number of major modifications to the submitted local plan, including the addition of a site H/1:k at Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington. A number of the major modifications are in response to specific changes put forward as Parish Council-led proposals for housing development in their villages. They are proposed on the basis that the Parish Councils concerned have carried out consultation with their local communities and key stakeholders, since the Proposed Submission Local Plan consultation, that demonstrates support for their proposals, under the District Council's approach to Localism.

- 3.6 As stated the only issue of contention is between the land owners/promoters and the Parish Council and the CAH relates to the provision of a landscape buffer on the eastern boundary of the site. The site proposed for allocation is only 27m wide and as a consequence of the significant tree line on the western site boundary (that is desired to be retained as part of the character of the site) the width of the development site is significantly reduced. This will make it very difficult to provide housing, parking and circulation areas, modest private amenity spaces and the requisite landscape buffer. To reconcile this conflict the landowners are seeking to extend the allocation boundary by circa 11-12m to the east into the existing field (see attached plan). It is important to note that this is to provide private amenity areas and the landscape buffer rather than built development. The provision of sheds and other trappings of domestic use can be controlled by way of condition or the removal of permitted development rights. As part of this suggested change to the allocation the landowners are looking to grant a lease to the Parish Council to use the remaining land to the east of the extended allocation site and to the west of the public footpath as a wildflower meadow. The management and maintenance of this area will become the responsibility of the Parish Council This will clearly enhance the setting of the footpath and provide a community facility. This will ensure that a real and tangible community benefit will arise from the allocation of the site which the current allocation will not achieve.
- 3.7 From the above it is clear that this site will meet the aspirations of both the Parish Council and CAH and ensure that development is provided which meets the needs of Great Abington and Little Abington, whereas the larger strategic allocations proposed will not meet the needs of the smaller, albeit very sustainable villages. Sites such as Bancroft Farm also have advantages in that they can be brought forward quickly without the delays associated with delivering large scale housing sites and their infrastructure. The Council cannot demonstrate a deliverable five year housing land supply and the early delivery of this site will help to address this shortfall, until the larger allocations start to be delivered.
- 3.8 The provision of this scale of development will help to complement rather than overload local facilities and services and the constraints associated with the site can be readily addressed. The acceptability of the proposal is evidenced by the support which has been offered by the local community to this site. It must also be recognised that the current site is in a very poor state of repair and it does not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Without appropriate development the land will continue to remain an eyesore. The proposed amendments suggested to the allocation boundary will allow a well-designed development which complements the area to be brought forward.
- 3.9 This allocation clearly accords with paragraph 50 of the National Planning Policy Framework in that it is seeking to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities. The Parish Council and CAH have also worked with their community and the site owner to identify the size, tenure and range of housing that is required in this particular location, reflecting local demand. The proposed allocation of the site fulfils this objective.
- 3.10 The allocation of this site clearly meets the objective of paragraph 69 in that it represents an example of a shared vision. This paragraph states that *"Local planning authorities should create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see. To support this, local planning authorities should aim to involve all sections of the community in the development of Local Plans and in planning decisions, and should facilitate neighbourhood planning"*.
- 3.11 The failure to allocate this site would be in clear contradiction of the advice at paragraph 69 and would not deliver the facilities that the Parish Council as the local community would wish to see and in turn render the plan unsound, by the failure to allocate development to all tiers of the settlement hierarchy.



Hill Residential Limited
 The Courtyard, Abbey Barns,
 Ickleton, CB10 1SX
 Project:
 Boncroft Farm
 Church Lane
 Little Abington, Cambridgeshire
 Proposed Development Zones

Scale:	1:5000	Date:	July 2017
Drawn by:	GM	Checked by:	GM
Drawn No:	SKETCH-03-05-2017	Rev. No.:	B
Drawn Name:		Drawn Date:	

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