

## LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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3 September 2017

Dear Sirs.

### **Uttlesford Draft Local Plan**

Little Abington Parish Council (LAPC) wishes to comment in response to the consultation on the draft Uttlesford Local Plan. Our comments relate specifically to the proposal for a Garden Village near Great Chesterford - the North Uttlesford Garden Village (NUGV).

#### **1. Lack of detail in the draft plan.**

The Parish Council notes that policy SP7 appears to consider a broad range of points associated with the proposed development in North Uttlesford. The Parish Council is very concerned about the lack of specific information and detail, including timescales.

#### **2. Scale of the development**

The proposed development would be on the border with South Cambridgeshire. It would be completely out of proportion with existing communities in the area which are small /medium villages and a small town, i.e. Saffron Walden, in Essex and with existing nearby settlements in South Cambridgeshire which are also predominately villages.

#### **3. Transport infrastructure.**

The Parish Council is extremely concerned about the lack of information on proposals for improving the local transport infrastructure. This includes roads, footpaths, cycleways and public transport links. The proposed layout would exacerbate transport problems, as the major exit from the proposed new settlement is to the west - putting a huge amount of pressure on a few roads. If this plan receives any further consideration we would expect there to have been demonstrable and effective consultation with the County Highways teams in Essex, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire and the Highways Agency on road capacity and Sustrans for advice on cycle routes and also with rail service providers.

Roads in this area are already running very close to full capacity. We note that it is anticipated that some residents from NUGV would work on the local science parks including Hinxton, Babraham and Great Abington.

The A505 is frequently at a standstill from Duxford (the M11) to the A11. We are not aware of any plans to improve the road to accommodate planning proposals in South Cambridgeshire let alone

the impact of any developments in Uttlesford and further afield. The A11 is a busy route and local trunk roads such as the A1301 and the A1307 are also already congested in peak periods.

If any residents were to commute down the M11 towards Stansted airport, London and towns en-route consideration would need to be given to improving the capacity and traffic flows at the junction at Stump Cross and the M11. Traffic is often slow or stationary at busy times.

The capacity of the A1307 between Haverhill and Fourwentways is subject to discussions with the Greater Cambridge Partnership (The City Deal). The Uttlesford Plan might provide an opportunity for collaborative working and investment to enhance road transport links between Haverhill and the M11 at Stump Cross and hence to relieve the pressure on the A1307.

Cycling from NUGV to the local science parks and to local public transport hubs should be a consideration. Options for safe cycling routes would also need to be developed.

It is likely that some of the residents of NUGV would commute by train into London. Commuter rail services between Whittlesford and London are already very popular and operate close to capacity. Commuters often park in Whittlesford rather than at the railway station and the station car parks are usually full before the rush hour is over. The Uttlesford plan must consider improvements in rail services from Great Chesterford to prevent any further pressures on services to and from Whittlesford.

#### **4. Strategic oversight and collaboration with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council**

The Parish Council is very concerned about the lack of evidence of collaboration with South Cambridgeshire District Council despite the proposed development being so close to South Cambridgeshire.

Several significant housing and commercial developments are already being considered at Hinxton and Sawston. It is vital that the local authorities work together to develop the necessary strategic vision and oversight to deliver a robust plan that is sustainable and adequately resourced. This could include some consideration of what contribution the NUGV development might make to addressing any potential lack in housing supply in South Cambridgeshire thus reducing pressure and the potential for speculative development on undeveloped green spaces in South Cambridgeshire.

Also, as outlined above there must be some potential for joint investment decisions between the local authorities in South Cambridgeshire, Uttlesford and St Edmundsbury to enable robust and sustainable strategic development.

#### **5. Provision of education and health facilities at NUGV**

The scheduling for development of schools and health facilities is not included in the proposals.

It does not seem unreasonable to assume that new housing developments would attract young families with children. Schools will be required. Based on the assumption that many of the residents will be travelling into South Cambridgeshire to work parents may have an expectation of access to educational facilities in Linton, Great Abington, Sawston and elsewhere. This is unlikely to be possible. Even without the completion of the proposed developments in South Cambridgeshire schools in the area are full. The Uttlesford plan must include details and a timetable for provision for education locally.

We would also expect that a proposal for such a large development would have clear plans and timetables for the provision of local health and social care facilities. What discussions has Uttlesford District Council had with local National Health Service providers and commissioners of health and social care in Essex and South Cambridgeshire?

## **6. Water supplies**

East Anglia is the driest part of the UK and water supplies need to be actively conserved. Groundwater resources are critical to the public water supply in South Cambridgeshire. The chalk aquifer to the south and east of Cambridge, which includes the area around Great Chesterford is an important strategic resource and the principal source for the Cambridge Water Company. It is highly vulnerable to any development which could pollute it or prevent it from re-charging. LAPC would expect the Environment Agency to be included in any discussions about such a massive housing development that could impact on ground water supply.

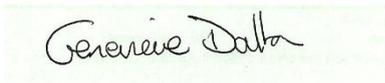
## **CONCLUSION.**

Based on the information in the draft local plan Little Abington Parish Council can find little evidence that the development of NUGV can be justified or that there has been any effective planning and consideration of the infrastructure requirements and impact on the natural environment associated with such a large-scale development.

The apparent lack of collaboration and strategic working with South Cambridgeshire District Council and other agencies is a major concern. It gives the impression of an opportunistic development rather than a properly developed and thought through planning proposal.

The consultation has taken place over the summer. The outcome of the consultation is likely to lack credibility with the public. We would strongly urge the local authority to ensure that any future consultations are timed so that they can be genuinely meaningful and effective, offering realistic opportunities for comprehensive public engagement.

Yours Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light green rectangular background. The signature reads "Genevieve Datta" in a cursive script.

Clerk  
Little Abington Parish Council