

Written Statement

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Examination

Matter SC1: Development Frameworks, Strategy for Rural Area, and Omission Sites

Client: Mr Roger Worboys

Site: Land off Elbourn Way, Bassingbourn

Rep ID No.: 59890

Introduction

This Written Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr Roger Worboys, who has an interest in land north of Elbourn Way in Bassingbourn. This Statement is focussed on the omission of land off Elbourn Way in Bassingbourn from the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (SCLP). The representations submitted to the draft Local Plan in October 2013 remain valid, and are relevant to other questions in Matter SC1, and in particular that there has been no assessment of the capacity of individual villages to accommodate the minimum scheme size thresholds. In addition, there have been material changes since SCLP was submitted for examination, including that it has been confirmed that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply and a number of appeals have been allowed and applications approved in Group Villages (and Group Villages which are due to be reclassified as Minor Rural Centres). The sustainability of villages has been reassessed through the appeals process, and edge of village locations have been accepted as suitable for residential development. The outcome of those appeals is equally relevant to higher order settlements.

1.3 MINOR RURAL CENTRES

Question.1.3A Bassingbourn

ii Omission sites

Is the plan unsound without the allocation of the following sites for housing development, and if so why?:

a. Land north of Elbourn Way

Introduction

1. In summary, the submitted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (SCLP) is unsound without the allocation of land north of Elbourn Way in Bassingbourn. The Council acknowledge that it cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply, and the land supply position has deteriorated since SCLP was submitted for examination. The outcome of recent appeal decisions and decisions on planning applications demonstrate that residential development on the edge of villages are sustainable; the SCLP adopts a different approach and makes only a limited number of residential allocations in the villages despite these being identified at

appeal and in decisions on planning applications as sustainable locations. If, as determined at appeal, Group Villages (and Group Villages due to be reclassified as Minor Rural Centres) are sustainable locations for additional development then land in other sustainable villages should be considered as allocations in SCLP. The failure to allocate sufficient sites for residential development in the villages within SCLP would not support the rural economy and the existing services and facilities within villages, and would not meet rural housing and affordable housing needs. A range of sites are needed to meet the housing land supply, including small and medium sized housing sites in the sustainable villages which are typically less complex and can be delivered quickly and as such would make an early contribution to the housing land supply shortfall.

Housing Land Supply Position

2. The Council acknowledge that it cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. The calculated supply is 3.7 years when correctly applying a 20% buffer because of persistent under-delivery and the Sedgefield approach to meet the current housing shortfall - see table on pg.62 and table in Appendix 3 pg.200 in the Annual Monitoring Report 2016 [Doc Ref. RD/AD/480]. The 20% buffer and Sedgefield approach were accepted as the appropriate method for calculating the housing land supply for South Cambridgeshire in the two Waterbeach appeals in 2014 [Doc Refs. RD/Strat/330 and RD/Strat/340] and there has been no change in circumstances since to suggest a different approach should be applied now. The table in Appendix 3 pg.200 in the Annual Monitoring Report 2016 [Doc Ref. RD/AD/480] shows that the Council does not expect to be in a position to demonstrate a five year housing land supply until the period 2020-2025. The housing land supply position has deteriorated since SCLP was submitted for examination. The housing land supply has been boosted by appeal decisions in the last three years, but these are insufficient to address the shortfall. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF seeks to boost significantly the supply of housing, and expects local planning authorities to identify deliverable sites to maintain a five year housing land supply; the Council is clearly not meeting this requirement. The fact that a significant number of residential developments in Minor Rural Centres and Group Villages have been allowed on appeal in the last three years demonstrate that the Council has adopted a negative approach towards developments which have been found acceptable in terms of constraints, potential impacts and sustainability. The Council's inability to demonstrate a five year housing land supply is unsound because it demonstrates that SCLP is not consistent with national policy and is not positively prepared. Additional sites in the more sustainable villages, and in particular small and medium sites which can be delivered quickly and easily, need to be identified in SCLP to address the current housing land supply shortfall.
3. We are aware that there are a number of matters which have not yet been confirmed as sound which could affect the housing land supply position, including the following: the preferred housing target (including modifications) in Policy S/5: Provision of New Jobs and Homes; and, the proposed strategy for the new settlements, including infrastructure requirements and delivery assumptions, at Waterbeach (Policy SS/5: Waterbeach New Town) and Bourn Airfield (Policy SS/6: New Village at Bourn Airfield). A higher housing target would make the housing land supply position worse than it currently is. Any amendments to the delivery assumptions,

and delays in particular, at the new settlements (if accepted as sound) would have a significant detrimental effect on the housing land supply position; the delivery of new settlements is complex and it typically takes much longer for development to commence than first predicted e.g. Northstowe.

Development Strategy for Minor Rural Centres

4. In summary, the development strategy for Minor Rural Centres is based on the following: a defined Development Framework boundary for the villages to distinguish the urban area from the countryside – see Policy S/7; and, identify an indicative maximum scheme size of 30 dwellings, within the Development Framework boundary of Minor Rural Centres – see Policy S/9. There has been no assessment undertaken to determine what capacity exists within Minor Rural Centres to accommodate schemes of up to the maximum site size threshold, and in most cases the Development Framework boundaries are unchanged from the 2004 Local Plan. The previously developed sites and the easily deliverable sites within the Development Framework boundaries would already have come forward since 2004. It is not clear whether any sites within the villages are still available to meet future housing needs, and if so how many sites and how many dwellings could be provided. The development strategy for the villages provides no or limited support for existing services and facilities in villages including schools and would not deliver additional affordable housing.

Sustainability of Villages – Outcome of Recent Appeals & Applications

5. There have been four recent appeal decisions in South Cambridgeshire which are relevant to sustainable development in Group Villages. The outcome of those appeals are equally relevant to current Group Villages such as Bassingbourn, which is due to be upgraded to a Minor Rural Centres. The details of the appeals are as follows: Land at 18 Boxworth End, Swavesey (Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/15/3139078) for 30 dwellings [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/010]; Land at Linton Road, Balsham (Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/16/3162747) for up to 29 dwellings [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/020]; Land at 8 Greenacres, Duxford (Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/15/3138791) for 35 dwellings [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/030]; and, Land to the west of Mill Road, Over (Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/16/3148949) for 55 dwellings [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/040]. In all cases the appeals were allowed, and are relevant to SCLP because of how the Inspectors assessed sustainable development in these Group Villages. The Inspectors in all four cases were not concerned with the status of the villages as Group Villages in reaching their decision, and assessed sustainable development in its widest context against all three strands; see Paragraphs 52 and 53 of the Swavesey appeal decision [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/010], Paragraphs 25 to 28 of the Duxford appeal decision [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/030], Paragraphs 18 to 23 of the Balsham appeal decision [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/020], and Paragraph 54 to 58 of the Over appeal decision [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/040].
6. The Over appeal decision, as the most recent decision, is particularly relevant to the allocation of housing sites in Group Villages in SCLP. In that case the indicative layout demonstrated that a suitable development could be delivered, which included commitments to retain and enhance landscape and biodiversity features and provide planning obligations to address

impacts on infrastructure. A similar outcome could be achieved for other developments in Group Villages, including our client's site, if allocated for development in SCLP.

7. Paragraph 48 of the Over appeal decisions is also relevant and supports the point made above, that Group Villages are suitable locations for additional development, sites in these villages are needed to meet the current housing land supply shortfall, and further developments above and beyond those allowed on appeal (and at Planning Committee) are needed to address the five year housing land supply position. Paragraph 48 states:

"48. The Council cannot provide a five year housing land supply. That has been the case persistently and there is no evidence to demonstrate that there is a realistic prospect that that position will be changed in the short term. Even with the Council seeking to apply a more flexible approach, as it has put it, there is still a significant shortfall and there is no indication of when that would be addressed. The Council accept that it will need to approve housing schemes in Group village locations, Ms Ballantyne-Way cross examination, and indeed Ms Ballantyne-Way's new appendix 5 shows they are approving such. However, the level of approvals are not at such a scale or rate that they are making significant in-roads into the shortfall. Therefore in this context it is likely that further approvals will need to come forward in Group Village locations to meet the Council's housing needs. I have no reason to suppose, on the evidence before me, that other sites likely to come forward under the flexible approach the Council is adopting would have better access to services. A concern that the location of this development would lead to journeys for shopping trips is therefore something that is potentially to be repeated at other such locations and therefore does not make this site significantly less sustainable than any other sites in terms of travel and transport issues."

8. The Council's Planning Committee has recently resolved to grant planning permission for residential development in Hardwick (App Ref. S/1694/16/OL) for 98 dwellings - see Committee Report for the application [Doc Ref. RD/CAR/050]. Hardwick is a Group Village. The Application Site is located outside but on the edge of the Development Framework boundary for the village. Paragraphs 144 to 155 of the Committee Report provide the conclusions and a summary of the assessment of the application. It is clear that the proposed development for 98 dwellings was supported, despite the current and proposed maximum scheme size limit of 8 dwellings for Group Villages (see Policy ST/6 of adopted Core Strategy and Policy S/10 of SCLP). The delivery of additional housing and affordable housing were identified as a benefit of the proposed development. It is also clear that the potential constraint of landscape and visual impact on the edge of the village was considered, and a landscape buffer was included within the proposed development as a solution. In addition, the proposed development provided for planning obligations to address the impacts on infrastructure. The outcome of the Hardwick application demonstrates that the Council now accepts that Group Villages are suitable locations for additional residential development; which is a completely different approach to the one pursued through SCLP where no allocations are made in Group Villages (except for the parish council-led allocations - described below).

Allocations in Group and Infill Villages

9. We note that modifications are proposed to SCLP to insert four parish council-led housing allocations in Group and Infill Villages: H/1:i Land at Linton Road, Great Abington for 35 dwellings; H/1:j Land at High Street/Pampisford Road, Great Abington for 12 dwellings; H/1:k Land at Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington for 6 dwellings; and, H/1:l Land at Toseland Road, Graveley for 6 dwellings. The allocation for each site specify the requirements for development, including that potential impacts on landscape, heritage assets, and trees for example are addressed. It is an inconsistent approach to allocate sites in these categories of village because they are proposed by the relevant parish councils, but reject other sites at a similar level of the settlement hierarchy. The benefits associated with the proposed allocations at Great Abington, Little Abington and Graveley could equally apply to other sustainable villages e.g. contribute to the housing land supply, meet local housing needs, and support the rural economy and local services and facilities. The national policy requirements to support the economy of rural areas and promote additional housing in those areas to enhance and maintain the vitality of rural communities have been ignored in Minor Rural Centres such as Bassingbourn.

Conclusions on Soundness

10. The overall development strategy and the failure to consider Bassingbourn for small and medium sized development is unsound because:
- it fails to consider all three dimensions of sustainable development jointly and simultaneously (NPPF Paras. 7 and 8);
 - it is contrary to the core planning principles (NPPF Para.17);
 - it does not support the economy of the rural area (NPPF Para. 28);
 - it will not address the housing supply and demand in South Cambridgeshire, and significant affordability pressures (NPPF Para. 47); and
 - it will not promote sustainable development in rural areas that meets local housing needs and that maintains and enhances the vitality of rural communities (NPPF Para. 55).
11. The positive benefits of meeting housing and affordable housing needs including local needs in villages such as Bassingbourn have not been properly factored in to the development strategy.
12. Policy H/1: Village Housing Allocations is not sound because it is not positively prepared, not justified, not effective, and not consistent with national policy. Policy H/1 can only be made sound by allocating more land for development in the villages, including land off Elborn Way in Bassingbourn.

Land North of Elbourn Way, Bassingbourn - Site Assessment

13. The site was assessed in the SHLAA in 2012 (SHLAA Ref. 219) and was identified in part at Issues & Options stage as a potential development option (Option 38 - Land North of Elbourn Way). A plan showing the SHLAA 2013 sites in Bassingbourn is provided in **Appendix 1**. The

assessment of the site in the SHLAA update in 2013 reached a different conclusion, and suggests that the site has no development potential. The SHLAA should be an objective assessment of the development potential of sites based on meeting identified housing needs, and not influenced by current policy. In these circumstances the original assessment in 2012 and the reassessment in 2013 should have reached the same conclusion.

14. We note that one of the other sites in Bassingbourn assessed in the SHLAA has recently been granted planning permission - SHLAA Ref. 078 Land East of Spring Lane Bassingbourn, granted outline planning permission for 30 dwellings on 23rd March 2017 (Ref. S/1745/16/OL). The assessment of this site in the SHLAA 2013 raised similar issues and potential constraints to be addressed to those identified in the assessment of Land North of Elbourn Way e.g. heritage assets including conservation area and listed buildings, and loss of agricultural land. Regardless of the apparent constraints that were previously identified in the SHLAA, the land east of Spring Lane was granted planning permission, which demonstrates an inconsistent and negative assessment process.
15. The impact of development at Land North of Elbourn Way in Bassingbourn on the adjacent Conservation Area and surrounding landscape could be addressed through careful design and layout with additional landscaping. The land to the west of the site is owned by Mr Worboys, and could be used for open space and allotments in conjunction with development of the neighbouring land off Elbourn Way. An archaeological assessment of the site needs to be undertaken, but it is unlikely that archaeology will prevent development from occurring, and if any remains are found then options of retention in situ or recording and removal exist. An ecological assessment of the site needs to be undertaken, but it is likely that any protected habitats and species can be accommodated within any development and biodiversity enhancement measures could be included at the site.
16. The site is 5.31 hectares in size and could accommodate approximately 100 dwellings including open space. The site is well-related to the existing development in the village, and represents a logical extension to the development framework of Bassingbourn. The site can be accessed via Elbourn Way. Mr Worboys also owns the land to the south of Park Close, and if required a secondary access could be provided in this location.
17. Bassingbourn has a very good range of facilities, including a secondary school and primary school, doctor's surgery, dentist, pharmacy, library, village store and other convenience shops, post office, plus good range of other facilities, and community facilities. There are good bus connections to Cambridge and Royston. We conclude that Bassingbourn is a very sustainable village with few constraints, and a suitable location for additional development. It is inconsistent to unnecessarily constrain development in such villages. The Conservation Area will limit the amount of development that can take place within the existing village, and in these circumstances sites on the edge of the village should have been assessed more positively. The assessment of sites should have considered whether any potential constraints could be overcome through careful design and layout, restricting development on parts of sites, or subdividing sites. As set out above, the parish-led housing allocations in Group Villages identified factors such as landscape and heritage assets that would need to be taken

into account in development at those sites, and recent appeals in Group Villages have also accepted that constraints could be addressed through design and layout at reserved matters stage. As such, we conclude that the evidence used to support the decision not to allocate sites in Bassingbourn is not robust, and the strategy in Policy H/1 for village housing allocations is not justified.

Requested Change

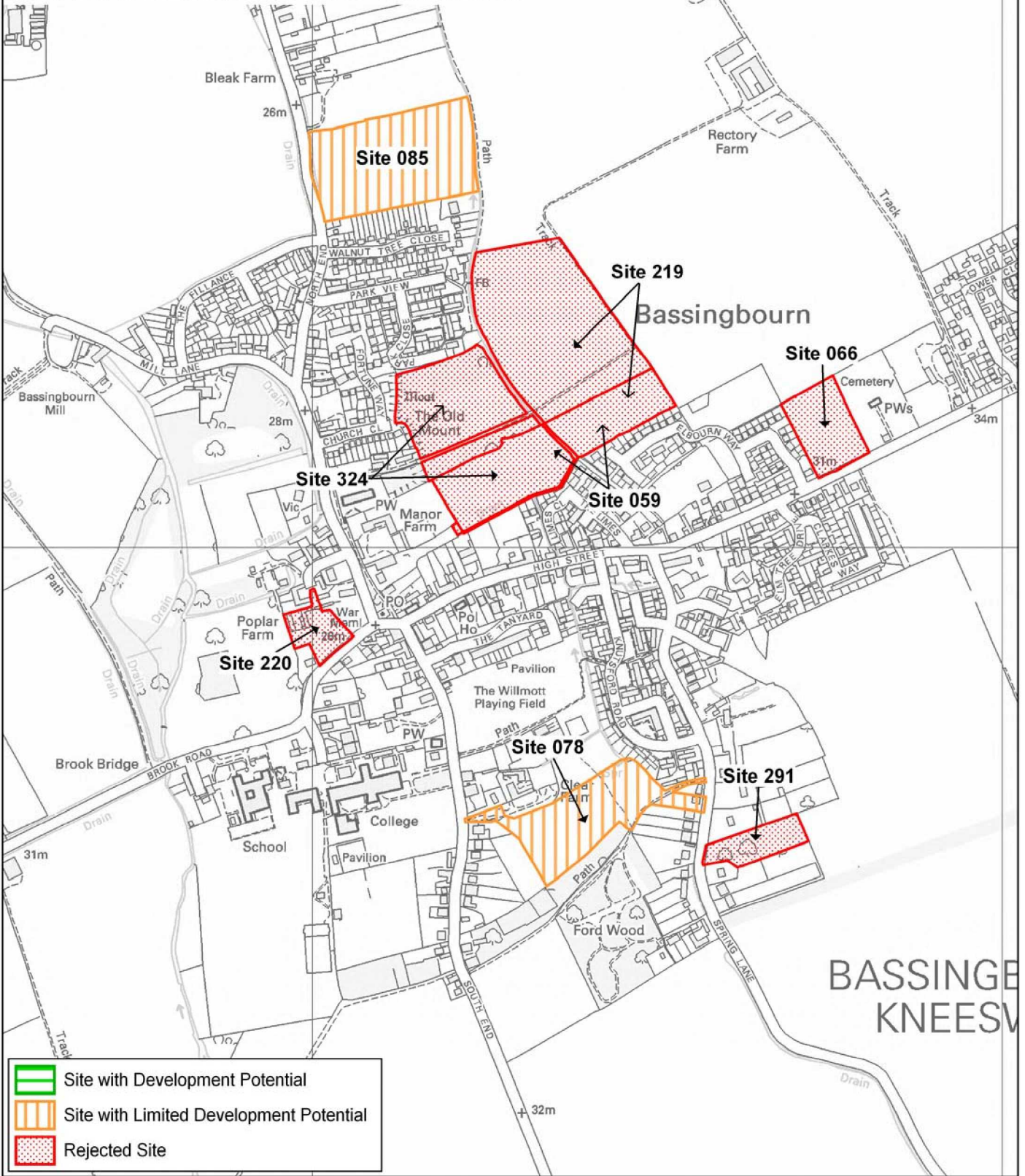
18. Bassingbourn is a suitable village for additional development, and sites should be identified within and adjacent to the development framework boundary to meet the housing and affordable housing need within the village. We request that potential development sites in Bassingbourn are reassessed to meet those housing needs. We request that Land to the North of Elbourn Way in Bassingbourn is allocated for residential development in Policy H/1, and is included within the housing trajectory contained in Table 3.

Carter Jonas – 2nd May 2017

Carter Jonas

Appendix 1

Basingbourn SHLAA Sites



Created:	June 2013
Last Updated:	August 2013
Service:	Planning Policy
Scale:	1:8000 @ A4

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Bassingbourn Village Sites

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