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Huntingdonshire Local Plan
Programme Officer
Pathfinder House
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Ref: 3160le/L002ra

28th August 2018

Dear Annette Feeney

HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036 EXAMINATION**EXAM/04: Note for the Inspector Regarding Availability of Services within Settlements**

We write to you on behalf of our client, Caddick Land Ltd and Landowners David Hicks, Sarah Williams, Harry Williams and Helen Landy to comment on the reassessment of available services within settlements, particularly in relation to our clients' interest in Land to the east of North Street, Stilton. This reassessment was undertaken as a result of the inspector's request for further work following the Matter 3 hearing sessions held on 17th and 18th July 2018.

It is our view that the reassessment of the availability of services within settlements clearly shows that simply equating sustainability to the number of existing services and facilities does not appropriately identify the most sustainable settlements which are capable of accommodating growth in Huntingdonshire.

We have shown, through a scoring system that a number of settlements are incorrectly allocated in regard to their sustainability for housing development. As a result of this reassessment, we believe that Stilton should be allocated as at least a Local Service Centre.

The table below sets out the available services and facilities in the local service centres of Alconbury, Bluntisham and Great Staughton alongside the available services and facilities in Stilton.

Each subsection (shops, services, facilities, education, health and bus service) is given a score as follows:

- Good access – 5 points
- Moderate access – 3 points
- Poor access – 1 point

The table is laid out below.

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Reassessment of Services within Settlements: Local Service Centres and Stilton

	Alconbury	Bluntisham	Great Staughton	Stilton
Shops				
Convenience Store	Costcutter	Budgens	n/a	Nisa
Other Shops	n/a	n/a	Buds2bloom Florist G M Gilbert Butchers	K H Richards Watch Repairs A1 Cherriash Garden Centre and Pet Shop
	Access to a convenience store but no other shops.	Access to a convenience store but no other shops.	No convenience stores.	Access to convenience store and two other stores.
Services				
Restaurants/Café/Takeaway/ Public House	Manor House Hotel	The Lounge White Swan	The Snooty Tavern White Hart Pub	The Angel Spice Indian Stilton Oaks Golf Club S Bar The Bell Inn
Hair Salon/Barbers/Beauty	Salon 17	Kevin Anthony Hair Studio The Village Barbers	Olympus Hair Design Harmony Treatment Rooms Mays Hair Lounge	Hi Lite Hair Ten Hairdressing
Other		BP Garage JP Auto Centre	Still and Sons wood burners	Colbrook Car Sales and Repairs
	Poor access to other services with one hair salon and one hotel.	Good access to a range of services.	Good access to a range of services.	Good access to a range of services.
Community Facilities				
Public Hall	Alconbury Sports and Social Club Memorial Hall	Bluntisham Village Hall St Marys Church Hall Ex-Servicemen's Club	Village Hall	Stilton Pavilion Parish Meeting Room

	Alconbury	Bluntisham	Great Staughton	Stilton
Worship	St Peter and St Paul Church	Bluntisham Baptist Church St Marys		St Mary Magdelene
Other		BaCStage		
	Good access to community facilities.	Good access to community facilities.	Access to one village hall.	Good access to community facilities.
Education				
Primary	Alconbury CofE Primary School	St Helens Primary School	Great Staughton Primary School	Stilton CofE Primary School
Pre-school/Playgroup	Alconbury Community Pre-school	Brambles Playgroup		Stilton Playgroup
Surplus/Deficit	-29	115	55	-56*
	Primary school and preschool available. However, primary school over capacity.	Good access to primary school and playgroup with capacity.	Access to a primary school with capacity, no pre-school or playgroup.	Primary school and preschool available. However, primary school over capacity.
Health				
GP	Alconbury Surgery and Dispensary	Bluntisham Branch Surgery (GP Tuesday 9.15-10.45; Nurse Thursday 9:15-12:00) Dispensary 9.15-10.45 Mon, Tues, Wed, Friday.	Great Staughton Surgery	Stilton Memorial Hall has planning permission for a new pharmacy with consulting room to offer branch services at limited hours. Halls Chemist head office have confirmed verbally that this is going ahead. We anticipate this will offer the same services at the Bluntisham Branch Surgery.
Clinics	n/a	n/a	n/a	Stilton Foot Clinic Crooks Physiotherapy**
Chemist	Alconbury Chemist	n/a	n/a	Halls the Chemist**

	Alconbury	Bluntisham	Great Staughton	Stilton
	Surgery and chemist available.	Surgery available at limited hours.	Surgery available.	Chemist available. New chemist with consultant rooms coming soon. Foot Clinic.
Bus Service				
Monday to Friday	401 46A B	21 A	150	46A B 5
Approximate Frequency	21 per day (each way)	3 per day (each way) 3 per day (one way)	4 per day (each way)	34 per day (each way)
Saturday	46A B	22 A	150	46A B 5
Approximate Frequency	20 per day (each way)	3 per day (each way) 3 per day (one way)	4 per day (each way)	34 per day (each way)
Sunday	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Regular bus services Monday to Saturday.	Poor bus service, just 9 per day in total.	Poor bus service, just 8 per day in total.	Regular bus services Monday to Saturday.
Final Score	22	22	18	26

* Whilst the School is currently over capacity, a planning application has just been granted for a 4-classroom extension and this will provide more space within the school.

** Halls Chemist Stilton and Crooks Complete Physiotherapy are both currently available services which run from the Nisa Convenience Store at 4 Church Street and 17 Church Close. These services were not included in the reassessment of available services by the Council.

When comparing the results of the reassessment, we see that Stilton scores 26 and is a more sustainable settlement than Alconbury (22), Bluntisham (22) and Great Staughton (18); all of the allocated local service centres.

Taking Great Staughton, the least sustainable Local Service Centre, and comparing this with Stilton, we see that although the settlement boasts access to Great Staughton Surgery, the settlement does not contain a convenience or food store and has only limited access to community facilities and education services. This means therefore that residents of Great Staughton have to travel to other settlements for their day to day needs. Residents are likely to use convenience stores much more regularly than Doctor's surgeries and therefore this should be a key consideration when determining how sustainable a settlement is. In addition, the settlement of Great Staughton is serviced by just one bus service Monday-Saturday providing limited sustainable connections with other nearby settlements.

Paragraph 4.100 of the emerging New Huntingdonshire Local Plan describes local service centres as *“large villages, outside of spatial planning areas, that offer a **range of services and facilities to meet the daily needs of their residents and to some extent the residents of other villages nearby**”*. It is clear from this assessment that Great Staughton does not provide a range of services and facilities to meet the daily needs of residents.

In comparison, Stilton boasts access to a range of shops and services, a good level of community facilities, a primary school and playgroup as well as a chemist. There are also approved plans for a new pharmacy, together with a consulting room, to be provided on North Street to improve Halls the Chemist's health care offering within the settlement. Whilst this service is not yet open, the relevant steps are being undertaken, and this has been confirmed by Halls the Chemist head office. This is likely to be in place prior to the adoption of the Local Plan and should therefore be taken into consideration in this assessment. In addition, two bus services run through the settlement of Stilton, connecting the village with many nearby larger settlements, further services and employment opportunities. Once open this new chemist with consulting space will bring the settlement in line with what is currently available in Bluntisham (Doctor available for 1.5 hours per week). Bluntisham has been assessed as being a Local Service Centre.

The assessment makes clear that Stilton is a larger village, with a **range of services and facilities** which **meet the daily needs of residents**.

Stilton is the most sustainable settlement when compared with the proposed Local Service Centres.

It is our view therefore that the reassessment of available services in settlements further supports our case that Stilton should be reallocated as a Local Service Centre and demonstrates that the current settlement hierarchy has been inappropriately allocated, the most sustainable settlements in Huntingdonshire have not been correctly identified in the emerging New Huntingdonshire Local Plan.

Yours sincerely

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