

**LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL
RESPONSE TO THE AGRITECH PLANNING APPLICATION SENT JANUARY 2018**

Ref: S/4099/17/OL. Land to the east of the A1301, south of the A505 near Hinxton and west of the A1301, north of the A505 near Whittlesford

Thank you for allowing additional time for consultation on this application. Little Abington Parish Council discussed it at its meeting on 22 January 2018.

Little Abington Parish Council (LAPC) does not support this outline planning application. The application appears to be speculative, with few, if any, clear plans for the type of research and activities on the site, and a great number of matters left for the detailed applications.

The Parish Council's chief concerns are as follows:

Lack of alignment with Local Development Strategies.

A development of this scale cannot be considered in isolation from other development proposals. It must be considered within the overall strategic vision for South Cambridgeshire. The Parish Council is aware of significant developments in progress in or near Sawston and including a trade park, housing and a new sports facility. The prospect of a significant development just across the local authority border in North Uttlesford must not be overlooked. LAPC's view is that a major proposal such as this must be considered in the wider strategic context within a revised South Cambs Local Development plan

Transport infrastructure.

The application estimates the site will have approximately 4000 employees. LAPC feels that it is unrealistic to expect that only 50% of employees will drive to work. The majority of employees will not live close to the site. If the site is to attract new people to the area there is nowhere for them to live. Indeed, the proposal for the Uttlesford Garden Village assumes that the majority of residents there will be commuting into South Cambridgeshire.

The experience of local residents contradicts the findings of the traffic surveys and modelling. Local roads including the A505 and the A1301 are already running over capacity. There are traffic jams on the A505 for long periods during morning and evening rush hours to such an extent that traffic backs up onto the M11, which is clearly dangerous. The A505 between Royston and Duxford is also dangerous. The A1301 was not built to be a major trunk road. The fixes around "the McDonalds roundabout" proposed in this application are inadequate. If anything they may create an additional bottleneck. Significant investment together with a strategic plan for solving the problems of the existing inadequate road network on the South Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Essex border must be considered. This must include improvements at Stump Cross and better access for A11 traffic

The train service to and from Whittlesford Parkway is already full. Reliability of the service would also need to improve substantially. Local car parks are full and commuters park in the street. On many occasions there is standing room only on the trains. There would need to be some discussion with National Rail about the potential to enhance local train services and the facilities at the railway station, local bus providers about improving bus services and with the local authority to consider the development of more parking facilities and an effective public transport hub close to the station. The estimates of a five-minute cycle ride or a 20 minute walk to the site seem astonishingly optimistic.

Viability of the proposal

The objective of improving global food production is laudable. As the UK approaches the prospect of Brexit its place in global research & development may well need to be strengthened and, if successful, this proposal could contribute, in a small way, to the economic development of Cambridgeshire and of UK plc. LAPC is not qualified to assess the scientific basis of this proposal however it would seem to make more sense strategically for it to be located close to other agricultural research sites in and around East Anglia. If it was found that the business model was not workable LAPC is concerned that the use of the site would change or it might be left under occupied to decay.

Environmental impact.

Clearly the pollution due to additional road traffic and congestion generated by this development (see above) will have an impact on the environment. LAPC also noted concerns about the aquifer and increased flood risks. The local authority would need to pay careful attention to any noise and light pollution. Many residents in the Abingtons are affected by constant intrusive background noise as well as overnight lighting from Granta Park which some might consider to be a low-density development

Community facilities

LAPC noted the intention for public access and the developers' goals linked to improving the health and well-being of the local population through access to open-air and green spaces etc. Recent experience of working with Granta Park clearly demonstrates that such promises are worthless unless the local authority is able to formally enshrine them in law.

Kind Regards

Genevieve Dalton

Clerk

Little Abington Parish Council