1. **Introduction**
1.1 I have been requested by the owners of approximately 0.79 hectares of land situated on the eastern side of Brackley Lane, Abthorpe, to seek to include part of the site within the village boundary, to enable a range of types of housing development to take place.
1.2 The representations are in response to the current consultation on the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 Submission Draft and relate to the proposed policies on the definition of village confine boundaries and the housing policies which relate to development in villages.

2. **Description of site**
2.1 The site has a frontage to the eastern side of Brackley Lane of 55 metres to the south of a fairly recently completed development of nine dwellings known as Snelson’s Orchard which extends from the junction with Wappenham Road. To the south of the site, fronting the east side of Brackley Lane are a further nine dwellings dating from the 1970s/80s which extend a further 100 metres down the Lane. On the opposite side of Brackley lane are a block of lock-up garages and eight dwellings which extend the same distance down the lane as properties on the opposite side. Half way along the row of eight dwellings is a cul-de-sac Stanhill Row, which gives access to a further five properties.
2.2 The depth of the site where it fronts Brackley Lane is around 50 metres. The land then extends further to the south behind the rear gardens as a narrower parcel of land between 25 and 30 metres deep and 135 metres long.
2.3 The boundaries of the site as a whole are hedgerows containing individual trees.

3. **The proposals**
3.1 The owners wish to be able to achieve residential development on the main part of the site which fronts Brackley Lane. Two alternative sketch layouts were produced at the Pre-Submission Draft stage which are still applicable. One shows a development of 6 dwellings on that part of the site between Snelson’s Orchard and 21 Brackley Road on an area of 0.26 hectares. The second shows a development of 10 dwellings, extending partly behind 21 Brackley Road on a slightly larger area of 0.33 hectares. In both cases a field access would be provided to the rest of the land, which would remain available for grazing use.

4. **Relevant policies**
4.1 **Policy SS2 General Development Principles** sets out criteria a) to r) by which development proposals will be judged. It is considered that development of the site would be capable of meeting all of the relevant criteria, in particular it would maintain the individuality of the village and not contribute to any significant reduction in open countryside, being an infill site between existing dwellings within the village (criterion a) and would not result in an unacceptable loss of open spaces, locally important views of particular significance to the form and character of the settlement (criterion b).

4.2 **Settlement Hierarchy** - Abthorpe is identified as a small village in the group of fourth tier villages where there is scope for limited development within or adjoining the village confines to meet identified local need or specialist need at an overall scale commensurate with the scale of the size of the settlement. The target of 2360 dwellings for the rural areas should not be treated as a maximum where the provisions of Policy SS2 are met, particularly because the Objectively Assessed Need for housing in the District calculated using the new methodology will increase the annual housing requirement.

4.3 **Specific housing policies** – Amongst the suite of housing policies the following are considered to be particularly relevant – LH1 Development within town and village confines, LH2 Starter homes outside settlement confines, LH3 Entry level and single plot exception sites, LH5 self and custom built housing, LH6 older persons and specialist housing, LH10 supporting provision of bungalows.

5. **Analysis**

5.1 In relation to defining the settlement boundary of Abthorpe, this site is unique, being the only one fronting a highway within the village where housing development exists on both sides and opposite on Brackley Lane, but is not included within the village confines. Inclusion of the area identified on one of the alternative proposals shown on the accompanying plans within the village boundary would not contravene any of the criteria for determining village confines set out in the Plan. Specifically it would retain the compact nature of the village, respecting its existing character and form, not affecting any important open space, protected habitat and with no adverse impact on the Conservation Area which is not visible from the site. Therefore as noted above it would meet the key requirements of Policy SS2.

5.2 Small villages should not be unduly restricted in scope for meeting a variety of housing needs identified in policies LH1, LH2, LH3. LH5 and LH6. The guidance in the NPPF that affordable housing in the categories of entry level exception sites or rural exception sites for first time buyers on land not allocated for housing adjacent to existing settlements should be no larger than 1 hectare or exceed 5% of the size of the existing settlement should apply to all villages rather than the more restrictive policies being proposed. The site is much smaller than this maximum size/capacity. Specifically Policy LH2 should apply to all villages and not just to brownfield sites, Policy LH3 should also apply more broadly to all villages, Policy LH5 should apply to
all villages as should Policy LH6. The site is capable of accommodating some bungalows to support the aims of Policy LH10.

6. Conclusion
6.1 There is considered to be a good case for extending the Abthorpe village boundary to include one or other of the two areas of land shown on the attached drawings in order to meet both general demand for additional housing and the specific categories of need identified in the housing policies in the plan.

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