



A meeting of the **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** will be held in **THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **MONDAY, 16 MARCH 2026** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

PLEASE NOTE THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA MAY CHANGE

APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 16th and 23rd February 2026.

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, other registerable and non-registerable interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

3. APPLICATIONS REQUIRING REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

To consider reports by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management).

(a) Warboys - 25/01279/FUL (Pages 13 - 76)

43 affordable dwellings of mixed size and tenure along with associated infrastructure and open space - Land North of Sewage Pumping Station, Station Road, Warboys.

(b) Somersham - 24/02116/FUL (Pages 77 - 102)

Change of use of land for the stationing of two mobile homes and four touring caravans to include establishment of hardstanding and fences on a temporary or permanent basis (part retrospective) - Land at Rosefield, Parkhall Road, Somersham.

(c) Ramsey - 21/01481/FUL (Pages 103 - 132)

Retrospective development of day room and standing of two additional residential static caravans and two touring caravans on land granted planning consent in 2015 (Ref: 14/00997/FUL) - Hanley Stables, Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights.

(d) Ramsey - 23/02167/FUL (Pages 133 - 164)

Retrospective proposed single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. - Whites Yard, Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights, Huntingdon, PE26 2RG.

(e) Ramsey - 21/01476/FUL (Pages 165 - 196)

Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. - Land South East of True Briton, Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights.

(f) Ramsey - 21/01477/FUL (Pages 197 - 228)

Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. - Land South East of True Briton, Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights.

(g) Ramsey - 21/01478/FUL (Pages 229 - 260)

Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family - Land South East of True Briton, Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights.

(h) Ramsey - 21/01479/FUL (Pages 261 - 292)

Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent) - Magpie Farm, Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights, PE26 2RG.

(i) Ramsey - 21/01480/FUL (Pages 293 - 324)

Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family - Indianas Paddock, Middle Drove, Ramsey Heights, Huntingdon, PE26 2RG.

(j) Ramsey - 21/01475/FUL (Pages 325 - 354)

Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. - Land West of Kelvedon Cottage, Harpers Drove, Ramsey Heights.

4. APPEAL DECISIONS (Pages 355 - 356)

To consider a report by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management).

5. SECTION 106 AGREEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Following changes to the Development Management Committee, to review the composition of the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group.

LATE REPRESENTATIONS

5 day of March 2026

Michelle Sacks

Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registrable and Non-Registrable Interests

Further information on [Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and other Registrable and Non-Registrable Interests is available in the Council's Constitution](#)

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Please contact Anthony Roberts, Democratic Services, Tel: 01480 388015 / email Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the [District Council's website](#).

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held in THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Monday, 16 February 2026

PRESENT: Councillor D L Mickelburgh – Chair.

Councillors E R Butler, J Clarke, S J Corney, K P Gulson, P A Jordan, S R McAdam, J Neish, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson and R A Slade.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R J Brereton, D B Dew, S Mokbul, C H Tevlin and S Wakeford.

49 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 19th January 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

50 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor B Pitt declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor T Sanderson declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council and of the Council's Executive, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor S Corney declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor J Neish declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor S McAdam declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council and of Huntingdon Town Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor P Jordan declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that she was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but she had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor R Slade declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor K Gulson declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor J Clarke declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor E Butler declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor D Mickelburgh declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 52 by virtue of the facts that she was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council and that her husband Councillor B Mickelburgh had been involved in the application through his membership of the Executive but they had not discussed it and she had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

- 51 OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED EXCEPT FOR SITE ACCESS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION (USE CLASS B8), GENERAL EMPLOYMENT (USE CLASS B2), BUS DEPOT (SUI GENERIS) FLOORSPACE WITH ANCILLARY OFFICES AND GATEHOUSES, PROVISION OF LANDSCAPING, ACCESS INFRASTRUCTURE (INCLUDING NEW AND IMPROVED VEHICULAR ACCESS FROM THE A141, HIGHWAY, PARKING, CYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS), UTILITIES (INCLUDING GAS, ELECTRICITY, WATER, SEWERAGE, TELECOMMUNICATIONS), SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS, AND ALL ASSOCIATED ENGINEERING WORKS (INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES AND BUILDINGS, BREAKING-UP AND REUSE OF HARDSTANDING AND GROUND REMODELLING AND ENABLING WORKS). THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT IS PHASED WITH EACH PHASE BEING A SEPARATE AND SEVERABLE PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT -BROOKFIELD FARM, ERMINE STREET, GREAT STUKELEY, HUNTINGDON, PE28 4AB - 25/01922/OUT**

Following receipt of further information relating to the fact that discussions on the application to clarify highways matters were ongoing, it was

RESOLVED

that the application be not determined.

52 APPLICATION REQUIRING REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - TWO-STOREY EXTENSION AND REFURBISHMENT OF LEISURE CENTRE TO INCLUDE NEW SWIMMING POOLS, FITNESS SUITES, THE RELOCATION OF AN ARTIFICIAL PITCH, NEW RACKET COURTS, CAR PARKING, LANDSCAPING AND OTHER ASSOCIATED WORKS - ONE LEISURE, ST PETERS ROAD, HUNTINGDON, PE29 7DA - 25/02361/HDC

(Councillor D Landon Cole, Huntingdon Town Council, N Hunt, Neighbouring Ward Member, and D Mason, Agent, addressed the Committee on the application).

See Minute No 50 for Members' interests.

Consideration was given to a report by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) on the application. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book. The Committee discussed the recommendation contained in the report and the representations that had been received together with other matters including parking. Having taken into account relevant local and national policies and legislation, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the receipt of an Impact Assessment Certificate for Planning counter signed by Natural England prior to planning permission being issued, the application be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) to include those listed in paragraph 8 of the report now submitted.

53 APPEAL DECISIONS

The Committee received and noted a report by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management), which contained details of two recent decisions by the Planning Inspectorate. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

Chair

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held in THE CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Monday, 23 February 2026

PRESENT: Councillor D L Mickelburgh – Chair.

Councillors E R Butler, J Clarke, K P Gulson, P A Jordan, S R McAdam, S Mokbul, J Neish, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson, R A Slade and S Wakeford.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R J Brereton, S J Corney, D B Dew and C H Tevlin.

54 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor B Pitt declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor T Sanderson declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council and of the Council's Executive, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor J Neish declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

In respect of Minute No 55, a Councillor S McAdam declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council and an Other Registrable Interest by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdon Town Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor P Jordan declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that she was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but she had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor R Slade declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor R Slade also declared an Other Registrable Interest in Minute Nos 55 c and 55 d by virtue of the fact that that he had been present at a meeting of St

Neots Town Council and had voted on the application, left the room and took no part in the discussion or voting on the item.

Councillor K Gulson declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor J Clarke declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor S Wakeford declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council and was a Member of the Cabinet with responsibility for affordable housing, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor S Mokbul declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that she was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but she had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

Councillor E Butler declared a Non-Registrable Interest in Minute No 55 a by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council, but he had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

In respect of Minute No 55, a Councillor D Mickelburgh declared a Non-Registrable Interest in by virtue of the fact that she was a Member of Huntingdonshire District Council and an Other Registrable Interest by virtue of the fact that she was a Member of Godmanchester Town Council but she had had no involvement in the application and came to the meeting with an open mind.

55 APPLICATIONS REQUIRING REFERENCE TO DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Planning Service Manager (Development Management) submitted reports (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book) on applications for development to be determined by the Committee. Members were advised of further representations, which had been received since the reports had been prepared. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- a) **Demolition and part demolition of factory buildings and phased erection of 82 dwellings, access works, landscaping and associated development - R G E Engineering and Bridge Place Car Park, The Avenue, Godmanchester - 25/01587/FUL**

(E Durrant, Agent, addressed the Committee on the application).

that the application be approved subject to conditions to be determined by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) to include those listed in paragraph 8 of the report now submitted together with the additional conditions contained in the Late Representations.

- b) Proposed erection of 26 dwellings, garaging and associated roadways, landscaping, etc (revised down to 23 dwellings) - Brittens Farm, Station Road, Kimbolton, Huntingdon, PE28 0JN - 25/00433/FUL**

(B Woodbine, Objector, and K Hutchinson, Agent, addressed the Committee on the application).

that powers be delegated to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection to resolve outstanding Anglian Water and Biodiversity Net Gain matters and approve the application subject to conditions including those listed in paragraph 8 of the report now submitted together with additional conditions relating to plot 17 for the removal of a first floor window from the eastern elevation to be replaced with a window on the southern elevation and the removal of Permitted Development Rights and completion of a Section 106 obligation or refuse the application in the event that the obligation referred to above has not been completed and the Applicant is unwilling to agree to an extended period for determination; or if the Applicant is unwilling to complete the obligation necessary to make the development acceptable; or if the applicant is unwilling to agree to the pre-commencement conditions specified in the report now submitted as being necessary to make the development acceptable.

At 8.47 pm the meeting was adjourned.

At 8.56 pm the meeting resumed.

- c) Conversion of existing building into 7 residential units and erection of 2 bungalows with associated landscaping and drainage works - 44 Huntingdon Street, St Neots, PE19 1DU - 25/01712/FUL**

(S Richardson, Agent, addressed the Committee on the application).

that the application be refused for the following reasons:

- a) The application is not accompanied by sufficient information to enable the Local Planning Authority to make a full assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on the Listed Building. On the basis of the information accompanying the application, the proposed alterations and extension to the Listed Building, in addition to the removal of historic features and fabric which contribute to its significance and its architectural and historic interest, would result in harm to the character, appearance, setting and significance of the Listed Building and the Conservation Area. In addition, the proposed bungalows, car parking area and gardens would result in a cramped and contrived form and layout of development within the curtilage of the Listed Building and the Conservation Area; and the proposed bungalows, by virtue of their siting, scale and incoherent design,

would appear unsympathetic to the Listed Building and the Conservation Area. For these reasons, the proposed development is not designed to a high quality that reinforces local distinctiveness, and it would result in less than substantial harm to the character, appearance, setting and significance of the Listed Building and the Conservation Area which would outweigh the benefits of the proposed development, contrary to Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan (2016), policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

- b) The proposed development would result in the erection of new dwellings, and an extended car parking area to serve the proposed dwellings, located within Flood Zone 2. The proposed development fails to pass the sequential test for flood risk, contrary to policy 5 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, paragraph 174 of the NPPF and guidance contained within Section 4 of the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD.
- c) The proposed development would provide poor levels of privacy to the windows and gardens of Plots 08 and 09; a poor outlook from the bedroom window within the west elevation of Plot 08; and detrimental noise and light impacts to the bedroom and kitchen / living room windows within the east elevation of Plot 09. The proposed development would therefore fail to provide a high standard of amenity for future occupiers of the proposed development, contrary to policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
- d) The proposed development fails to demonstrate that adequate and accessible waste storage arrangements could be achieved, with no bin collection points being proposed to serve the proposed dwellings, contrary to policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017).

d) Conversion of existing building into 7 residential units and erection of 2 bungalows with associated landscaping and drainage works - 44 Huntingdon Street, St Neots, PE19 1DU - 25/01713/LBC

that the application be refused because the application is not accompanied by sufficient information to enable the Local Planning Authority to make a full assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on the Listed Building. On the basis of the information accompanying the application, the proposed alterations and extension to the Listed Building, in addition to the removal of historic features and fabric which contribute to its significance and its architectural and historic interest, would result in less than substantial harm to the character, appearance, setting and significance of the Listed Building which would outweigh the benefits of the proposed development, contrary to policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Chair

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th March 2026

Case No: 25/01279/FUL

Proposal: 43 AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS OF MIXED SIZE AND TENURE ALONG WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE.

Location: LAND NORTH OF SEWAGE PUMPING STATION, STATION ROAD, WARBOYS

Applicant: Mr David Stutting (Amplius Living)

Grid Ref: 531110 280894

Date of Registration: 14th July 2025

Parish: WARBOYS

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) as Huntingdonshire District Council own the land, the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Parish Council, and a local member has also called in the application.

0. BACKGROUND

Regulation 4

- 0.1 This land which forms the application site is owned by Huntingdon District Council. The development is being promoted by Amplius Living, the applicant. This is a reg 4 application as the land is owned by Huntingdonshire District Council, but the application is made by another party.
- 0.2 Regulation 4 of The Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 governs planning applications made by a local authority for development on their own land, which they do not intend to develop themselves but instead intend to make available for development by others. These applications are processed by the relevant planning authority (e.g., district council), treating them as standard applications.
- 0.3 Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 022 Reference ID: 21b-022-20140306 outlines:

The procedures dealing with development proposed by local authorities are contained in the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 (as amended). The principle underlying these Regulations is that local authorities must make planning applications in the same way as any other person and must follow the same procedures as would apply to applications by others.

Local authorities may grant themselves planning permission for their own development on land in which they have an interest or for development by an authority jointly with another person. The proposals must be publicised in the same way as any similar application from any other applicant and they cannot be decided by a committee or officer responsible for the management of any land or buildings to which the application relates.

Local authority development proposals, like those of other persons applying for planning permission, must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning permission which any local authority grants to itself runs with the land – see the Town and Country Planning General (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2018.

- 0.4 Officers of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) have not been engaged with, or are privy to, any commercial matters relating disposal of council owned land. To ensure transparency the planning application has been advertised, and a site notice was erected as close as possible to the site, alongside wider consultation with stakeholders and residents. Further consultations have been undertaken during the course of the application.
- 0.5 To ensure full transparency, this application is brought before the Development Management Committee for determination.

Secretary of State Call in Request

- 0.6 The Secretary of State (SoS) has received a request to call in the application.
- 0.7 Under section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the SoS can call in an application for determination by the SoS.
- 0.8 The SoS is still considering the request and has confirmed they do not intend for that to impede the application's progress with the council. Officers have informed the SoS that the application is to be considered at the 16th of March DMC with an Officer recommendation of approval. Members must therefore consider the application in full like any other application on the agenda.

- 0.9 Officers will notify the SoS of the outcome of the DMC meeting and will not issue the decision until the SoS have confirmed their decision on whether to call in the application or not.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The application site is a 2.3 hectare, broadly square, parcel of agricultural land (arable use until late 2022, vacant since then). The site lies to the northeast part of Warboys. Immediately to the north-west is an industrial unit. To the south-west is Station Road which has a strong linear form of dwellings fronting onto the opposite side of the road. To the south-east are dwellings and paddocks. To the north-east is open countryside.
- 1.2 The boundaries are defined by a combination of drainage ditches, intermittent hedging, and mature trees. The northwest boundary is strongly vegetated, forming a dense wooded belt that screens the adjacent industrial unit, while the northern edge features three prominent mature oak trees and lengths of shrubby vegetation. The eastern boundary is more open, comprising chain-link fencing interspersed with scrub and occasional trees, while the southern boundary adjoins residential properties and includes an Anglian Water pumping station.
- 1.3 The site is set in an elevated position which falls markedly from around 25.5m AOD along the western boundary to approximately 16.5m AOD in the east, creating an open aspect with extensive views across the fenland landscape to the north and east. Drainage ditches run along the north-east, south-west and south-east perimeters of the site.
- 1.4 There are currently two access points from Station Road onto the site. One is opposite 107a Station Road to the north-west and the second access is on the southern corner adjacent to a pumping station and opposite an access between 67 and 69 Station Road
- 1.5 Warboys Footpath 7 (245/7) is a public right of way which runs north to south circa over 100m from the eastern edge of the site.
- 1.6 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 (less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding) as identified by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2024 and the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning. There is some surface water flooding on the far eastern element of the site, and some towards the north-eastern element of the site.
- 1.7 There are no designated heritage assets which would be affected by the proposed development and no trees subject to a preservation order in the vicinity. The site does not fall within a protected landscape. Pringle Wood and Cutting (County Wildlife

Site) are located circa 355.4m to the northeast and Warboys and Wistow Wood SSSI is located circa 833m to the north-west of the site.

Proposal

- 1.8 This planning application seeks full planning permission for 43 affordable dwellings of mixed size and tenure along with associated infrastructure and open space.
- 1.9 Vehicular access to the site is defined through a number of access points. There is a main access point off Station Road, which utilises the existing access point opposite 107a Station Road, that would serve 33 dwellings. The access leads to a loop road circulation within the site. The second existing access point along Station Road in the southern corner of the site is the approximate location of a new proposed access serving plots 1-4 parking court. Five additional accesses to private drives would be created off Station Road to serve six dwellings. Four out of six plots would have the ability to turn around within the plot curtilage and therefore leave site onto Station Road in forward gear. A new 2m wide footpath along the frontage is proposed to improve access from the village to the development, with two crossing points proposed. A crossing point on Station Road, is proposed to be located between the shared driveway for plots 1 and 2 and the access to the existing pumping station compound. The crossing point on the opposite side would be located between the existing drives for 67 and 67a Station Road with the drop kerb being extended.
- 1.10 Open space, landscaping and SuDs would be provided on the eastern element of the site which is adjacent to the wider countryside.
- 1.11 The proposal is for 100% of the dwellings to be affordable for either rent or shared ownership.
- 1.12 This application has been accompanied by the following drawings and documents:
 - Drawings
 - Planning, Design & Access and Affordable Housing Statement
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy
 - Foul Sewerage and Utilities Assessment
 - Odour Impact Assessment
 - Noise Impact Assessment
 - Transport Statement
 - Arboricultural Statement
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

- 1.13 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 1.14 With regard to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 the development does not meet the criteria within Schedule 2 to require a detailed screening opinion, as the application does not propose more than 150 dwellings and is under 5 hectares.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF December 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'
- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP7: Spatial Planning Areas
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation
 - LP14: Amenity
 - LP15: Surface Water

- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP25: Housing Mix
- LP28: Rural Exceptions Housing
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- LP37: Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

For full details visit the government website.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 22/00412/FUL - Residential development for 47 affordable dwellings and associated works (WITHDRAWN)

5. CONSULTATIONS

Summary of consultation responses

- 5.1 Cllr Ross Martin (County Councillor) – Objection

1. Conflict with the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

- The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) puts into question the use of this site for allocation, concluding:
 - It is Grade 2 agricultural land, protected under Policy LP10(a) to prevent irreversible loss of the best and most versatile farmland.
 - It forms part of the open countryside with “no capacity for development” due to its visibility, undeveloped character, and contribution to the setting of Warboys.
 - It lies outside the built-up area boundary, contrary to Policy LP8, which supports development only within defined built-up areas.
2. Unsustainable Location and Poor Connectivity
 - The site is beyond reasonable walking distance from shops, a school, and a doctor’s surgery. Resulting in the development would increase car dependency, undermining local and national sustainability objectives.
 - Public transport is limited to sporadic at best, bus service, falling short of Policy LP16 (Sustainable Transport).
 3. Harm to Landscape, Character, and Amenity
 - The site is adjacent to a sewage pumping station and industrial premises (B2 use), yet no odour, noise, or amenity assessments have been provided, contrary to NPPF Paragraph 187.
 4. Failure to Justify as a Rural Exception Site
 - No Housing Needs Survey has been conducted for Warboys; therefore, no evidence exists of an unmet local need. Without such evidence, allocations may go to people with no local connection, increasing commuting and reducing sustainability.
 - Warboys has already delivered over 130 affordable homes since 2015, with another 40 in the pipeline.
 5. Highways, Parking, Drainage, and Flood Risk
 - The proposed junction aligns with an existing dwelling, causing potential light intrusion. Station Road is narrow, with no pedestrian infrastructure, creating highway safety risks which must resolved before any development is allowed.
 - The LLFA objected to the previous application (22/00412/FUL), and many feel these concerns remain unresolved.
 6. Consultee Objection – Anglian Water

- Anglian Water has objected due to significant existing capacity issues in the foul drainage network. Despite this not being a material planning reason, the potential for failure of our waste assets should hold a significant weight.

5.2 Cllr Charlotte Lower (District Councillor) - Objection

Procedural and Policy Conflicts

The application raises significant procedural issues, including a clear **conflict of interest** as Huntingdonshire District Council is both the landowner of the site and the planning authority making the decision. This undermines public confidence in the impartiality of the planning process. As mentioned by Warboys Parish Council in their objection letter, the proposal also fails to address the site's history in the planning process. This site was previously rejected for allocation in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) for the Local Plan to 2036. A key reason for the previous rejection, which remains relevant, is that the site is comprised of Grade 2 agricultural land, which is considered "very good quality". The permanent loss of this productive farmland conflicts with **NPPF Paragraphs 174 and 175**, which require planning decisions to protect and enhance valued soils and recognize the economic benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Amenity and Environmental Suitability

The site is unsuitable for residential use due to significant **environmental health and amenity issues**. The Environmental Health Officer's report identifies considerable noise from the adjacent factory and road traffic. The proposed mitigation measures, including a **3m high acoustic barrier**, sealed glazing, and mechanical ventilation, demonstrate that the site is not appropriate for residential development. This conflicts with **NPPF Paragraph 135**, which requires developments to provide a high standard of amenity for future residents. Additionally, the location presents potential contamination risks from adjacent sites and previous large development of houses behind the existing terraced houses on Station Road, due to possible sewage overflows from the Pumping Station, fuel leaks and surface water flooding. Locating affordable family housing next to industrial noise and potential contamination risks is contrary to this principle. This also conflicts with **Local Plan Policy LP17 (Amenity)**, which requires that development does not harm the health, quality of life, or amenity of existing and future residents.

A further concern is the potential impact from a proposed incinerator at Woodford's Recycling Centre, which would exacerbate these existing amenity issues.

Loss of Prime Agricultural Land

The application site is former Grade 2 **agricultural land (2.35 hectares)** which only recently went out of production, due to the landlord proposing this site for development. Paragraphs **174 and 175 of the NPPF** require planning decisions to protect and enhance valued soils and recognise the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). The permanent loss of productive farmland for housing undermines long-term food security and directly conflicts with these national policy aims.

This also conflicts with **Local Plan Policy LP10 (The Countryside)**, which seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, including the role of agricultural land.

Unresolved Infrastructure and Heritage Concerns

The application has not adequately addressed concerns raised by technical consultees:-

- **Highway Safety:** While a transport assessment was not required for the proposed number of dwellings, the Highways Development Management Engineer has requested amended drawings to resolve issues with a "too severe" taper in front of Plot 21 and the need for relocated or additional crossing points.
- Given that the road is one lane each way, with residents parking their cars on the road outside their homes, this proposed development will further increase road traffic collisions and potential difficulties for families crossing the road and vehicular turning.
-
- **Drainage and Flood Risk:** The LLFA has reviewed the drainage plans, but there are still concerns regarding the relocation of the ditch. Anglian Water has also noted that assets close to, or crossing the site, will require diversion at the developer's cost. Plus the sewerage system will not cope with the additional 43 properties proposed on this site.
-
- **Archaeological and Heritage Concerns:** The site lies within an area of "high archaeological potential". Previous investigations nearby have uncovered evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity, including an inhumation burial and Iron Age features. Developing this site risks the permanent loss of nationally important heritage assets, which directly conflicts with **NPPF Paragraph 205**. This raises direct conflict with **Local Plan Policy LP34 (Heritage Assets and Their Settings)**.

Failure to Deliver Biodiversity Net Gain

The scheme also fails to meet a key policy requirement for **Biodiversity Net Gain**. The applicant has admitted that the scheme cannot deliver the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on-site and instead relies on off-site credits. This is in direct conflict with **NPPF Paragraph 186**, which requires a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

The proposed site is highly visible with wide open views to the surrounding countryside. Development here would cause permanent harm to the landscape setting of Warboys. Paragraph **180 of the NPPF** requires planning decisions to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

This also conflicts with **Local Plan Policies LP11 (Design Context)** and **LP12 (Design Implementation)**, which require development to integrate positively into its landscape setting and avoid harm to rural character.

With the potential build of an incinerator very close to the proposed site, I do not think the potential residents would be so keen on purchasing a property that is so close to an incinerator!

In summary, this proposal:

- Conflicts with **NPPF paragraphs 174–175, 180, 186, and 205**.
- Conflicts with **Local Plan Policies LP10, LP11, LP12, LP17, LP30, and LP34**.
- Results in the **loss of agricultural land, harm to heritage assets, risk to residential amenity, and a failure to deliver biodiversity net gain**.

For the reasons outlined above, the proposal is considered to be **contrary** to both national and local planning policies, is outside the built-up area of the village (contrary to Policy LP8) and should be refused.

5.3 Warboys Parish Council - Objection

1. Conflict with the Local Plan
 - Grade 1 agricultural land, protected under Policy LP10(a);
 - Open countryside outside the built-up area boundary, contrary to Policy LP8; and
 - Of high landscape sensitivity, contributing to the rural setting of Warboys.
2. Failure to justify the development as a rural exception site
 - No Housing Needs Survey has been undertaken for Warboys;
 - No evidence of unmet local need has been provided;

- No binding mechanism is proposed to prioritise local households; and
- The site’s unsustainable location conflicts with LP28(d).

3. Infrastructure impact and absence of meaningful cil or secured mitigation

As a 100% affordable housing development, the scheme will generate no meaningful Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts for Warboys Parish. The proposal would introduce approximately 190–200 new residents through 43 dwellings, representing a significant increase in the village population, yet:

- No firm Section 106 obligations are secured;
- Health and education contributions remain “subject to discussions”;
- No alternative funding mechanism is proposed to offset the absence of CIL; and
- No certainty is provided that local infrastructure can support this level of growth. This places additional pressure on already constrained services and facilities and weighs significantly against the sustainability of the proposal.

4. Highways safety, drainage, and deferred technical detail

- Station Road remains the sole access point to the development;
- Steep gradients are mitigated rather than resolved;
- The drainage ditch along Station Road must be infilled and realigned to facilitate a footway; and
- The acceptability of these works is deferred to post-permission S38 and S278 agreements. Scale and Impact on Village Character

5. Landscape, character, and visual impact (including misleading visual evidence)

The Parish Council remains concerned about the loss of open countryside, erosion of the rural edge of Warboys, and harm to valued long-distance fenland views. In addition, the Parish Council considers that the photographic evidence submitted with the application is misleading and does not provide an accurate representation of landscape impact. The photographs are predominantly taken facing back towards the village, rather than looking down the site and across the open countryside, which is where the most significant visual harm would occur. As a result:

- The openness and depth of the site are understated;
- The true extent of countryside loss is not properly illustrated; and

- The development's impact on the wider landscape setting of Warboys is not accurately conveyed.

The newly released documents acknowledge significant level changes across the site and confirm the need for prominent retaining walls, in some cases exceeding 1100mm in height. This further undermines the reliability of the applicant's landscape and visual assessment.

6. Amenity impacts – sewage pumping station and industrial use.

The site lies adjacent to a sewage pumping station and close to a B2 industrial premises. No odour, noise, or amenity assessments have been provided, contrary to the “agent of change” principle set out in the NPPF. This omission remains unaddressed.

7. Cumulative impact – incinerator proposal

While planning application CCC/22/151/FUL for an incinerator at The Old Brick Works, Puddock Hill, has been withdrawn, Thermeco has publicly confirmed its intention to submit a revised application. The likelihood of a future incinerator proposal in close proximity to the site remains a material planning consideration. No cumulative impact assessment has been undertaken, and the applicant's failure to address this realistic planning context is a significant omission.

8. Procedural and governance concerns

Serious concerns remain regarding:

- HDC's dual role as landowner and determining authority;
- The fact that the sale of the land is contingent on the grant of planning permission;
- The absence of clear separation between commercial and regulatory functions; and
- Restricted public access to application documents during part of the consultation period due to a planning portal outage

5.4 HDC Housing Officer – Supports.

5.5 HDC Urban Design Officer – Supports subject to conditions.

5.6 HDC Landscape Officer – It would result in significant visual effects for high-sensitivity receptors along the Public Right of Way (PRoW) and the northern approach to Warboys. These effects remain most pronounced within the immediate foreground, particularly in the locations represented by Viewpoints 02–06 and along Station Road. Beyond the locations represented by Viewpoints 02–06 and Viewpoint 10, the proposed built form would

not be visible, with the visual envelope closing rapidly due to the combination of distance, landform, and existing vegetation. As a result, visual effects are confined to the immediate and near-field context only, with no predicted effects on receptors beyond these viewpoints. Taking these factors into account, we conclude that the proposed development would, overall, give rise to a medium/moderate level of landscape and visual harm.

- 5.7 HDC Ecology Officer – No objection subject to conditions.
- 5.8 HDC Tree Officer – Concern about the impact of this acoustic fence and the encroachment into root protection areas. The acoustic fencing will require pruning for installation, and the excavations throughout their RPA's, some of the RPA's will be left within the rear gardens, constant and on-going pruning would be required which would degrade the trees and their value.
- 5.9 HDC Environmental Health – No objection subject to conditions.
- 5.10 Cambridgeshire Constabulary Designing Out Crime Office – No objection.
- 5.11 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Archaeology – No objection subject to conditions.
- 5.12 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Highways – No objection subject to conditions.
- 5.13 Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) – No objection subject to conditions.
- 5.14 Anglian Water – No objection in relation to Oldhurst WRC. Maintains objection to any connection into our foul network from the proposed development, due to capacity constraints and pollution risk. In order to overcome our objection we require that the applicant reconsult Anglian Water in the form of a Pre-Development enquiry (PPE) in order to define a Sustainable Point of Connection (SPOC).
- 5.15 Natural England – No objection subject to conditions.
- 5.16 Fire Service – No objection subject to conditions.
- 5.17 HDC Strategic Sports Development Officer - HDC's Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sports Strategy outlines a few key formal outdoor sports sites within the village which could benefit from this contribution. At Warboys Sports field Ancillary provision is poor with the mini (5v5) and Youth (11v11) pitches considered poor quality. It, however, must be noted that the Warboys Sports Field have received several S106 agreements which have been paid or due to be paid when thresholds are met.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 Summary of multiple letters of objection received from 32 addresses:

- Conflict with the Local Plan (not allocated)
- Loss of agricultural land
- Station Road already congested and operating near capacity.
- Increased vehicle movements → higher collision risks, queuing, rat-running.
- Steep site access and unsafe pedestrian crossing points.
- Persistent speeding issues along Station Road.
- On-street parking is already over-subscribed, leading to: Restricted visibility, Narrowed carriageways, Obstruction of emergency and refuse vehicles
- Local schools are full, risking split siblings or long-distance placements.
- GP surgeries are over-capacity, with long waits for appointments.
- Anglian Water objects: Oldhurst WRC lacks capacity until at least 2030.
- Some proposed homes would be within 15m of the pumping station, causing noise/odour issues.
- Risk of overloading foul networks.
- Concerns over proposed drainage strategy
- Multi-phase construction leading to prolonged disruption.
- Existing traffic and factory noise already high.
- Potential air quality impact
- Reliance on sealed glazing and acoustic fencing shows the site is inherently unsuitable for housing.
- Loss of habitat corridors (hedgerows, ditches).
- Impact on protected/priority species.
- Inadequate evidence of Biodiversity Net Gain or mitigation.
- Out of keeping with Warboys' rural and village character (too dense and urban)
- Past contamination risks from sewage and fuel storage.
- Limited local job opportunities in Warboys

6.2 Concerns raised about the loss of views and loss of value to neighbouring properties are not material planning considerations that the Local Planning Authority can lawfully take into account in determining the application. In terms of consultation, the Council has carried sufficient consultation in line with statutory duties.

7. ASSESSMENT

7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.
- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The principle of development, including its impact on the character and appearance of the area
 - Access, Transport, Highway Safety & Parking Provision
 - Flood Risk, Surface Water and Foul Drainage
 - Parameter Plans, Indicative Layout, Landscaping, Trees and Open Space
 - Biodiversity
 - Residential Amenity
 - Affordable Housing
 - Accessible Housing
 - Water Efficiency
 - Other Matters
 - Developer Contributions

The principle of development, including its impact on the character and appearance of the area

Housing Land Supply

- 7.6 NPPF paragraph 78 requires the Council to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing against our housing requirement. A substantially revised methodology for calculating local housing need and the reimposition of this as a mandatory

approach for establishing housing requirements was introduced on 12th December 2024 in the revised NPPF and associated NPPG (the standard method).

- 7.7 As Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is now over 5 years old it is necessary to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS) based on the housing requirement set using the standard method. NPPF paragraph 78 also requires provision of a buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. As Huntingdonshire has successfully exceeded the requirements of the Housing Delivery Test, a 5% buffer is required here. The 5-year housing land requirement, including a 5% buffer, is 5,907 homes. The current 5YHLS is 4,345 homes, equivalent to 3.68 years' supply.
- 7.8 As a result of this, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'. While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications. Each planning application will be considered on its own merits and the degree of weight to be attached is a matter for the decision maker. Where an application is situated within a parish with a made Neighbourhood Plan NPPF paragraph 14 should also be taken into account.

Location and suitability of the site (including its impact on the character and appearance of the area)

- 7.9 The application seeks full planning permission for 43 dwellings (100% affordable dwellings) on a site within Warboys.
- 7.10 Policy LP2 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (the Local Plan) sets out the overarching development strategy for Huntingdonshire through the plan period. The main objectives are:
- Concentrate development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities;
 - Direct substantial new development to two strategic expansion locations of sufficient scale to form successful, functioning new communities;
 - Provide opportunities for communities to achieve local development aspirations for housing, employment, commercial or community related schemes;
 - Support a thriving rural economy;
 - Protect the character of existing settlements and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside;

- Conserve and enhance the historic environment; and
- Provide complementary green infrastructure enhancement and provision to balance recreational and biodiversity needs and to support climate change adaptation.

7.11 Policy LP2 directs approximately a quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing (together with a limited amount of employment growth) to sites dispersed across the Key Service Centres and Small Settlements in order to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply. In addition, rural exception, small and windfall sites will be permitted on sites which are in conformity with other policies of the plan, thereby providing further flexibility in the housing supply.

7.12 Policy LP2 is within the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and is therefore considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications for residential development. Notwithstanding this, weight should still be given to Policy LP2 given that it directs development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities which is consistent with the NPPF.

7.13 Local Plan Policy LP8 identifies Warboys as a Key Service Centre (KSC), which recognises the range of services and facilities available in KSCs that meet many of the day to day needs of residents and to some extent those of other nearby settlements. KSCs are more sustainable than those villages that are identified as Small Settlements (Policy LP9) within the Local Plan. The strategy also sets out a role for further sustainable development at KSCs in contributing to the social and economic sustainability of these settlements and supporting a thriving rural economy. Such development may be appropriate subject to recognition of the limitations of the services and facilities available and consideration of the impact development would have on the settlement concerned. It is therefore considered appropriate to limit development primarily to sites within built-up areas, acknowledging the fact that opportunities for development within them will largely be limited to redevelopment opportunities, intensification of use and development of land which relates wholly to existing buildings rather than the surrounding countryside.

7.14 Policy LP8 states:

'Development Proposals within the Built-up Area

A proposal for development on a site which is additional to those allocated in this plan will be supported where it is located within a built-up area of a Key Service Centre.

Development Proposals on Land well-related to the Built-up Area

A proposal for development on land well-related to the built-up area may be supported where it accords with the specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan.'

7.15 Policy LP8 is within the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and is therefore considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications for residential development. Notwithstanding this, weight should still be given to Policy LP8 given that the policy sets out that a set of criteria for assessing whether the proposal reflects sustainable development which is consistent with the NPPF. However, the part of Policy LP8 which specifies that only certain types of development on land well-related which accords with specific opportunities allowed for through other policies of this plan is to be given reduced weight in determining a proposal for residential development. This means that any residential development on land well-related may be acceptable in principle subject to other material planning considerations.

7.16 Firstly, it must be considered whether the site falls within the Countryside, land well-related to the built-up area or within the built-up area.

7.17 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 contains a definition of the built-up area. Para. 4.81 states that:

"The fundamental purpose of defining the built-up area is to provide guidance on interpretation of the boundary to inform the answer to the question 'does a specific parcel of land situated on the periphery of a settlement relate more to the built environment of that settlement in its use, form, character and connectivity or does it relate more to the surrounding countryside?'"

7.18 The definition is as follows: 'A built-up area is considered to be a distinct group of buildings that includes 30 or more homes. Land which relates more to a group of buildings rather than to the surrounding countryside is also considered to form part of the built-up area.'

7.19 The supporting text to Local Plan Policy LP7 provides extensive criteria-based guidance on the assessment of whether land falls within the built-up area or outside the built-up area. It advises that the built up area will include:

Principle - Open space, sports and recreational facilities, allotments, caravan sites, churchyard and cemeteries which are predominantly surrounded by and integral to the built up area and defined by strong boundary features.

Implementation guidance - Some greenfield uses such as recreational or amenity open space, churchyards, wide grass verges and allotments, can form an integral and valuable part of the built-up area and its character. These must have buildings on at least two sides and have a clear physical and visual relationship with the built-up area rather than any adjoining countryside. Examples of strong boundary features include a tree belt or substantial stone or brick wall.

7.20 It also advises that the built up area will include:

Principle - Individual plots and minor scale development opportunities which would provide infill and rounding off opportunities on land which is physically, functionally and visually related to existing buildings, taking account of any environmental development constraints subject to the exclusions below.

Implementation guidance - Pockets of undeveloped land exist in some locations which relate to nearby buildings. Often well contained by existing hedgerows or tree belts, the character of such land is influenced by the buildings such that it is not perceived to be part of the surrounding countryside but relates primarily to the built form of the settlement. Small parcels of land such as this can offer opportunities for organic growth of settlements.

7.21 The supporting text to Local Plan Policy LP7 also advises that the built up area will exclude:

Principle - Agricultural land, woodland, meadow, areas of water and natural habitats that penetrate the built form or sections of large residential curtilages where the character of the land primarily relates to the countryside.

Implementation guidance - These spaces can provide a visual buffer between built development and the open countryside, softening the visual impact and linking the built up area with its rural context.

7.22 The western part of the site is considered to lie within the built-up area of Warboys for the following reasons:

- The factory immediately to the north is within the built-up area as paragraph 4.85 of the Local Plan states that buildings on the edge of settlements that relate closely to the economic function of the development form part of the built-up area
- 84 and 86 Station Road form the northernmost extent of existing residential development on the eastern side of Station Road. They are clearly within the built-up area of Warboys and provide a built-up area boundary to the southern two thirds of this edge of the site

- To the west of the site, on the opposite side of Station Road there is in-depth residential development
 - The northern boundary of the site is defined by a drainage ditch with mature hedge and tree planting, albeit that this is limited in parts
- 7.23 Given these four points, the western part of the site can be considered as open space that is predominantly surrounded by built-up area, integral to the built-up area and is defined by strong boundary features on at least 2 and half sides. The western part of the site is functionally and physically linked to the built up area. For these reasons, Officers consider the western part of the site can be classed as being within the built-up area, and at the very least land well-related to the built-up area.
- 7.24 There is an element of the site within the eastern part that extends beyond the built form of 84 and 86 Station Road, which form the northernmost extent of existing residential development on the eastern side of Station Road. They are clearly within the built-up area of Warboys and provide a built-up area boundary to the southern two thirds of this edge of the site. That eastern part of the site sits against the remaining third of the south-eastern boundary. It also extends beyond the built form of the factory to the north.
- 7.25 The eastern site boundary is largely undefined and accordingly, in the context of adjoining fields, the application site from this point of view is perceived to be part of the wider surrounding countryside. But given it's physical relationship with the rest of the site, it can also be considered as land well related to the built-up area.
- 7.26 Taking into account, the above commentary about how the eastern part of the site may appear visually part of the countryside and noting that the site is set in an elevated position falling from west to east, which creates an open aspect with extensive views across the fenland landscape to the north, policy LP10 is considered to be relevant also.
- 7.27 Policy LP10 places significant restrictions on developments in such locations, referring to only "limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan" as being acceptable in principle. Policy LP10 requires all development in the countryside to:
- (a) seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - (i) avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - (ii) avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;

- (b) recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - (c) not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.
- 7.28 Policy LP10 is within the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and is therefore considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications for residential development. Notwithstanding this, weight should still be given to Policy LP10 especially in relation to criteria (a) to (c) as it is consistent with the NPPF. However, the part of Policy LP10 which restricts residential development in the countryside is to be given reduced weight. This means that any residential development on land in the countryside may be acceptable in principle subject to other material planning considerations.
- 7.29 With regard to Policy LP10 part (a) the application site comprises an undeveloped arable field which is classified as Grade 2 (very good) agricultural land, nationally considered as amongst the best and most versatile agricultural land. There has been reference to the land being Grade 1 by the Parish Council but the mapping system clearly shows it as Grade 2.
- 7.30 Some 98% of the district comprises land within Grades 1 to 3, with 15% being Grade 1 and an estimated 77% of land falling within the definition of best and most versatile land. The proposal would result in the irreversible loss of some of this best and most versatile agricultural land. Whilst the land has remained vacant since late 2022, it could in theory be returned to farming in the future. The irreversible loss of agricultural land which can be used for food or crop production would conflict with Policy LP10 part (a)(i). This will need to be weighed against the benefits of the proposal in the planning balance section at the end of the report.
- 7.31 In terms of Policy LP10 part (b), as discussed above, the western part of the site is considered to be within the built up area and the land to the rear of the site (far eastern element) is considered to well-related to the built up area of Warboys.
- 7.32 As outlined above, the site is agricultural field which since farming of the land has ceased in late 2022 has undergone natural succession, now supporting neutral grassland with a diverse sward, scattered scrub, and mature trees. The site lies to the north east part of Warboys. Immediately to the north-west is an industrial unit. To the south-west is Station Road which has a strong linear form of dwellings fronting onto the opposite side of the road. To the south-east are dwellings and paddocks. To the north-east is open countryside.

- 7.33 The boundaries are defined by a combination of drainage ditches, intermittent hedging, and mature trees. The northwest boundary is strongly vegetated, forming a dense wooded belt that screens the adjacent industrial unit, while the northern edge features three prominent mature oak trees and lengths of shrubby vegetation. The eastern boundary is more open, comprising chain-link fencing interspersed with scrub and occasional trees, while the southern boundary adjoins residential properties and includes an Anglian Water pumping station.
- 7.34 The site is set in an elevated position which falls markedly from around 25.5m AOD along the western boundary to approximately 16.5m AOD in the east, creating an open aspect with extensive views across the fenland landscape to the north and east. Drainage ditches run along the north-east, south-west and south-east perimeters of the site.
- 7.35 Pringle Wood and Cutting (County Wildlife Site) and Warboys and Wistow Wood SSSI are ancient woodland landscape features within the wider setting, forming part of the transition between the Fen Margin Landscape Character Area (LCA) and the Fens LCA to the north. These wooded areas are connected by a network of hedge banks and small, irregularly shaped fields that reflect the historic landscape character. They provide ecological connectivity and visual structure, creating a strong contrast with the open fenland context and linking the settlements located on higher ground.
- 7.36 The site is located within the Fen Edge Landscape Character Area (LCA), forming part of the transition between the Fen Margin LCA and the Fens LCA to the north. This position provides views across the surrounding landscape and illustrates the relationship between settlement and fenland that has historically influenced the development of Warboys. This area represents one of a few transitional zones within the district and is considered sensitive to change due to its open character. That being said, it not considered to be a valued landscape in line with NPPF paragraph 187, which is confirmed by the Landscape Officer.
- 7.37 The application is supported by a Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA) which consists of 3 documents which should be read in conjunction with each other: The original version dated 2023 submitted in support of the previously withdrawn application ref 22/00412/FUL, an addendum dated 2025 submitted in support of this application and Accurate Visual Representations dated Jan 2026.
- 7.38 The Landscape Officer has undertaken an assessment of the visual impact and has reviewed the submitted documents.
- 7.39 The LVA methodology set out in the LVA dated 2023 was agreed under 22/00412/FUL.

- 7.40 The revised current application proposes 43 dwellings on land east of Station Road, Warboys, following the withdrawal of 22/00412/FUL which was for 47 units. An addendum to the Landscape Visual Appraisal (LVA) has been submitted as part of the current application. The proposed development incorporates changes made after consultation and review. These include:
- a reduction in unit numbers and adjustments to the layout to improve site permeability and maintain views through the site towards the surrounding countryside.
 - Bungalows have been repositioned to the northern edge, and the pumping station has been relocated to the northern boundary within a landscaped setting.
 - The arrangement of front-facing plots has been amended to reflect the established character of Station Road.
 - Additional measures include the introduction of tree-lined verges and a landscape-led approach intended to integrate the development with its surroundings.
- 7.41 It is considered that the landscape character of the Fen Margins remains relatively intact despite the presence of large agricultural buildings and numerous wind turbines breaking the skyline within the adjacent Fen Landscape Character Area.
- 7.42 The Landscape Officer has advised that the host landscape has medium sensitivity within the wider LCA context. However, the site itself is highly sensitive to landscape change within its immediate setting. The updated viewpoint locations included in the Addendum are welcomed, as they provide a representative illustration of the visual experience along Footpath 245/7 over approximately 480 metres. However, these photographs were taken in August 2024 when trees were in full leaf (viewpoints for the LVA were also taken in full-leaf season, May 2022). In winter, filtered views extend up to 100 metres further south than Viewpoint 7. Additionally, when approaching Warboys from the north, the site becomes visible approximately 100 metres before Viewpoint 10. This indicates that the visual experience for users of the PRoW is affected over a distance more than 40% greater than previously illustrated, limiting the understanding of cumulative visual effects along these routes. Consequently, it is considered receptors on PRoW Warboys 7, to the east of the site, to have high sensitivity.
- 7.43 In response to the comments from the Landscape Officer, the applicant submitted Accurate Visual Representations (AVRs), including winter-season photography and wireframe modelling for Viewpoints 7 and 10. The submission of the AVRs is welcomed. It enables the planning authority, stakeholders, and the public to understand the likely landscape and visual changes resulting from the development. The out of leaf imagery to better reflect seasonal visibility. The wireframes in particular offer helpful clarity regarding the relationship between the proposed built form and the receiving landscape.

- 7.44 However, the Landscape Officer has advised that on review of all 3 documents that make up the LVA including the AVRs, they remain of the view the proposed development would result in changes to the landscape and views. This is due to its position at a village gateway and it being a transition space between landscape types. Changes include the permanent loss of key views from Station Road and changes to the landscape character and its perceptual qualities, which incorporate the historic and spatial relationships previously described. The submitted AVRs and the wireframes indicate that elements of the development, including rooflines, would remain perceptible above existing vegetation and would introduce a degree of change to the currently open fen-edge views.
- 7.45 The proposed development would continue to result in significant visual effects for high-sensitivity receptors along the Public Right of Way (PRoW) and the northern approach to Warboys. These effects remain most pronounced within the immediate foreground, particularly in the locations represented by Viewpoints 02–06 and along Station Road. Beyond the locations represented by Viewpoints 02–06 and Viewpoint 10, the proposed built form would not be visible, with the visual envelope closing rapidly due to the combination of distance, landform, and existing vegetation. As a result, visual effects are confined to the immediate and near-field context only, with no predicted effects on receptors beyond these viewpoints. Taking these factors into account, the Landscape Officer concludes that even with the proposed landscaping scheme that seeks to mitigate the visual impact, the proposed development would, overall, give rise to a medium/moderate level of landscape and visual harm.
- 7.46 Planning Officers agree with these conclusions. The proposed development overall would give rise to a medium/moderate level of landscape and visual harm which would conflict with Policy LP10 part (b). This will need to be weighed against the benefits of the proposal in the planning balance section at the end of the report. As noted within the earlier paragraphs of this report, the tilted balance contained within the NPPF is firmly engaged.
- 7.47 The proposed design of the development including landscaping will be discussed in more detail below.
- 7.48 Policy LP10 part (c) requires proposals to avoid giving rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others. These objectives could be secured by conditions and will be addressed in the relevant sections within this report. As such the proposal complies with Policy LP10 part (c).
- 7.49 As outlined above, Warboys as a Key Service Centre (KSC), it is considered there are a range of services and facilities available in

KSCs that meet many of the day to day needs of residents and to some extent those of other nearby settlements. Such settlements are, by their nature, considered more sustainable and are identified higher up the settlement hierarchy under Policy LP2.

- 7.50 This site is in a highly sustainable and accessible location for residential development, as it has local shops and services within reasonable walking and cycling distance, including a grocery store, bakery, hairdresser, church, library, public houses, doctor's surgery and community primary school. A local bus service provides transport to Abbey College in Ramsey. There are links with public transport, with a bus stop only 800m from the site on the route between Ramsey and Huntingdon, the latter of which provides access to national rail services.
- 7.51 NPPF Para 84 states: Planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside.
- 7.52 NPPF Para 110 states: The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.
- 7.53 It is considered that the development would have access to services and facilities within Warboys, and also the means to access the market town of Huntingdon through sustainable modes of transport. The development would therefore not result in the development of isolated homes in the countryside nor would the future occupiers have to have an over-reliance on the private motor vehicle.
- 7.54 Given the above discussion about whether the site is considered to be wholly in the built-up area, and the fact that the proposed development is for 100% affordable housing, it could be argued that the principle of development is considered acceptable by virtue of its location within the built-up area of a key service centre. However, it could also be considered that the relevant policy tests lie at Local Plan Policy LP28 ("Rural Exceptions Housing"):

"A proposal for housing will be supported on a site well-related to a built-up area, as an exception to the requirements of relevant policies, where it can be demonstrated that:

- (a) at least 60% (net) of the site area is for affordable housing for people with a local connection;
- (b) the number, size, type and tenure of the affordable homes is justified by evidence that they would meet an identified

- need arising within the settlement or nearby small settlements (as defined in 'Small Settlements') through a local needs survey or other local needs evidence;
- (c) the remainder of the site area is available as open market housing or plots suitable for custom or self-build homes tailored to meet locally generated need; and
- (d) the amount of development and location of the proposal is sustainable in terms of:
 - (i) availability of services and existing infrastructure;
 - (ii) opportunities for users of the proposed development to travel by sustainable modes; and
 - (iii) effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.”

7.55 Whilst the application meets requirement (a), it fails to evidence the local need requirement at (b). The Council’s Policy and Enabling Officer who advises on affordable housing has outlined the following:

‘As you will also be aware, all the homes are to comprise Affordable Housing for which there continues to be a significant unmet need in the District. At this time, there are 3081 households on the Council’s Housing Register and yet more people will be interested in Shared Ownership housing. The difficulty in affording a home at market prices is well known but with Shared Ownership people can buy a share in the property and as their circumstances improve, they can acquire further shares and ultimately buy the property outright.

In discussion with the applicant (Amplius), it has been agreed that there will be a 'Local Lettings Plan'. The details will be finalised with the Council’s Housing Strategy/Allocations team and Amplius. These are used from time to time with the objective of delivering a balanced community by apportioning the initial lettings across the different priority bands on the housing register and also seeking to ensure a proportion are in employment. The sustainability of the development is further enhanced since a significant proportion of the homes will be Shared Ownership homes (18 no.) and the occupants of those are anticipated to be working and in higher income groups.

The provision of 43 affordable would therefore make a valuable contribution towards meeting the needs of people unable to afford market housing in the District.’

7.56 LP28 (c) is not engaged in this instance. With regard to LP28 (d), that is addressed throughout the relevant sections of the report.

7.57 Overall, it is determined that the site is considered to be sustainable for the amount of development proposed. The above identified conflicts and harm will need to be weighed against the need for housing in the district, the significant need for affordable

housing within the district and any other benefits of the development. This will set out in the planning balance section at the end of the report.

Design, Landscaping and Open Space

- 7.58 Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape.
- 7.59 Section 12 of the NPPF (2023) seeks to achieve well designed places, noting that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.
- 7.60 The National Design Guide (2020) sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It covers the following: context, identity, built form, movement, nature, public spaces, uses, homes and buildings, resources and lifespan. Of particular note to the current proposals is guidance relating to design and how this understands and relates well to the site within its local and wider context, how the history of the place has evolved and that local sense of place and identity are shaped by local history, culture and heritage, how a proposal responds to existing local character and identity, whether proposals are well designed, high quality and attractive and whether they are of an appropriate building type and form.
- 7.61 The HDS Design Guide (2017) is relevant to the current application proposals, in particular chapter 4 and sections 3.7 and 3.8. The guide states that the size, shape and orientation (the form) of a building can have a significant impact upon its surroundings. The form of new buildings should generally reflect traditional built forms found in Huntingdonshire. The scale, massing and height of proposed development should be considered in relation to that of adjoining buildings, the topography, pattern of heights in the area and views, vistas and landmarks.
- 7.62 The guide notes that with regard to building detailing, the district has various architectural styles and materials which reflects the local vernacular. It is noted that new buildings should be designed in harmony and proportional to each other, complimenting the overall street character of the place. Appropriate spaces between buildings helps to create an interesting streetscape. Detailed guidance is also provided relating to roofs, eaves and ridge lines and chimneys. With regards to materials, these should

complement the successful parts of any surrounding developments in order to conserve or enhance the distinctive character of the various parts of the district and to ensure that buildings sit comfortably within the landscape.

- 7.63 This revised application follows the withdrawal of application 22/00412/FUL for 47 affordable dwellings (withdrawn May 2024) and has been the subject of extensive redesign and consultee engagement.
- 7.64 Key revisions since the withdrawn application 22/00412/FUL:
- Reduction in unit numbers from 47 to 43, improving permeability and separation between dwellings.
 - Realignment and widening of the main access and green spine to create a continuous, direct corridor through the site to open space and countryside beyond.
 - Relocation of bungalows (Plots 36–37) away from the Station Road frontage to the northern edge, preserving views from Station Road towards Pingle Wood.
 - Relocation of the new pumping station to the northern boundary within a treed perimeter, away from the main public open space.
 - Introduction of a loop road, reducing cul-de-sacs and improving connectivity.
 - Design revisions to front-facing plots to reflect traditional Station Road character.
 - Reconfiguration of turning areas to allow forward access for most dwellings onto Station Road.
 - Inclusion of tree-lined verges and reduction of retaining wall heights across the site.

Design

- 7.65 Development is setback from Station Road between 8.4m to 11.6m, behind a proposed new 2m footpath, knee rail, relocated swale, proposed tree and hedge planting and turning areas to allow the occupants of Plots 5-8 to enter and leave in forward gear. The frontage comprises semi-detached F-Type units (Plots 5-8) with side drives, C-Type corner turning units with frontage parking (Plots 9-10 and 42-43) and 2 pairs of A-Type units (Plots 1-4) towards the southeastern corner which are served by a parking court and separate access from Station Road.
- 7.66 The main site access is to be from Station Road, opposite No. 107a. This leads to a loop road, part of which forms a conventional road with 2m footpaths either side and 3m wide verges in front of Plots 21-28 and a shared surface road in front of Plots 29-37. This creates legible street layout and brings trees and soft landscaping into the centre of the development and allows for outward facing development overlooking the open space and northwest and southeast boundaries and frontage to Station Road.

- 7.67 The loop road allows the units to be arranged in 4 tiers of development that drop in height to follow the existing site contours from Station Road falling towards the northeast part of the site. The second existing access point along Station Road in the southern corner is the approximate location of a new access serving the parking court of Plots 1-4. Across the rest of the site parking is predominantly located on plot with side drives provided for Plots 5-8, 10-27, 29-35 and 42. These drives are aligned between the 4 tiers of development allowing multiple views between units from Station Road towards the open countryside to the north and northeast.
- 7.68 Apart from two bungalows, all other plots are two storeys in height with either a traditional dual-pitched roof and gables or hipped roofs. The appearance of plots 1-12 & 38-43 have been designed with traditional detailing. The appearance of the remaining plots (13-37) has been designed with a more contemporary appearance. A simple palette has been chosen for the whole development to reflect those in the local area. The main facing brick would be a buff gault brick with contrasting red facing brick for detailing work. TBS - Grantchester Bled TBS - Audley Antique A simple flat grey roof tile has been chosen for the whole development. On the contemporary designed dwellings (plots 13-37) this would be complimented with dark grey fascia boards and rainwater goods to create a contemporary aesthetic.
- 7.69 Key amendments since the withdrawn application include a reduction in dwelling numbers from 47 to 43, improved site permeability, and greater separation between units, while maintaining views towards the surrounding countryside. The principal green corridor from Station Road, which incorporates both vehicular and pedestrian access, has been widened. This open green swathe now forms a continuous straight line through to the northeast of the site, creating a more direct visual link compared to the previous offset alignment. The revised alignment also focuses views towards the distant open countryside, rather than towards the outer-lying buildings behind storage facilities on Heath Road. The Landscape Opportunities/Strategy Plan (N1166 (03)002 Rev A) which is provided as an appendix in the Landscape Visual Appraisal Addendum (INF_N1166_R02) May 2025 illustrates the improved site permeability.
- 7.70 The combination of proposed on-plot side-drives, frontage parking and a parking court is acceptable, provides variety and is well integrated with the built form, reducing the prominence of parking across the site. The revised layout demonstrates a significant improvement over the withdrawn scheme and responds positively to many of the recommendations made during pre-application and consultation discussions. The development achieves a clearer structure, better integration with its landscape setting, and stronger character references to Station Road. The proposed

design of the development would comply with policies LP11 and LP12 of the Local Plan.

Landscaping

- 7.71 The overall arrangement of soft landscaping is supported. The proposed attenuation pond planting comprises a wetland planting mix and wetland grass mix. The principal green corridor creates an open green swathe that runs in a continuous straight line towards the northeast of the site. This forms a clear visual axis, directing views toward the distant open countryside. The location offers a valuable opportunity to enhance outward views from within the development—through the Fen Edge Landscape Character Area (LCA) and towards the Fens LCA—as well as views into and across the site.

Open Space

- 7.72 In accordance with Local Plan Policies LP3 and LP4, proposals for residential development of this scale are required to provide appropriate levels of onsite informal and formal green space. The illustrative masterplan shows an appropriate level of onsite provision, with the Urban Design Officer commenting in support of the location, useability and natural surveillance of those open spaces.
- 7.73 When assessed against the adopted Developer Contributions SPD sufficient green space is provided as part of the proposed development, such to accord with Policies LP3 and LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. The proposed layout also incorporates a dedicated area of public open space for residents to enjoy. This includes a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) and a retention basin, providing both recreational and functional benefits within the development. The details and design of the LEAP will be conditioned. The future management/maintenance, would need to be secured by way of Section 106 Agreement, were the Members minded to grant planning permission.

Summary

- 7.74 Overall, it is considered that the application site could satisfactorily accommodate 43 dwellings. Taking these points into account, and when considering the densities of development in the locality, it is considered that the density of development and mix of built form shown on the drawings would not be uncharacteristic to the area. Urban Design are supportive of the proposal and recommend a number of conditions. The design of the proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable and would accord with the aims of the NPPF (2024), policies LP11 and LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036.

Access, Transport, Highway Safety & Parking Provision

Access, Transport & Highway Safety

- 7.75 Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.
- 7.76 Paragraph 116 of the NPPF states: 116. Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.
- 7.77 The application seeks full planning permission for 43 dwellings. Extensive objections have been received by local residents and the Parish Council regarding the amount of additional cars that would serve the proposed development and their impact on the local traffic network, the existing congestion issues and highway safety concerns. These concerns are noted. Members should be mindful that objections about speeding issues along Station Road is a matter for the police, not the planning process.
- 7.78 The applicant submitted a Transport Statement in support of the application. This outlines that the proposed development would generate a level of movements that could be accommodated, particularly at peak times. This level of traffic is not anticipated to have any significant impact on the wider highway network. It is considered that the likely number of movements associated with the development, and the Transport Statement's findings, are reasonable in relation to the number of dwellings proposed.
- 7.79 Vehicular access to the site is defined through a number of access points. There is a main access point off Station Road, which utilises the existing access point opposite 107a Station Road, that will serve 33 dwellings. The access leads to a loop road circulation within the site. The second existing access point along Station Road in the southern corner of the site is the approximate location of a new access serving plots 1-4 parking court. Five additional accesses to private drives will be created off Station Road to serve six dwellings. Four out of six plots will have the ability to turn around within the plot curtilage and therefore leave site onto Station Road in forward gear. A new 2m wide footpath along the frontage has been incorporated to improve access from the village to the development, with two crossing points proposed. Due to the requirement to construct a footway and verge along the site frontage for sustainable access reasons, the existing drain along the site boundary with Station Road would be realigned to the rear of the footway. A crossing point on Station Road, located between

the shared driveway for plots 1 and 2 and the access to the existing pumping station compound. The crossing point on the opposite side will be located between the existing drives for 67 and 67a Station Road with the drop kerb being extended.

- 7.80 The Highway Authority has been consulted as part of the application and raises no objection to the proposed development as the proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the local network and the access arrangements are acceptable in highway safety terms. This is consistent with the advice on the previously withdrawn application. Following discussions with the Highway Authority, they are satisfied that the design of the relocated ditch could be conditioned, with a gradient of 1:1 given that a fence is provided adjacent to the ditch but within the site boundary. Also, the footway will require additional construction depth and the bank will require reinforcement. The full scope of this work can be determined at S278 stage but will also be covered by way of a planning condition.
- 7.81 The Highway Authority recommends a number of conditions regarding access, internal road design and the highway improvement works. These conditions are therefore recommended to be imposed.
- 7.82 Subject to the inclusion of the conditions recommended by CCC Highway Authority, it is considered that a safe means of access could be achieved for the development and the traffic generated by the proposal would not have a severe impact upon the highway network. The development would connect to existing networks of sustainable transport to encourage travellers to use the sustainable travel opportunities within the development and the surrounding areas. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024), the development should not be refused on transport grounds. Subject to the inclusion of the recommended conditions, the proposed development complies with the NPPF 2024, policies LP16 and LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Parking

- 7.83 Car parking provision has been calculated at 1 space per 1-bed unit, 2 spaces per 2- and 3-bed units, and 3 spaces per 4-bed units, with additional EV charging provided for every dwelling. Five visitor spaces are proposed, distributed across the site. This overall provision is considered appropriate.
- **Side-drive dwellings:** Semi-detached dwellings with side drives are generously spaced, allowing parking bays to be widened to 3.3m where required. This ensures compliance with Policy LP25 and the provision of M4(2) accessible/adaptable dwellings.

- **Plots without side drives:** Plots 9, 43 with frontage parking include an access footpath adjacent to the space, for Plots 12 and 13, one of the two spaces allocated to each unit has been designed at 3.3m wide. Similarly, the ground-floor maisonettes at Plots 38–41 have been provided with 3m wide bays. This is supported as it ensures accessibility across a range of dwelling types.
- **M4(3) wheelchair adaptable homes:** Plots 36 and 37 incorporate parking spaces measuring 3380mm and 2500mm in width, each positioned adjacent to a 1200mm footpath. This arrangement is compliant with M4(3) requirements and is supported.

7.84 Each unit includes a cycle parking store and refuse storage within the rear garden (with communal stores proposed for Maisonette Type-I units). the stores are positioned on close to the rear of the dwellings, allowing level access from driveways and rear garden footpaths

7.85 Sufficient car and cycle parking is proposed to be provided as part of the development in accordance with Policy LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

Flood Risk, Surface Water and Foul Drainage

Flood Risk & Surface Water

7.86 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-179 of the NPPF 2024).

7.87 The site is located in Flood Zone 1 (less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding) as identified by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) 2024 and the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning. There is some surface water flooding on the far eastern element of the site, and some towards the north-eastern element of the site. The site is set in an elevated position which falls markedly from around 25.5m AOD along the western boundary to approximately 16.5m AOD in the east,

7.88 The concerns over Flood Risk, Surface Water and Foul Drainage raised by the Parish Council and local residents are carefully noted.

7.89 A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been submitted with this application which demonstrates that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and

future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

- 7.90 The Parish Council and objectors have raised concerns in respect of flood risk but these concerns are not shared by the Lead Local Flood Authority, who has no objections to the proposed development. The application site is located in Flood Zone 1, where there is the lowest risk of flooding. The Lead Local Flood Authority has scrutinised the applicant's surface water drainage strategy and is satisfied that that this would be appropriate to manage run-off through permeable paving and an onsite infiltration basin on the eastern element of the site. The proposed built form avoids any areas at risk of surface water flooding. This approach has both flow attenuation and water quality benefits and therefore subject to appropriate conditions recommended by the LLFA, the proposed development is considered capable of complying with Policy LP5 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

Foul Drainage

- 7.91 Policy LP6 of the Local Plan sets out the approach necessary to ensure that waste water capacity is maintained through the plan period.
- 7.92 Policy LP6 states: "A proposal for major scale development that would:
- a. require a new connection to the sewer network;
 - b. involve significant increases to flows entering the sewer network; or
 - c. involve development of a site identified by the Huntingdonshire Stage 2 Detailed Water Cycle Study or updated, successor or equivalent documents, to have potentially limited sewer network capacity (Amber or Red assessment);
- will only be supported where a sustainable foul/ used water strategy has been prepared and agreed with Anglian Water as the sewerage undertaker to establish whether any upgrades are necessary so that flows from the proposal can be accommodated. If upgrades are necessary the proposal will need to include an agreed plan for delivery, including phasing of development as necessary."
- 7.93 Paragraph 201 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) states the focus of planning decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively.
- 7.94 The proposal seeks to discharge foul water into the existing foul sewerage system.

- 7.95 Anglian Water originally advised this site is located within the catchment of the Oldhurst Water Recycling Centre (WRC), which currently lacks the capacity to accommodate the additional flows that would be generated by the proposed development as a whole. Anglian Water had determined that the site is unsustainable due to the associated environmental risk and the increased discharge rates, which could lead to a deterioration in water quality and an unacceptable risk of breaching environmental legislation at Oldhurst WRC. At present, no funding has been allocated at this Water Recycling Centre (WRC) for AMP 8 (2025-2030).
- 7.96 Anglian Water also originally objected to the proposed development due to the intended connection to the public foul drainage network and objects to any connection into our foul network from the proposed development, due to capacity constraints and pollution risk.
- 7.97 The applicant has submitted a report in response to this objection. The report outlines the following:
- Anglian Water (AW) provided a Pre-Planning assessment Report on the 11/03/2025 (Ref PPE0223268) confirming that the receiving wastewater recycling plant for the development was Oldhurst WRC and that capacity existed to accommodate the flows from the proposed development. Anglian Water also confirmed a suitable connection point and detailed works required for a suitable connection to be made that would fully comply with AW requirements. This pre-app advice is valid until March 2026.
 - The treatment of foul flows at the Oldhurst WRC is controlled by an environmental permit (Permit Number AWCNF/1160) issued by the Environment Agency (EA) who are responsible for the management of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016. The Environmental permit details the conditions that the operator (AW) must comply with. These cover all aspects of the operation and maintenance of the WRC and importantly state the volume of foul flow that can be treated and the quality of treated effluent that is discharged to the receiving watercourse (The Bury Brook).
 - A review of the flow data for the Oldhurst WRC using data supplied by the EA for years 2019-2024 (Note: the EA would not provide 2020 data due to an ongoing investigation has been undertaken. This shows that for those years, the flows are well below the limit.
 - To more accurately determine the current actual dry water flows at Oldhurst, the rainfall data for the years 2019-2024 has also been reviewed. Rainfall has a significant impact on the incoming flows and in wet years it could mean that even in the typically dry months (July, August, September) if high groundwater levels or rainfall continues it may well be that dry water flow conditions are not achieved throughout the year. This will mean that the measured

levels will be higher due to rainfall and water ingress rather than due to increased population related foul flows. This is why the EA now typically look for exceedance of the flow in 2 earlier years before a failure is recorded.

- The data demonstrates the impact of high rainfall levels in 2023 and 2024 which cause a significant increase in average flows treated throughout the entire year and in 2024 elevated Q90 flows. The Q90 flow in 2022 is 894 m³/day (a dry year) followed by a 2024 Q90 of 985 (a record wet period). This is a 10% increase in DWF in less than two years which if it were related to an increase of foul flows would represent a population increase of around 800 (or 300 newly connected dwellings) in less than two years. At a works that likely serves a population of around 8000 this would be most unlikely. It is however possible that the increase in flow is directly related to the wet years in 2023 and 2024 and our opinion is that AW are mistaken in their conclusion that the works does not have the capacity to treat the flows likely to be generated from the proposed development, which, based on AW calculations would increase the population equivalent by around 101 and the daily foul flows by <15m³/day.
- The report also comments that is suspected that that infiltration of groundwater and rainfall into the sewerage network is increasing due to poor maintenance of the sewers. If sewers are not maintained adequately, they will suffer from root damage and cracking which will mean that more groundwater ingress will take place. The increase in flows in wet years suggests high levels of water ingress that AW need to give urgent attention to.
- The report also highlights on the obligation placed on water companies to continuously review and properly manage all aspects of their permits. The permits under which water companies operate are determined by the Environment Agency (EA) and matters such as Environmental Permitting are clearly matters between the permit holder AW and the EA.
- In conclusion, the proposed development represents an increase of less than 1.5% in the permitted dry water flows at Oldhurst and as such is a very small increase. Therefore it is not agreed that the proposed development would cause the Oldhurst WRC to breach its Q90 flow limit and as such operate outside the limits of its EA permit.

7.98 This was sent to Anglian Water alongside a letter from HDC. Anglian Water have since confirmed they agree that the dry water flows returns are within the permit limits and therefore agree with the applicant on that point.

7.99 Anglian Water have explained that they also take into account the growth through planning consents. They have reviewed the latest Huntingdonshire 5 year housing supply Annual Monitoring Report-

Part 1 (Housing Supply) 2024/25 and note the progress of sites. Using their standard methodology for flow calculations, Anglian Water has advised that there will be headroom to accommodate the 43 dwellings proposed. On that basis, Anglian Water have removed their objection in relation to the Oldhurst WRC.

- 7.100 Anglian Water has advised they object to any connection into their foul network from the proposed development, due to capacity constraints and pollution risk. In order to overcome their objection, they required the applicant to reconsult Anglian Water in the form of a Pre-Development enquiry (PPE) in order to define a Sustainable Point of Connection (SPOC). This has taken place, and discussions with Anglian Water are ongoing.
- 7.101 Officers are satisfied that the applicant is engaging with Anglian Water to seek a solution to ensure the proposed development can remain safe for its lifetime. The implementation of this solution would fall under the responsibility of Anglian Water and the applicant and/or other statutory control regimes. To secure this, a Grampian condition is recommended requiring the submission and approval of a foul water drainage strategy should Members be minded to approve the proposal. A Grampian condition prevents development from starting or being occupied until specified off-site works or measures have been completed. Subject to this condition, the proposed development would be safe for its lifetime and would not exacerbate foul water network capacity constraints or give rise to pollution risks. Officers therefore seek delegated authority to resolve outstanding matters with Anglian Water and to subsequently impose a suitably worded condition.
- 7.102 This will be consistent with recent decisions made by Members of the DMC.
- 7.103 Subject to the imposition of the recommended condition, the proposed development would accord with Policy LP6 of the Local Plan.

Trees

- 7.104 Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated and that a proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development.
- 7.105 The proposal is not located within a Conservation Area nor are there any Tree Preservation Orders on or immediately adjacent to the site.

- 7.106 The majority of the site is an agricultural field. However, there are number of trees and hedgerows on the perimeter of the site. An AIA, Tree Protection Plan and Tree Survey has been provided with the application. All of the trees have been given a 'B' grade rating. The Tree Officer has reviewed this and also visited the site. The Tree Officer has confirmed that the mature Oak Trees along the northern boundary are not veteran trees. Although the trees are large and of high value, their condition is not one of a Veteran tree, due their relatively young age and lack of significant heart rot/decay.
- 7.107 In terms of the group of trees on the northern common boundary, a 3m high acoustic fence is proposed on that common boundary. As discussed in further detail below, this is required to mitigate the noise from the factory. Plots 38-43 are also sited adjacent to this group of trees. The Tree Officer has raised concern about the impact of this acoustic fence and the encroachment into root protection areas. The acoustic fencing will require tree pruning for installation, and the excavations throughout their RPA's, some of the RPA's would be left within the rear gardens, constant and on-going pruning would be required which would degrade the trees and their value. This is noted, and will be weighed up at the end of the report.
- 7.108 The Tree Officer has recommended a number of conditions if members look to approve the application regarding methods of construction, tree protection etc. These conditions are considered are necessary to ensure accordance with the aims of Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

Biodiversity

- 7.109 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.
- 7.110 A preliminary ecological assessment (PEA) within the Habitat and Protected Species Suitability Report has been submitted as part of the application, and demonstrates that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on wildlife subject to recommendations outlined in the report.
- 7.111 The application is supported a numerous surveys which have been reviewed by the Ecology Officer who is content with the conclusions and agrees that no further surveys are required. Conditions are recommended regarding further surveys should

work not commence within 18 months, sensitive lighting plan, precautionary working method statement and an ecological enhancement statement.

- 7.112 In accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021 and amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, this development is subject to the mandatory requirement to deliver at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
- 7.113 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment within the Habitat and Protected Species Suitability Report has been submitted as part of the application.
- 7.114 The site is an arable field with good quality grassland on site. The proposed development will inevitably result in the loss of some of these grassland.
- 7.115 There is scope onsite to provide some biodiversity net gain through enhancements and SuD's features on the eastern section of the site. A number of off-site units would need to be secured also. A condition is recommended to secure this. Overall, the Ecology Officer is satisfied that the application is supported by sufficient information to demonstrate the development is capable of providing at least 10% BNG.
- 7.116 A BNG condition is recommended to secure this net gain. Due to the size and distinctiveness of habitat created onsite, a monitoring fee of £6,345.50 broken up into instalments is required to cover a period of 30 years. This would be required to be secured through a Section 106 agreement and is considered necessary to ensure the biodiversity net gain is achieved in accordance with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan and the NPPF 2024. The Ecology Officer is content with this approach.
- 7.117 Warboys and Wistow Wood SSSI is located circa 833m to the north-west of the site. The applicant has submitted a SSSI Impact Assessment. This has been reviewed by Natural England who confirm they agree with the conclusions. A condition is recommended to secure the provision of Homeowner Information Packs (about respecting SSSI's, making use of PROW's and educational tools for the environment) as a way of mitigation.
- 7.118 Subject to the imposition of the recommended conditions, the proposal is considered to broadly accord with the objectives of Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework in this regard.

Residential Amenity

- 7.119 Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all

users and occupiers of the proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

Amenity of neighbouring properties

- 7.120 The closest neighbouring residential properties are on the northern side of Station Road and abut the eastern boundary of the application. These properties are no.84 Station Road, which fronts onto Station Road but is separated from the site by the access to No.86 Station Road which sits to the rear of No.84. Unlike No.84, No.86 sits against the site boundary.
- 7.121 The nearest plots to those properties are Plot 1, 20, 28 and 29. Plot 1 is located a considerable distance away from both properties and therefore will not have a significant impact upon these two neighbouring properties. Plot 20 is located circa 14m away from No.86. The proposed first floor windows on the eastern facing elevation look towards the driveway of No.86. Plots 20 is positioned and orientated to avoid any significant interlooking or overlooking from the first floor windows on the northern facing elevation because the angles will be too oblique. It is therefore considered that Plot 20 would not have a significant impact upon No.86.
- 7.122 Plots 28 has two first floor windows on the east facing elevation which would face towards the rear garden of No.86. Whilst there would be circa 17m separation, both of those rooms are served by windows on either the north or south elevations. Officers therefore recommended a condition to obscure glaze the proposed first floor windows on the east facing elevation of Plot 28. In regard to Plot 29, that is located a considerable distance away from No.86.
- 7.123 The other nearest residential properties are opposite the site on the south/west side of Station Road. Given the proposed development is set quite a bit back from the site boundary, this relationship is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.124 It is considered that the detailed layout demonstrates no significant impact upon any neighbouring properties.
- 7.125 The Environmental Health Team (EH) have been consulted as part of the application and have not raised any concerns. Conditions to protect neighbouring properties during construction, a construction environmental management plan is recommended to be imposed should Members be minded to approve the application.
- 7.126 Given the site context and the design of the development, no concerns are raised regarding noise or lightning.

Amenity for future occupiers

- 7.127 In terms of noise, a noise assessment was submitted with the application. The assessment identified factory noise to the north and traffic noise to the south-west from Station Road. The assessment sets out the factory noise could be mitigated with a 3m high acoustic fence on the common boundary. A condition is recommended to secure this. This would affect plots 38-43 the most. However, it is located between circa 10m -14m away. Whilst it may have a degree of impact upon these plots given its height and proximity, it is considered necessary to mitigate the noise from the factory and therefore acceptable in this instance. It is located a considerable distance away from plots 36 and 37. Traffic noise would be mitigated with glazing and background ventilation. A condition is also recommended to secure the implementation of the recommendations of the noise assessment. The pumping station has also been relocated to a less sensitive part of the site and will be further away from neighbouring properties. Environmental Health have raised no concerns about odour or noise from the pumping station, nor have they raised any concern about air quality.
- 7.128 In respect of the amenity of future occupants, it is considered that the detailed layout has been designed to ensure amenity of the future occupiers of the development is of a high quality. It is noted that, in any event, occupants would be aware of the layout and relationship of the site and would be able to make an informed decision on how that relationship would relate to their personal needs.
- 7.129 The proposed development is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms amenity to both existing neighbouring properties and future occupants of the proposed development in accordance with Local Plan Policy LP14, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Accessible Housing

- 7.130 The requirements within policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 relating to accessible and adaptable homes are applicable to all new dwellings. This states that all dwellings (where practicable and viable) should meet Building Regulation requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'. These include design features that enable mainstream housing to be flexible enough to meet the current and future needs of most households, including in particular older people, those with some disabilities, and also families with young children. The applicant has confirmed that all the dwellings meet the requirements of M4(2) and a condition is recommended to be attached to secure these Building Regulation requirements. In addition to this, two bungalows are to be provided which meet the requirements of M4(3).

Water Efficiency

- 7.131 The requirements within policy LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 relating to sustainable design and construction methods are applicable to all new dwellings. A condition is recommended to be attached to any consent to ensure that the dwellings are built in compliance.

Other Matters

Contamination

- 7.132 Policy LP37 of the Local Plan states that where ground contamination of a site is possible, the risks of such needs to be investigated. The geo-environmental assessment indicated that the site is likely to be suitable for its proposed new use with regard to land contamination and the supplementary ground investigation confirms that no contamination was identified along the south-western boundary. However, in light of potential sewage overflows or fuel leaks from the adjoining sites, it might be prudent to include an "unexpected contamination" condition. The proposal therefore complies with Policy LP37 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan.

Fire Hydrants

- 7.133 A fire hydrant condition is recommended to be imposed given the size and scale of development, and on the advice of the Fire Service.

Archaeology

- 7.134 In terms of archaeology, The Historic Team at Cambridgeshire County Council have been consulted. They advise that the development lies in an area of archaeological potential, to the north of the historic core of Warboys. Archaeological investigations in advance of residential development along Station Road to the south have found evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity including an inhumation burial, pitting, ditches and a series of disarticulated human remains of the same date (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference. MCB23599). Earlier prehistoric activity was found including Iron Age pitting. These earlier remains were found to be overlain with evidence of medieval agricultural regimes and post-medieval quarry pits (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record references ECB5008, ECB5549, ECB4648, ECB5548, MCB23599, MCB25917). Cropmarks of circular enclosures and long, linear features along with further probable quarry pitting are also present to the west, adjacent to Coronation Avenue (MCB20261), and a medieval moated site is present to the north of the proposed development, at Pingle Wood (MCB23579). The Historic Team advise that due to the archaeological potential of the site a further programme of investigation and recording is required in order to

provide more information regarding the presence or absence, and condition, of surviving archaeological remains within the development area, and to establish the need for archaeological mitigation of the development as necessary. A written scheme of investigation condition is therefore recommended.

Cumulative impact – incinerator proposal

- 7.135 Concerns have been raised locally that whilst planning application CCC/22/151/FUL for an incinerator at The Old Brick Works, Puddock Hill, has been withdrawn, Thermeco has publicly confirmed its intention to submit a revised application. However, at the time of writing this report, there is no live application for an incinerator.

Developer Contributions

- 7.136 Statutory tests set out in the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (Regulation 122) require that S.106 planning obligations must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonable related in scale and kind to the development. S.106 obligations are intended to make development acceptable which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. Without prejudice to the eventual determination of the planning application, negotiations have been held with the Applicant in order to determine the extent of the obligations required to make the development acceptable. These negotiations have been held in line with the advice within the Regulations and the outcome is summarised below.

CIL

- 7.137 Housing in Huntingdonshire is generally Chargeable Development under the Community Infrastructure Levy (“CIL”) Regulations. CIL payments cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries, lifelong learning and education.
- 7.138 However, a chargeable development which comprises social housing is entitled to full relief from CIL for the ‘qualifying dwellings’ within the development. There are clawback provisions if the development no longer qualifies for relief within seven years of the commencement of development. However, this is not a planning issue. In respect of the lack of health and education contributions, the Contributions SPD is clear that the threshold for contributions are for developments of 200 or more, everything below is addressed via CIL. This development is for 43 dwellings. The development is still a chargeable development for CIL but is granted CIL relief given that it is 100% affordable. It is also noted that Warboys is Key Service Centre and has a range of services and facilities available. The CIL bid process is also separate from planning.

Affordable Housing

- 7.139 Given the proposal is for 100% affordable housing, were the Council minded to grant planning permission the scheme's tenure would need to be secured by way of Section 106 Agreement.

Open/Green Space

- 7.140 In accordance with Local Plan Policies LP3 and LP4, proposals for residential development of this scale are required to provide appropriate levels of onsite informal and formal green space. The site plan shows an appropriate level of onsite provision, with the Urban Design Officer commenting in support of the location, useability and natural surveillance of those open spaces. When assessed against the adopted Developer Contributions SPD sufficient green space will be provided as part of the proposed development, such to accord with Policies LP3 and LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. The design and delivery of the onsite open spaces, and their future management/maintenance, would need to be secured by way of Section 106 Agreement, were Members minded to grant planning permission.

Formal Sports

- 7.141 Comments have been received from the Strategic Sports Development Officer. Within those comments, it is noted that Warboys Parish Council have received several S106 financial contributions (some have been paid, some are due to paid when thresholds have been met). No project has been identified for a contribution and therefore no contribution has been sought.

Residential Wheeled Bins

- 7.142 Each dwelling would require the provision of wheeled bins. The current cost of such provision to the developer is £150 per dwelling and would be secured through S106 Agreement were Members minded to grant planning permission.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 7.143 As a result of this, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'. While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-

date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.

7.144 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.145 A revised NPPF was published in December 2024, introducing a substantially revised methodology for calculating local housing need and the reimposition of this as a mandatory approach for establishing housing requirements. This has resulted in the Council being unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply (5YHLS). While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.

7.146 As a result of this, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the tilted balance'.

7.147 NPPF para 11 states:

'Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

For decision-taking this means:

d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance (7) provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*

ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

7 Foot note 7 states: The policies referred to are those in this Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated*

as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.'

- 7.148 As outlined in the report, in light of the considerations, there are no strong reasons for refusal in relation to any habitats sites (and those sites listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Green Space, irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75) and areas at risk of flooding. Therefore, there is no reason to not move forward to test d (ii) as per above and thus the 'titled balance' is engaged.
- 7.149 As stated above, a tilted balance approach should be applied in the assessment of the proposed development, and a balancing exercise should be carried out to determine the potential any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 7.150 The application seeks full planning permission for the erection of 43 affordable dwellings in Warboys.
- 7.151 It has been determined that the western part of the site is on land within the built-up area, and the eastern part of the site is on land on land well related to the built up area but could be considered visually part of the countryside. Policies LP8 and LP10 are therefore relevant and are considered for completeness. These Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications. The aspects of these policies that restrict development on land well-related to the built up or in the countryside is to be given reduced weight.
- 7.152 It has been established that the proposed development is in a sustainable location, would have access to services and facilities, and that it would not result in an over-reliance on the private motor vehicle. As such, the proposed development would comply with Framework Paragraph 109.
- 7.153 It is considered that the application site could satisfactorily accommodate 43 dwellings and be of an acceptable design and layout.
- 7.154 The proposed access arrangements are considered to be safe and acceptable in highway safety terms. The level of traffic generated by the development would not result in adverse traffic impacts on the surrounding network.

- 7.155 The site is Flood Zone 1, and the site is therefore acceptable in principle in terms of flood risk and drainage.
- 7.156 The development of this 2.3 hectare site would result in the loss of Grade 2 agricultural land, nationally considered as amongst the best and most versatile agricultural land. The proposal would result in the irreversible loss of some of this best and most versatile agricultural land. The irreversible loss of agricultural land which can be used for food or crop production would conflict with Policy LP10 part (a)(i). However, given that the total area of agricultural land being lost is less than 20 hectares and therefore does not trigger consultation with Natural England as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England) Order) (DMPO) 2015. This loss is not considered to be significant. Whilst harm does arise from this loss, such harm should be quantified through the size of the loss which amounts to 2.3 hectares. Therefore, in this case, moderate weight is attached to this.
- 7.157 As outlined above, the surrounding landscape is not considered to be a valued landscape in line with NPPF paragraph 187, which is confirmed by the Landscape Officer. Whilst this application represents an improvement on the previously withdrawn application through the reduction in number of dwellings, improved views from Station Road through the development and pulling back of the built form from Station Road, even with the proposed landscaping mitigation, the proposed development overall would give rise to a medium/moderate level of landscape and visual harm which would conflict with Policy LP10 part (b). This harm is considered to be moderate given that the harm is considered to be localised as it is confined to the immediate and near-field context only.
- 7.158 There would be a degree of impact upon the group of trees on the western boundary due to the acoustic fence and positioning of the curtilages of those nearest properties. However, as outlined above, the site layout has been developed in response to a number of constraints and consultee comments, and maintains visual gaps through the development. It is therefore considered that in that context, and on balance the degree of impact upon the group of trees on the western boundary is not significant.
- 7.159 As noted above, there would be some element of conflict identified with the requirements of Policy LP28. This is because the application is not supported by a housing needs survey for Warboys. The identified element of Policy LP28 deals with evidence of unmet local need in the context of rural exception sites as opposed to affordable housing needs more generally and within a strategic context.
- 7.160 However, the delivery of housing and affordable housing is a prime material consideration of significant and strategic importance for

the District. The Council's housing team have confirmed that there continues to be a significant unmet need in the District and the delivery of all 43 dwellings as affordable housing would make a valuable contribution towards meeting the needs of people unable to afford market housing in the District.

- 7.161 At this time, there are some 3081 households on the Council's Housing Register and yet more people will be interested in Shared Ownership housing. The difficulty in affording a home at market prices is well known but with Shared Ownership people can buy a share in the property and as their circumstances improve, they can acquire further shares and ultimately buy the property outright.
- 7.162 The extent of known demand arising from the Council's Housing Register is clearly significant and should attract commensurate weight within the planning balance, particularly when considering any identified conflicts with development plan policy.
- 7.163 There is an obligation through the planning process to provide for affordable housing in sustainable locations and the magnitude of need across the district outweighs any remnant harm arising from the 'exception site' element of policy LP28.
- 7.164 Overall, the proposal would result in the delivery of 43 homes towards the housing supply and acknowledged need for new affordable homes. The applicant has agreed to two years for implementation. This will mean that the homes will come forward sooner. Substantial weight is afforded to this provision and delivery.
- 7.165 This quantum of residential development would not only address local needs but would also contribute to the national imperative to deliver 1.5 million new homes over the current parliamentary period as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of July 2024. Further ministerial statements since, flowing from this, also highlight the importance of the £39 billion pounds 'social and affordable homes programme' designed to deliver the biggest boost to social and affordable housing in a generation.
- 7.166 In terms of the economic dimension of sustainable development, the proposal would contribute towards economic growth, including job creation - during the construction phase and in the longer term through the additional population assisting the local economy through spending on local services/facilities. Moderate weight is afforded to this.
- 7.167 In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the proposal offers potential for the incorporation of energy efficiency measures, the delivery of green space and a 10% minimum net gain in biodiversity. The application site constitutes a sustainable location for the scale of development

proposed in respect of access to local employment opportunities, services and facilities in the local area as well as Ramsey and Huntingdon and is accessible by sustainable transport modes. Moderate weight is afforded to this.

- 7.168 Conflict/harm has been identified in relation to loss of agricultural land and the localised landscape/visual impact. This is weighed against the benefits of the provision of 43 dwellings in a sustainable location in the absence of the Council being able to demonstrate a 5YHLS, as well as the provision of 43 affordable dwellings which will make a valuable contribution towards addressing the significant shortfall across the district and the other above-mentioned benefits.
- 7.169 It is concluded that the identified harm would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits when taking all the positives and negatives of the proposal into account.
- 7.170 Having regard to all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that approval be granted.

8. RECOMMENDATION – APPROVAL with delegated authority to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection (Chief Planning Officer) to resolve Anglian Water matters including the wording of a suitable condition for foul drainage, and subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 obligation relating to affordable housing, BNG monitoring, provision of open space and wheeled bins, and to conditions to include those listed below:

- Time limit (2 years)
- Approved Plans
- Boundary treatment (including railing on Station Road)
- Hard and soft landscaping
- Materials
- Architectural details
- Cycle and refuse stores
- LEAP design and play equipment
- Street furniture
- Lighting
- Highways (including access, internals, relocated ditch and highway improvements etc)
- Surface water drainage
- Foul drainage
- Trees (including construction method, tree protection etc)
- Ecology (including lighting, method statement, enhancements, welcome packs etc)
- BNG
- Obscure glaze 1st floor windows east elevation Plot 28
- Acoustic fence
- Windows & ventilation

- CEMP
- Unexpected contamination
- Fire Hydrants
- Written scheme of investigation (archaeology)
- M4(2) dwellings
- Water efficiency

or

REFUSAL only in the event that the obligation referred to above has not been completed, or on the grounds that the applicant is unwilling to complete the obligation necessary to make the development acceptable.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk



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Huntingdonshire District Council
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Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

10th February 2026

Dear Sir/Madam,

Updated Objection and Request for Refusal

Planning Application: 25/01279/FUL

Site: Land North of the Sewage Pumping Station, Station Road, Warboys

Warboys Parish Council writes to reaffirm and update its formal objection to the above planning application, having now reviewed the recently released planning documents submitted in December 2025 and January 2026, including the applicant's Responses to Consultees and updated highways material.

Having carefully considered this additional information, the Parish Council is of the clear view that the newly submitted documents do not address the fundamental and material planning objections previously raised. The proposal remains unacceptable in principle and should be refused for the reasons set out below.

1. CONTINUED CONFLICT WITH THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036

The recently submitted documents do not revisit or rebut the conclusions of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), which explicitly rejected this site for development. The site remains:

- Grade 1 agricultural land, protected under Policy LP10(a);
- Open countryside outside the built-up area boundary, contrary to Policy LP8; and
- Of high landscape sensitivity, contributing to the rural setting of Warboys.

No material change in circumstances has been demonstrated to justify departing from the adopted Local Plan strategy.

2. FAILURE TO JUSTIFY THE DEVELOPMENT AS A RURAL EXCEPTION SITE

Despite being promoted as a 100% affordable housing scheme, the proposal continues to fail to meet the requirements of Policy LP28:

- No Housing Needs Survey has been undertaken for Warboys;
- No evidence of unmet local need has been provided;
- No binding mechanism is proposed to prioritise local households; and
- The site’s unsustainable location conflicts with LP28(d).

The newly submitted documents do not remedy these deficiencies.

3. INFRASTRUCTURE IMPACT AND ABSENCE OF MEANINGFUL CIL OR SECURED MITIGATION

As a 100% affordable housing development, the scheme will generate no meaningful Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts for Warboys Parish.

The proposal would introduce approximately 190–200 new residents through 43 dwellings, representing a significant increase in the village population, yet:

- No firm Section 106 obligations are secured;
- Health and education contributions remain “subject to discussions”;
- No alternative funding mechanism is proposed to offset the absence of CIL; and
- No certainty is provided that local infrastructure can support this level of growth.

This places additional pressure on already constrained services and facilities and weighs significantly against the sustainability of the proposal.

4. HIGHWAYS SAFETY, DRAINAGE, AND DEFERRED TECHNICAL DETAIL

While the applicant has submitted revised access drawings and explanatory material, the Parish Council notes that:

- Station Road remains the sole access point to the development;
- Steep gradients are mitigated rather than resolved;
- The drainage ditch along Station Road must be infilled and realigned to facilitate a footway; and
- The acceptability of these works is deferred to post-permission S38 and S278 agreements.

Critical matters relating to highway safety, drainage stability, and long-term maintenance remain unresolved at the application stage.

5. LANDSCAPE, CHARACTER, AND VISUAL IMPACT (INCLUDING MISLEADING VISUAL EVIDENCE)

The Parish Council remains concerned about the loss of open countryside, erosion of the rural edge of Warboys, and harm to valued long-distance fenland views.

In addition, the Parish Council considers that the photographic evidence submitted with the application is misleading and does not provide an accurate representation of landscape impact. The photographs are predominantly taken facing back towards the village, rather than looking down the site and across the open countryside, which is where the most significant visual harm would occur.

As a result:

- The openness and depth of the site are understated;
- The true extent of countryside loss is not properly illustrated; and
- The development's impact on the wider landscape setting of Warboys is not accurately conveyed.

The newly released documents acknowledge significant level changes across the site and confirm the need for prominent retaining walls, in some cases exceeding 1100mm in height.

This further undermines the reliability of the applicant's landscape and visual assessment.

6. AMENITY IMPACTS – SEWAGE PUMPING STATION AND INDUSTRIAL USE

The site lies adjacent to a sewage pumping station and close to a B2 industrial premises. No odour, noise, or amenity assessments have been provided, contrary to the "agent of change" principle set out in the NPPF. This omission remains unaddressed.

7. CUMULATIVE IMPACT – INCINERATOR PROPOSAL

While planning application CCC/22/151/FUL for an incinerator at The Old Brick Works, Puddock Hill, has been withdrawn, Thermeco has publicly confirmed its intention to submit a revised application.

The likelihood of a future incinerator proposal in close proximity to the site remains a material planning consideration. No cumulative impact assessment has been undertaken, and the applicant's failure to address this realistic planning context is a significant omission.

8. PROCEDURAL AND GOVERNANCE CONCERNS

The Parish Council has submitted a Freedom of Information request to Huntingdonshire District Council regarding governance arrangements for this application.

Serious concerns remain regarding:

- HDC's dual role as landowner and determining authority;
- The fact that the sale of the land is contingent on the grant of planning permission;
- The absence of clear separation between commercial and regulatory functions; and
- Restricted public access to application documents during part of the consultation period due to a planning portal outage.

These matters undermine public confidence in the transparency and impartiality of the planning process.

CONCLUSION

The newly submitted documents do not materially alter the planning balance. They rely on justification, mitigation, and deferred detail rather than resolving fundamental policy conflicts and site constraints.

For the reasons set out above, Warboys Parish Council respectfully requests that planning application **25/01279/FUL** be **refused**, as it:

- Conflicts with the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036;
- Fails to meet the requirements for a rural exception site;
- Introduces significant infrastructure and sustainability impacts without mitigation;
- Causes harm to landscape character and residential amenity; and
- Raises serious procedural and governance concerns.

Yours faithfully,



Clerk to Warboys Parish Council

[REDACTED]

From: Charlotte Lowe (Cllr) [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 September 2025 15:40
To: Lewis Tomlinson
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Call-in 25/01279/FUL

Dear Lewis and Planning,

I am writing to formally request that planning application 25/01279/FUL, relating to the proposed residential development at Station Road, Warboys, be referred to the Planning Committee (DMC) for determination rather than decided under delegated powers.

This request is made on the basis of several material planning considerations that I believe warrant wider scrutiny and public debate:

- **Wastewater Infrastructure Capacity:** Anglian Water has objected to the application due to insufficient capacity at Oldhurst Water Recycling Centre. The risk of environmental harm and potential breach of statutory obligations is significant and unresolved.
- **Amenity Impact:** The proposed dwellings are located within 15 metres of a sewage pumping station, raising serious concerns about noise, odour, and disruption. This proximity could result in unacceptable living conditions for future residents.
- **Flood Risk and Surface Water Management:** The site's impermeable clay soils and complex drainage strategy—including ditch realignment and attenuation ponds—require careful consideration. The long-term sustainability of these measures is uncertain.
- **Biodiversity Net Gain:** The development cannot deliver the required 10% net gain on-site and relies on off-site compensation. This approach may not align with Policy LP30 or the Environment Act 2021.
- **Prematurity and Scale:** The site lies outside the defined settlement boundary and is not allocated for development in the Local Plan. Given the scale of the proposal and its edge-of-village location, it may represent overdevelopment and undermine the character of the area.
- **Conflict with National Policy – Heritage and Archaeology:** The Archaeology Report (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record references MCB23599, ECB5008, ECB5549, etc.) identifies that the development site lies within an area of high archaeological potential.

Previous investigations in the immediate area uncovered Anglo-Saxon burials, Iron Age features, and medieval remains. Failure to secure proper preservation and mitigation would risk contravening the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023)**, which emphasises the need to conserve and record heritage assets. This makes the matter of more than local significance.

- **Community Safety and Crime Prevention:** Although the developer has submitted a Crime Reduction Statement adopting principles of “Secured by Design”, there are unresolved concerns about natural surveillance, defensive boundaries, and lighting design in a rural setting. Poorly implemented layouts risk undermining community safety, contrary to NPPF policies on creating safe, inclusive and accessible environments.
- **Wider Regional and Precedent-setting Impact:** This development is of a scale and sensitivity that extends beyond Warboys parish. It sets a precedent for how archaeological sites in Huntingdonshire and beyond will be managed when faced with housing development pressures. This is a matter of more than local significance in terms of heritage protection, housing growth, and planning consistency across Cambridgeshire.

Given the above concerns, I believe this application raises issues of strategic importance and public interest that merit transparent discussion at committee level.

I would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this letter and advise whether the application will be referred to committee.

Kind regards
Charlotte

Charlotte Lowe BSc (Hons) Env.Sci.
Huntingdonshire District Councillor - Warboys Ward
Covering Broughton, Old Hurst, Pidley cum Fenton, Upwood & The Raveleys, Warboys, Wistow & Woodhurst villages

[REDACTED]

Huntingdonshire District Council | Pathfinder House | St Mary's Street | Huntingdon | PE29 3TN



[REDACTED]

From: Charlotte Lowe (Cllr) [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 September 2025 16:02
To: Lewis Tomlinson
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Planning application 25/01279/FUL

Dear Lewis,

I am writing to formally object to planning application 25/01279/FUL for the proposed development of 43 affordable dwellings at Land North of the Sewage Pumping Station, Station Road, Warboys. This objection is based on material planning considerations, many of which conflict with the NPPF, as evidenced by the supporting documents for the application.

Procedural and Policy Conflicts

The application raises significant procedural issues, including a clear **conflict of interest** as Huntingdonshire District Council is both the landowner of the site and the planning authority making the decision. This undermines public confidence in the impartiality of the planning process.

As mentioned by Warboys Parish Council in their objection letter, the proposal also fails to address the site's history in the planning process. This site was previously rejected for allocation in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) for the Local Plan to 2036. A key reason for the previous rejection, which remains relevant, is that the site is comprised of Grade 2 agricultural land, which is considered "very good quality". The permanent loss of this productive farmland conflicts with **NPPF Paragraphs 174 and 175**, which require planning decisions to protect and enhance valued soils and recognize the economic benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land.

Amenity and Environmental Suitability

The site is unsuitable for residential use due to significant **environmental health and amenity issues**. The Environmental Health Officer's report identifies considerable noise from the adjacent factory and road traffic. The proposed mitigation measures, including a **3m high acoustic barrier**, sealed glazing, and mechanical ventilation, demonstrate that the site is not appropriate for residential development.

This conflicts with **NPPF Paragraph 135**, which requires developments to provide a high standard of amenity for future residents. Additionally, the location presents potential contamination risks from adjacent sites and previous large development of houses behind the existing terraced houses on Station Road, due to possible sewage overflows from the Pumping Station, fuel leaks and surface water flooding.

Locating affordable family housing next to industrial noise and potential contamination risks is contrary to this principle. This also conflicts with **Local Plan Policy LP17 (Amenity)**, which requires that development does not harm the health, quality of life, or amenity of existing and future residents.

A further concern is the potential impact from a proposed incinerator at Woodford's Recycling Centre, which would exacerbate these existing amenity issues.

Loss of Prime Agricultural Land

The application site is former Grade 2 **agricultural land (2.35 hectares)** which only recently went out of production, due to the landlord proposing this site for development.

Paragraphs **174 and 175 of the NPPF** require planning decisions to protect and enhance valued soils and recognise the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grades 1, 2 and 3a). The permanent loss of productive farmland for housing undermines long-term food security and directly conflicts with these national policy aims.

This also conflicts with **Local Plan Policy LP10 (The Countryside)**, which seeks to protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, including the role of agricultural land.

Unresolved Infrastructure and Heritage Concerns

The application has not adequately addressed concerns raised by technical consultees:-

- **Highway Safety:** While a transport assessment was not required for the proposed number of dwellings, the Highways Development Management Engineer has requested amended drawings to resolve issues with a "too severe" taper in front of Plot 21 and the need for relocated or additional crossing points.
- Given that the road is one lane each way, with residents parking their cars on the road outside their homes, this proposed development will further increase road traffic collisions and potential difficulties for families crossing the road and vehicular turning.
-
- **Drainage and Flood Risk:** The LLFA has reviewed the drainage plans, but there are still concerns regarding the relocation of the ditch. Anglian Water has also noted that assets close to, or crossing the site, will require diversion at the developer's cost. Plus the sewerage system will not cope with the additional 43 properties proposed on this site.
-
- **Archaeological and Heritage Concerns:** The site lies within an area of "high archaeological potential". Previous investigations nearby have uncovered evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity, including an inhumation burial and Iron Age features. Developing this site risks the permanent loss of nationally important heritage assets, which directly conflicts with **NPPF Paragraph 205**. This raises direct conflict with **Local Plan Policy LP34 (Heritage Assets and Their Settings)**.

Failure to Deliver Biodiversity Net Gain

The scheme also fails to meet a key policy requirement for **Biodiversity Net Gain**. The applicant has admitted that the scheme cannot deliver the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain on-site and instead relies on off-site credits. This is in direct conflict with **NPPF Paragraph 186**, which requires a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

The proposed site is highly visible with wide open views to the surrounding countryside. Development here would cause permanent harm to the landscape setting of Warboys. Paragraph **180 of the NPPF** requires planning decisions to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

This also conflicts with **Local Plan Policies LP11 (Design Context)** and **LP12 (Design Implementation)**, which require development to integrate positively into its landscape setting and avoid harm to rural character.

With the potential build of an incinerator very close to the proposed site, I do not think the potential residents would be so keen on purchasing a property that is so close to an incinerator!

In summary, this proposal:

- Conflicts with **NPPF paragraphs 174–175, 180, 186, and 205.**
- Conflicts with **Local Plan Policies LP10, LP11, LP12, LP17, LP30, and LP34.**
- Results in the **loss of agricultural land, harm to heritage assets, risk to residential amenity, and a failure to deliver biodiversity net gain.**

For the reasons outlined above, the proposal is considered to be **contrary** to both national and local planning policies, is outside the built-up area of the village (contrary to Policy LP8) and should be refused.

Kind regards
Charlotte

Charlotte Lowe BSc (Hons) Env.Sci.
Huntingdonshire District Councillor - Warboys Ward
Covering Broughton, Old Hurst, Pidley cum Fenton, Upwood & The Raveleys, Warboys, Wistow & Woodhurst villages

████████████████████
Huntingdonshire District Council | Pathfinder House | St Mary's Street | Huntingdon | PE29 3TN



County Councillor for Warboys and The Stukeleys

Abbots Ripton - Alconbury Weald - Great Raveley - Great Stukeley
Little Raveley - Little Stukeley - Upwood - Warboys - Wennington
Wistow - Woodwalton

Leader of the Cambridgeshire County Council Conservative Group

Planning Department
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

Subject: Formal Objection to Planning Application 25/01279/FUL – Land North of Sewage Pumping Station, Station Road, Warboys

Dear Sir/Madam,

As the County Councillor for the Warboys and The Stukeleys Division, I wish to lodge a formal objection to planning application 25/01279/FUL, which proposes the erection of 43 dwellings (all designated as affordable housing) and associated works at Land North of the Sewage Pumping Station, Station Road, Warboys.

This objection is based on multiple material planning considerations, many of which were raised in relation to the earlier application 22/00412/FUL and remain unresolved.

1. Conflict with the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036

- The Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) puts into question the use of this site for allocation, concluding:
 - It is Grade 2 agricultural land, protected under Policy LP10(a) to prevent irreversible loss of the best and most versatile farmland.
 - It forms part of the open countryside with “no capacity for development” due to its visibility, undeveloped character, and contribution to the setting of Warboys.
 - It lies outside the built-up area boundary, contrary to Policy LP8, which supports development only within defined built-up areas.

2. Unsustainable Location and Poor Connectivity

- The site is beyond reasonable walking distance from shops, a school, and a doctor's surgery. Resulting in the development would increase car dependency, undermining local and national sustainability objectives.
- Public transport is limited to sporadic at best, bus service, falling short of Policy LP16 (Sustainable Transport).

3. Harm to Landscape, Character, and Amenity

- The site is adjacent to a sewage pumping station and industrial premises (B2 use), yet no odour, noise, or amenity assessments have been provided, contrary to NPPF Paragraph 187.

4. Failure to Justify as a Rural Exception Site

- No Housing Needs Survey has been conducted for Warboys; therefore, no evidence exists of an unmet local need. Without such evidence, allocations may go to people with no local connection, increasing commuting and reducing sustainability.
- Warboys has already delivered over 130 affordable homes since 2015, with another 40 in the pipeline.

5. Highways, Parking, Drainage, and Flood Risk

- The proposed junction aligns with an existing dwelling, causing potential light intrusion. Station Road is narrow, with no pedestrian infrastructure, creating highway safety risks which must be resolved before any development is allowed.
- The LLFA objected to the previous application (22/00412/FUL), and many feel these concerns remain unresolved.

6. Consultee Objection – Anglian Water

- Anglian Water has objected due to significant existing capacity issues in the foul drainage network. Despite this not being a material planning reason, the potential for failure of our waste assets should hold a significant weight.

Conclusion

For the reasons above, I strongly urge Huntingdonshire District Council to refuse application 25/01279/FUL.

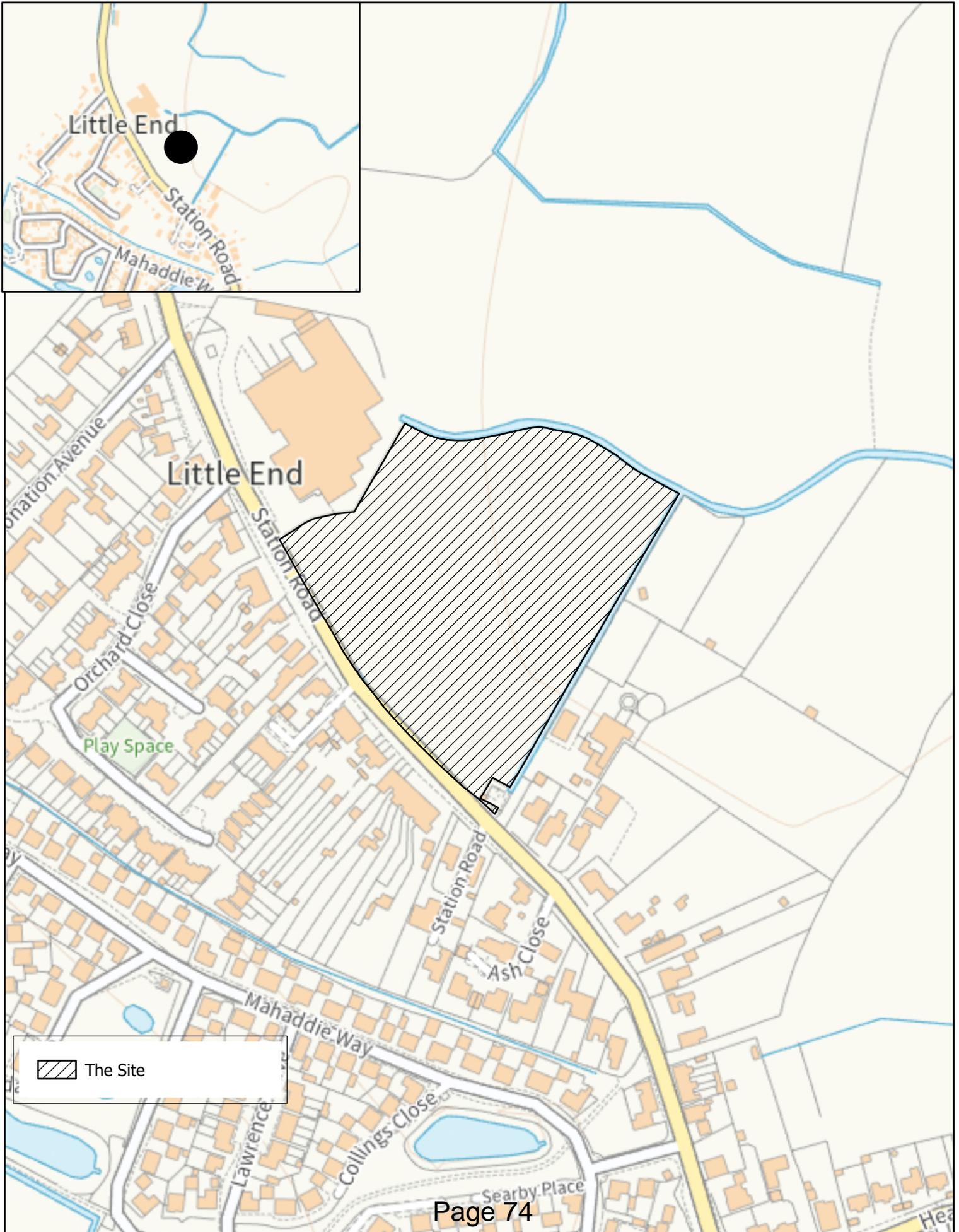
Given the lack of robust justification and enduring policy conflicts, I respectfully request that this application be refused.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Ross Martin

**County Councillor for Warboys and The Stukeleys
Cambridgeshire County Council**





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DEVELOPMENT at STATION ROAD, WARBOYS
 For AMPLIUS
 SITE: LOCATION PLAN
 Scale: 1:1250 @ A3 Date: 09/04/2025
 Drawn: DC Dwg No: 21015/PL17

PDG ARCHITECTS LTD
 1 Eaglethorpe Barns,
 Eaglethorpe, Warmington,
 Peterborough, PE8 6TJ
 T: 01733 371000
 E: design@pdgarchitects.co.uk
 W: www.pdgarchitects.co.uk



PLOT SCHEDULE

4	HTA 1b2p House
10	HTB 2b4p House
4	HTC 2b4p House
4	HTE 3b5p House
4	HTF 3b5p House
10	HTG 3b5p House
1	HTH 4b7p House
4	HTI 1b2p Flat
1	HTJ 2b4p Bungalow M4(3)
1	HTK 3b5p Bungalow M4(3)
43	

■ SHARED OWNERSHIP
■ AFFORDABLE RENT

BOUNDARY TREATMENTS

---	SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS HARD LANDSCAPING PLAN
---	SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS HARD LANDSCAPING PLAN
---	SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS HARD LANDSCAPING PLAN
---	SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS HARD LANDSCAPING PLAN
---	SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS HARD LANDSCAPING PLAN
---	SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS HARD LANDSCAPING PLAN
---	SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS HARD LANDSCAPING PLAN
---	3000mm HIGH ACOUSTIC FENCE - SEE NOISE REPORT

SURFACE FINISHES

---	ASPHALT ROAD & FOOTWAY (ADOPTABLE)
---	BLOCK PAVED SHARED SURFACE (ADOPTABLE)
---	BLOCK PAVED PRIVATE DRIVE
---	PRIVATE FOOTPATH/PATIO
---	GRAVEL
---	PRECAST CONCRETE GRASS BLOCK
---	INDICATIVE LANDSCAPING - TREES & HEDGING SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS DRAWINGS & INFORMATION
---	INDICATIVE LANDSCAPING - PLANTING SEE LANDSCAPE CONSULTANTS DRAWINGS & INFORMATION
---	PEDESTRIAN CROSSING POINT - SEE CIVIL ENGINEERS DRAWINGS
---	RETAINING STRUCTURE - SEE CIVIL ENGINEERS DRAWINGS ENGINEERING BRICKWORK

BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS. SEE RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT PREPARED BY ARBTECH CONSULTING LTD

■	BEE BRICKS - IBSTOCK BEE HABITAT BRICKS OR SIMILAR. POSITION ON SOUTH EAST FACING WALL AT 1-1.5m AFL. SPACING NO MORE THAN 4 PER 1m ² . TOTAL NUMBER OF LOCATIONS: 5
■	BAT BOX - IBSTOCK BUILT-IN BAT BOX OR SIMILAR. POSITION ON SOUTH EAST FACING WALL AT 5m AFL. TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES: 3
■	RSPB SPARROW TERRACE NEST BOX. THREE SEPARATE NEST BOXES IN ONE TIMBER TERRACE, EACH WITH 32mm ENTRANCE HOLE. POSITION AT HIGH LEVEL TO GABLE JUST BELOW APEX OF ROOF. MEASURES 48 X 23 X 17cm. TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES: 4
■	RSPB SWIFT NEST BOX WITH INTERNAL NEST CUP AND 28 x 65mm ENTRANCE HOLE. POSITION ON EAST, WEST OR NORTH ELEVATIONS AT HIGH LEVEL BELOW EAVES AT LEAST 5m AFL. MEASURES 44 X 20 X 12-21cm. TOTAL NUMBER OF BOXES: 4
■	REPTILE LOG PILES. TOTAL NUMBER: 6
■	AMPHIBIAN HIBERNACULA. TOTAL NUMBER: 6
h	'h' DENOTES 10CM X 12CM HEDGEHOG HOLE TO GRAVEL BOARD

EV	ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POST. IF NOT SHOWN EV POINT TO EACH PLOT TO BE FIXED TO EXTERNAL WALL OF PROPERTY
BS	BIKE STORAGE (EXTERNAL/CYCLE STORAGE) 2/3 BEDROOM = 2/3 CYCLE SPACES = 1.25m x 1.95m PENT BIKE SHED 4 BEDROOM = 4 CYCLE SPACES = 1.45m x 2.05m PENT BIKE SHED
SH	SHED (EXTERNAL/CYCLE STORAGE) 2/3 BEDROOM = 2/3 CYCLE SPACES = 1.8m x 2.4m SHED
G	GATE
RW	RETAINING WALL
CP	BIN COLLECTION POINT
W	3No. 240 LITRE WHEELIE BINS (Refuse, Recycling, Garden)
P	DENOTES ROOF MOUNTED PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS



DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 24/02116/FUL

Proposal: CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FOR THE STATIONING OF TWO MOBILE HOMES AND FOUR TOURING CARAVANS TO INCLUDE ESTABLISHMENT OF HARDSTANDING AND FENCES ON A TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT BASIS (PART RETROSPECTIVE)

Location: LAND AT ROSEFIELD, PARKHALL ROAD,
SOMERSHAM

Applicant: MR WILLIAM MC EWAN

Grid Ref: 535993 278841

Date of Registration: 14th November 2024

Parish: SOMERSHAM

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Parish Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The application site comprises approximately 0.37 hectares of land at Rosefield around 200 metres north-west of the built-up area of Somersham. The site is accessed via a private track off Parkhall Road. There are 17 permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the immediate vicinity of the site, these are split between areas to the north and south of the track. The application boundary projects south from behind an existing single Gypsy and Traveller pitch across the length of the field.
- 1.2 Approximately 300 metres west of the site is public footpath 206/6 which is on lower ground than the application site. In terms of flood risk, the site is located in Flood Zone 1 (lowest probability of flooding from rivers and the sea). However, the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017 (SFRA) identifies part of the site within a high-risk groundwater area and an area of the site at high risk of surface water flooding.

Proposal

- 1.3 This planning application seeks approval for the Change of use of land for the stationing of two mobile homes and four touring caravans (2 pitches) to include establishment of hardstanding and fences on a temporary or permanent basis (part retrospective). The proposal is part retrospective as 1 pitch is more complete than the other.
- 1.4 A previous application under reference 22/00518/FUL for a larger red line boundary and 4 pitches was refused under delegated powers on the 11th October 2023 for the following reasons:
1. There is insufficient information submitted to establish the Gypsy and Traveller status of the proposed occupiers in planning terms against the PPTS 2015 definition (taking in account the effect of the Court of Appeal Judgement *Lisa Smith v SSLUHC* [2022] EWCA Civ 1391). The proposal does not accord with any of the specific opportunities for development in the countryside contrary to Policy LP10 and Paragraphs 4.110 and 7.36 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 2. The depth of residential development proposed across the paddock would be unsympathetic to the prevailing pattern of adjacent development, fail to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies LP10 part b and LP12 parts a and b of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and paragraph 130 parts a, b and c of the NPPF 2023.
 3. The Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017 (SFRA) identifies the site within a medium-high risk groundwater area and an area of the site at high risk of surface water flooding. The application is not accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and therefore the application fails to demonstrate that development would be in an acceptable location sequentially and that the health and safety of all occupants would not be put at risk through unacceptable flood risk. Future occupiers therefore would be placed at an unwarranted risk of flooding contrary to Policies LP5, LP15 and LP27 part g of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and paragraphs 162 and 167 of the NPPF 2023.
 4. The application is not accompanied by a completed Unilateral Undertaking for the provision of wheeled bins and therefore fails to comply with part H of the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011) and Policy LP4 of the Local Plan to 2036 meaning the needs of future residents would not be met with regard to waste management.
- 1.5 This application has been accompanied by the following:

- Design and Access Statement
- Supporting information
- Drawings
- Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- UU for bins

1.6 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):

- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
- building a strong, competitive economy;
- achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
- conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment

2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)

2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)

- LP1: Amount of Development
- LP2: Strategy for Development
- LP3: Green Infrastructure
- LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP5: Flood Risk
- LP6: Waste Water Management
- LP8: Key Service Centres
- LP10: The Countryside
- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Application site

- 4.1 22/00518/FUL - Change of use of land for the stationing of four mobile homes (static caravans) and eight touring caravans, to include establishment of hardstanding and fences on a temporary or permanent basis (partly retrospective). (REFUSED)

Immediate vicinity

- 4.2 0400062FUL - Change of use of part of orchard to one gypsy/traveller pitch comprising two mobile homes, two touring caravans, washroom, dayroom including accommodation for disabled child and carer, and hardstanding. (Permission granted 03.12.2015) (APPEAL ALLOWED)
- 4.3 17/01626/FUL - Change of use of the land to two residential pitches, one for Gypsies and Travellers who meet the planning definition, the other for a mix of Gypsies and Travellers who meet the planning definition and Romany Gypsies who do not, with the siting of six caravans of which no more than four would be static caravans, and the construction of two amenity blocks. (APPROVED)
- 4.4 18/01312/FUL - Change of use of the land to residential with the siting of three caravans of which no more than one would be static caravans, and the construction of an amenity block. (APPROVED)
- 4.5 20/00608/FUL - Change of use of the land to Gypsy and Traveller residential with the establishment of two residential pitches, each with the siting of two caravans of which no more than one can be static caravans and the construction of an amenity building. (APPROVED)
- 4.6 21/01491/FUL (same application site as 20/00608/FUL) - Use of the land for Gypsy and Traveller residential with the establishment of three residential pitches (APPROVED) *Same red line as above permission.*
- 4.7 21/02861/FUL - Change of Use of Land for the creation of 6no. Gypsy/Traveller pitches comprising the siting of 1no. Mobile Home, 1 no. Touring Caravan, and formation of hardstanding area, per pitch. (APPROVED)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Somersham Parish Council – Objection.
- Over development of the site

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

- 7.4 The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”
- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal would result in the loss of approximately 0.2ha of Grade 2 Agricultural Land. This loss would conflict with Policy LP10 to a degree. However, this amount of loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the availability of best and most versatile land across the district.
- 7.8 In terms of part b, the previous application for 4 pitches was refused for the following reason:
- The depth of residential development proposed across the paddock would be unsympathetic to the prevailing pattern of adjacent development, fail to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies LP10 part b and LP12 parts a and b of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and paragraph 130 parts a, b and c of the NPPF 2023.
- 7.9 The adjacent existing Gypsy and Traveller pitches are primarily sited just off the track, and the six pitches to the north-east are behind the group of nine residential properties which front Parkhall Road. The existing approved Gypsy and Traveller pitches do not protrude significantly across the field. The adjacent plot has approval for three pitches which extend south into the field from the track. The other approved pitches south of the track are individual pitches accessed directly from the track with paddock land to the rear.
- 7.10 The previous application site covered the full length of the field behind the existing Gypsy and Traveller pitch (approved by

17/01626/FUL). However, this current application represents not only a reduction in pitches, but also a reduction in red line site area, so it no longer covers the full length of the field, but stops short of it. This is considered to be a reduction in terms of a visual impact when compared with the previously refused application.

- 7.11 The site is set back from Parkhall Road and screened by existing hedging across the length of the field boundary on its eastern side approximately 200m west of Parkhall Road. When in leaf the hedging provides almost complete screening of all Gypsy and Traveller pitches on the south side of the track from Parkhall Road. During the winter months the hedging does not provide as much screening and the proposed development would be visible to some degree from Parkhall Road. It is unclear who owns and maintains the hedge and it does not have any protection from removal in terms of planning control.
- 7.12 Approximately 300 metres west of the site is public footpath 206/6 which is on lower ground than the application site. There is no landscape screening on this side of the wider site and the current unauthorised development is visible in long-distance views. It is considered that the proposed development would cause a degree of harm to the character and appearance of the area when viewed from public footpath 206/6. This harm could be mitigated by the planting of soft landscaping, which could be conditioned if the application were to be supported by Members.
- 7.13 Given the reduction in pitches from the previously refused scheme, and the reduced site area, Officers do not consider the proposed development would result in a level of visual harm that could not be mitigated via a soft landscaping scheme. For the above reasons, and subject to the above landscape conditions, Officers consider that the proposed development would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. The previous reason for refusal on visual amenity has therefore been addressed.
- 7.14 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

- 7.15 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.
- 7.16 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

1. . Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.
- 7.17 This proposal seeks to provide 2 gypsy and traveller pitches. A pitch normally comprises one mobile, one static and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household.
- 7.18 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Somersham, which is a Key Service Centre, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.
- 7.19 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.
- 7.20 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 7.21 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.
- 7.22 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Somersham, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -
* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled

community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.

- 7.23 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.
- 7.24 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.
- 7.25 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:
- a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
 - b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
 - c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
 - d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and
 - e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.26 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
- a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;
 - b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;
 - c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.27 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.28 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In

producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:

- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
- b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15;
- c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
- d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
- e) protect local amenity and environment.

7.29 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.

7.30 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.

7.31 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.32 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:

PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:

7.33 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.

- 7.34 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.35 Since the refusal of the previous application in October 2023, the Council has since consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.36 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.37 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller (GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.38 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.39 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider intensifying and expanding existing sites. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.40 The conclusion section of the report also goes on to state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.41 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

- 7.42 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.
- 7.43 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

- 7.44 This proposal seeks to provide 2 gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.45 The previous application was refused for the following reason:

There is insufficient information submitted to establish the Gypsy and Traveller status of the proposed occupiers in planning terms against the PPTS 2015 definition (taking in account the effect of the Court of Appeal Judgement *Lisa Smith v SSLUHC* [2022] EWCA Civ 1391). The proposal does not accord with any of the specific opportunities for development in the countryside contrary to Policy LP10 and Paragraphs 4.110 and 7.36 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

- 7.46 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.
- 7.47 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 7.48 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy

where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.49 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.50 This proposal seeks to provide 2 gypsy and traveller pitches. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.51 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.52 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.

- 7.53 The proposal accords with this requirement. The site is 0.5 mile from Somersham Primary School and less than a mile from Somersham health centre. However, the policy also indicates distances from amenities i.e. schools, should be used as a guide rather than a fixed limit, and that account will also be taken of qualitative aspects, and in particular the nature of the route to the nearest primary school, including the presence or lack of pavements and/or cycle paths.

- 7.54 It is acknowledged that there is no pedestrian footpath along this part of Parkhall Road, and no lighting. The applicants would therefore likely be reliant on the use of a motor car to transport to the school or doctors. However, the trips by car are expected to be short journeys only in order to access the local surgery, schools and other shops and facilities. The village of Somersham is also within cycling distance so that older children and adults would be able to access facilities by bicycle, and not just by car. The benefits to the families would include a stable home base

where the family members would benefit from access to health care and educational facilities in a reasonably sustainable location having moved from a primarily roadside existence. Therefore, on balance, the location of the site is considered acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.55 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the existing hedge screening of Rosefield when viewed from Parkhall Road mitigates the visual impact of the Traveller site development to a large degree when in leaf and to a lesser degree during winter months. It is unclear who owns and maintains the hedge and it is considered that its removal outside of planning control would mean the depth of residential development across the paddock in the open countryside would significantly harm the landscape if the visual impact of the development is not otherwise mitigated. The depth of development is visible in long-distance views from the public right of way footpath 206/6 to the west. It is considered that there is suitable space within the site for soft landscaping which could reinforce the existing screening from Parkhall Road and soften the visual impact from the public right of way to the west. However, given the proposed depth of residential development in the open countryside, which is discordant with its surroundings, at best soft landscaping could ensure the landscape is not significantly harmed. However, it is considered that in any event the proposed 2 pitch development on this site would cause a degree of harm to the character and appearance of the countryside.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.56 LP27, criterion c) is based on the national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 25. Paragraph 25 states that: "Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure." No definition is provided of what should be considered the 'nearest settled community'.
- 7.57 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: "Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure." No definition is provided of what should be considered the 'nearest settled community'. However, the nearest

settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Somersham rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.

7.58 Other Gypsy and Traveller sites around Somersham in addition to Rosefield Parkhall Road (17 pitches), 15 pitches at Legacy Park and Hilltop Orchard (7). All of those sites are at least 0.85 miles distant from the main settled community; the Rosefield Parkhall pitches are the only pitches in close proximity to the main settled community in Somersham. It should be noted that Somersham is considered a Key Service Centre under Policy LP8 of the Local Plan. This means that Somersham is of a scale that has a range of services that meet many of the day to day needs of residents and to some extent those of other nearby settlements. It is therefore not considered that the scale of this proposal, when considered collectively with other nearby Traveller sites, would dominate the nearest settled community nor place undue pressure of local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

7.59 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, "It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances." Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development's impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

7.60 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, a landscaping condition is recommended to be sought to help mitigate the visual impact of the development.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

7.61 The application site is located a significant distance from the main living areas of the adjacent residential dwellings to the east and would not have an unneighbourly relationship with the existing Gypsy and Traveller pitches such that there would be no significant impacts on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses through noise, disturbance, obtrusive light, dust, odour, pollution and loss of privacy in accordance with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

- 7.62 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. Meadowlands Park is located less than 500 metres from the application site. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

- 7.63 On the previous application, the Highway Authority did not raise objection to the proposal. The access is considered safe subject to the implementation of improvements requested by the Highway Authority on previous consents within the immediate vicinity.
- 7.64 Previously, HDC Environmental Health requested a land contamination investigation and if necessary remediation which could be secured by condition. Officers recommend a contamination condition.
- 7.65 In terms of flood risk, the site is in Flood Zone 1 (lowest probability of flooding from rivers and the sea). However, the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017 (SFRA) identifies part of the site within a high-risk groundwater area and an area of the site at high risk of surface water flooding.
- 7.66 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-179 of the NPPF 2024).
- 7.67 The previous application was refused for the following reason:

The Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2017 (SFRA) identifies the site within a medium-high risk groundwater area and an area of the site at high risk of surface water flooding. The application is not accompanied by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment and therefore the application fails to demonstrate that development would be in an acceptable location sequentially and that the health and safety of all occupants would not be put at risk through unacceptable flood risk. Future occupiers therefore would be placed at an unwarranted risk of flooding contrary to Policies LP5, LP15 and LP27 part g of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and paragraphs 162 and 167 of the NPPF 2023.

- 7.68 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.69 In terms of groundwater, the FRA sets out that a detailed analysis using the Ambiental UK FloodMap4™ indicate that the site is at very low risk of groundwater flooding. The site's geology, consisting of West Walton Formation and Ampthill Clay Formation, typically restricts significant groundwater emergence. Officers therefore consider the risk of groundwater flooding has been addressed in this instance.
- 7.70 Turning to surface water flooding, Paragraph: 027 Reference ID: 7-027-20220825 of Planning Practice Guidance outlines that: In applying paragraph 175 a proportionate approach should be taken. Where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development (therefore addressing the risks identified e.g. by Environment Agency flood risk mapping), without increasing flood risk elsewhere, then the sequential test need not be applied.
- 7.71 The FRA sets out that the internal levels will be higher than ground levels, with those external ground levels immediately outside of accommodation falling away from the thresholds and can be directed along a channel drainage system, ensuring the minimisation of storm water ingress. In addition, permeable paving and Suds features can be incorporated into the design.
- 7.72 The FRA that has been submitted with this application demonstrates that the proposed layout, design, and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future surface water flood risk for the lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk elsewhere. The sequential test therefore does not need to be applied in accordance with PPG. The previous reason for refusal on flood risk has therefore been sufficiently addressed. A condition is recommended to secure SuDS.

LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles

- 7.73 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes

- 7.74 It is understood that the applicant is part of a wider close family unit at Rosefield. However, there is no information provided as to future management arrangements within the site. Given the existing development and permissions in the wider vicinity, and that this application only seeks 2 pitches, a management condition is not considered reasonable.

LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure

- 7.75 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

- 7.76 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.
- 7.77 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. It is considered that there would be some degree of loss in biodiversity given the proposal would replace a grassed paddock. However, it is considered that the level of biodiversity loss in this instance would be relatively minor. In this case it is considered that the low level of biodiversity loss could be satisfactorily mitigated by ecological enhancements which could be secured by condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it is part retrospective. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

- 7.78 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking has been submitted with the application. On this basis the proposal would

provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011). The reason for refusal on lack of a UU for bins has therefore been addressed.

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

7.79 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

7.80 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.81 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

7.82 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

7.83 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

7.84 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be

viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>

- 7.85 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it's need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.86 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider intensifying and expanding existing sites. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.87 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.88 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of these pitches will go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.89 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.90 It is therefore not considered that the scale of this proposal, when considered collectively with other nearby Traveller sites, would dominate the nearest settled community nor place undue pressure of local infrastructure. However, future applications would have to be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.91 Members should note that the immediate vicinity benefits from existing planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than

gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. Similarly with this site, there are no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.

7.92 As outlined above, all the previous reasons for refusal have been addressed subject to the imposition of conditions. No other significant harm or conflict with policy has been identified.

7.93 The site is flood zone 1 and is therefore at the lowest risk of flooding. The proposal is in overall accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused. Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- 3 year implementation permission (permanent)
- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans
- Site development scheme (including landscaping, ecology enhancements, SuDS etc)
- Contamination

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: DevelopmentControl
Sent: 11 February 2025 11:03
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 24/02116/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 11/02/2025 11:03 AM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address: Land At Rosefield Parkhall Road Somersham

Proposal: Change of use of land for the stationing of two mobile homes and four touring caravans to include establishment of hardstanding and fences on a temporary or permanent basis (part retrospective)

Case Officer: [REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Address: The Norwood Building Parkhall Road Somersham Huntingdon

Comments Details

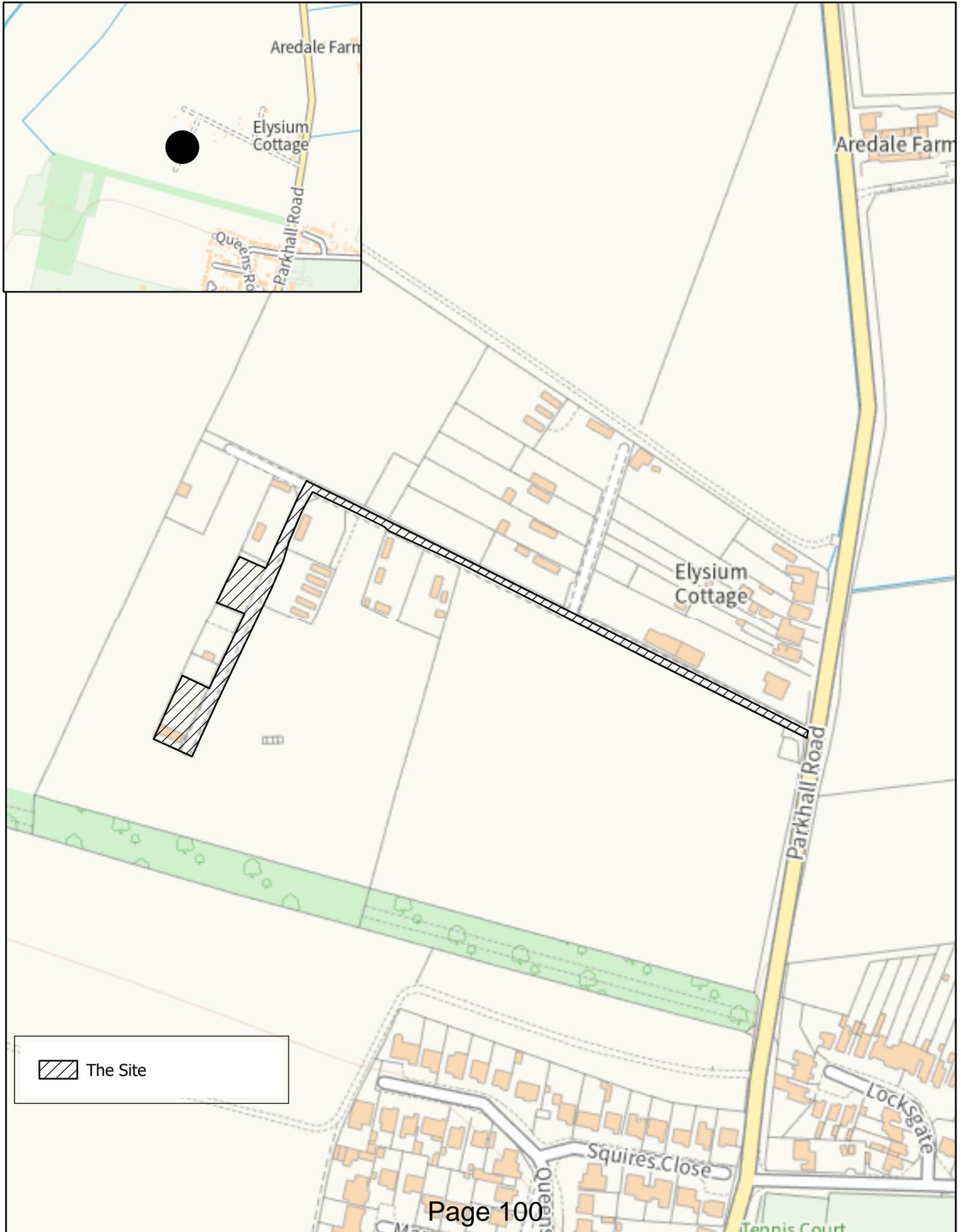
Commenter Type: Town or Parish Council

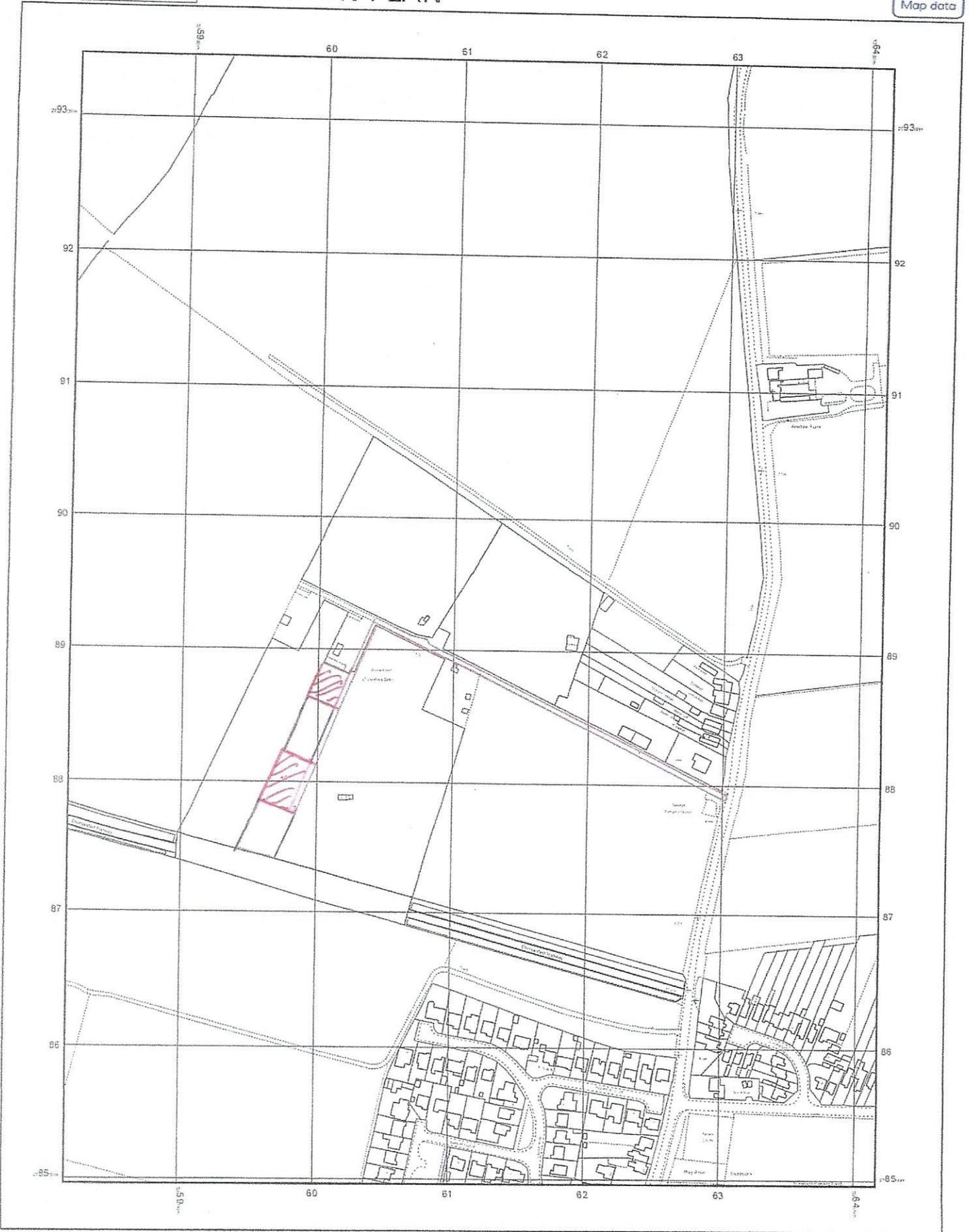
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: Further to the meeting held on 10th February 2025, Somersham parish council agreed to object to this proposal due to over development of the site.

Kind regards



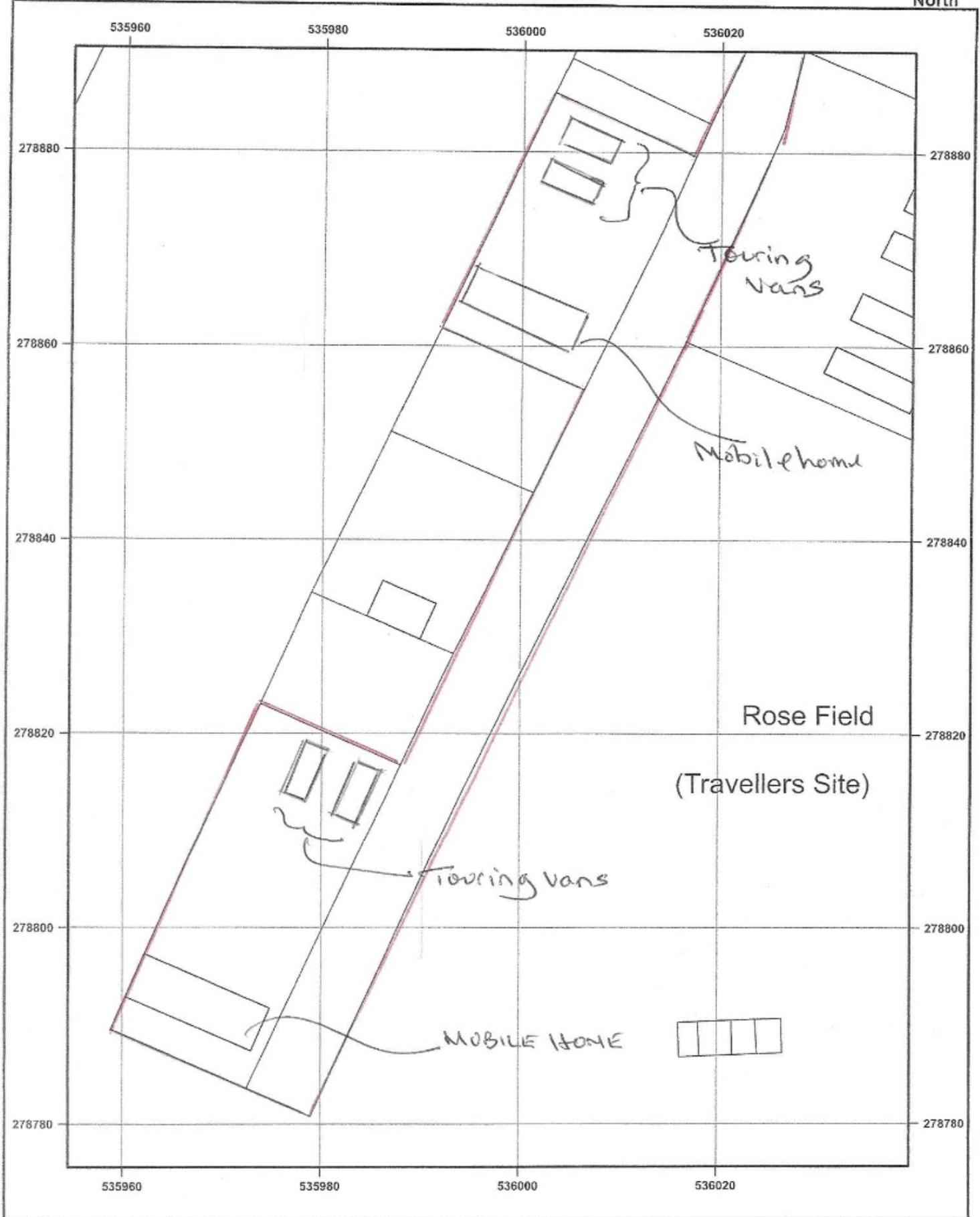


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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 21/01481/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE DEVELOPMENT OF DAY ROOM AND STANDING OF TWO ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL STATIC CARAVANS AND TWO TOURING CARAVANS ON LAND GRANTED PLANNING CONSENT IN 2015 (REF: 14/00997/FUL).

Location: HANLEY STABLES, MIDDLE DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS

Applicant: MS SMITH

Grid Ref: 524758 285614

Date of Registration: 27th June 2021

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Middle Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km. This access also serves a group of dwellings at School Drove, immediately behind the ribbon of dwellings fronting Ugg Mere Court Road, School Drive.
- 1.2 Middle Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Middle Drove itself serves 4 permanent dwellinghouses, and 7 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted across the Drove. All bar one of the residential uses are found along the northern side of Middle Drove. The area is considered rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land

extending in all directions and with the aforementioned School Drove and ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a similar character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.
- 1.4 The site lies along the northern side of Middle Drove. The application site itself comprises stables and an existing gypsy and traveller pitch approved under 1400997FUL. However, over time the land associated with permission 1400997FUL and has been subdivided into two separate sites. This application seeks to regularise the matter.
- 1.5 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017.
- 1.6 Immediately to the west is an permanent gypsy and traveller pitch approved under planning permission 15/00075/FUL.

Proposal

- 1.7 This planning application seeks permission for Retrospective development of day room and standing of two additional residential static caravans and two touring caravans on land granted planning consent in 2015 (Ref: 14/00997/FUL).
- 1.8 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.9 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive

way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation
 - LP14: Amenity
 - LP15: Surface Water
 - LP16: Sustainable Travel

- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Application site

- #### 4.1 1400997FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)

Immediate vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.2 23/02167/FUL - Retrospective single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.3 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.4 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.5 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.7 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Wider vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.12 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.13 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)
- 4.14 21/01475/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

- 5.2 Environmental Health Team –The superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. If you are minded to approve the application, I would recommend a condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations.

- 5.3 Environment Agency – No objection.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in

order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.
- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and

ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;

b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and

c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”

- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal is a stables and benefits from a permission for a gypsy and traveller pitch. This proposal therefore is acceptable in regards to this element of Policy LP10.
- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 It is recognised that planning permission was granted on the site itself and also immediately to the west of the application site for 1 pitch. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form, as well the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered.
- 7.10 The site is generally only partially visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Given that this application seeks to regularise the division of a previously consented site into two, the visual impact is contained to the site itself. Given the size of the site, its relationship with the consented pitches either side, this intensification is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.11 Whilst the proposal represents an intensification of an existing site, the application site is considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is not considered to cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and

cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b.

- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

- 7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.
- 7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

- 7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises a static caravan, a touring caravan and a dayroom.
- 7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a Small Settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.
- 7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.

- 7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.
- 7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -
* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.
- 7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.
- 7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.
- 7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:
a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and

- e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
- a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;
 - b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;
 - c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15:
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
 - d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
 - e) protect local amenity and environment.
- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.

- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:
- PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:*
- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller (GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to

2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.

- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

- 7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.
- 7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

- 7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.
- 7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.
- 7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would

be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

- 7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.

- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large

settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the site is generally only partially visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Given that this application seeks to regularise the division of a previously consented site into two, the visual impact is contained to the site itself. Given the size of the site, its relationship with the consented pitches either side, this intensification is considered to be acceptable.

- 7.53 The application site is therefore sufficiently separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is not considered to cause significant visual harm to the character of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: "Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure." No definition is provided of what should be considered the 'nearest settled community'. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.

- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Middle Drove amounts to 6 lawful pitches with a further lawful 4 pitches on Harpers Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 6 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. 1 of these being located further to the east and closer towards Ugg Mere Court Road, and the other 5 being located in a grouping at the far western end of the Drove. There is also 1 additional pitch proposed for consideration on Harpers Drove by an application which is also on this same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.
- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.
- 7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

- 7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, “It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances.” Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development’s impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

- 7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, The site is generally only partially visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray’s Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

- 7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

- 7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

- 7.64 The land is located off Middle Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The Highway Authority has advised for each application that the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal won't be a significant intensification of use of the junction. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.
- 7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.
- 7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).
- 7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).
- 7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.
- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability food risk areas should not be permitted.

- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.
- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are

rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.

- Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.
- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.

- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that ‘Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams’ personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.’
- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it’s need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is

likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.

- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.
- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided an site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.
- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.
- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to

agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.

7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.

7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.

7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.

LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles

7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes

7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.

LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure

7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal,

identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

- 7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. Given that the site's planning history, the proposal is acceptable in terms of biodiversity. Ecological enhancements could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

- 7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

- 7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

- 7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions

and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

- 7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.
- 7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.
- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation

is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that the that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance.
- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted

pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet need and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, officer deems the justification for temporary consents to has fallen away. This means there are no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.

7.118 The proposal is in overall accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused. Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans
- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2021 14:10
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 21/01481/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/07/2021 2:09 PM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address:	Hanley Stables Middle Drove Ramsey Heights
Proposal:	Development of day room and standing of two additional residential static caravans and two touring caravans on land granted planning consent in 2015 (Ref: 14/00997/FUL).
Case Officer:	[REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

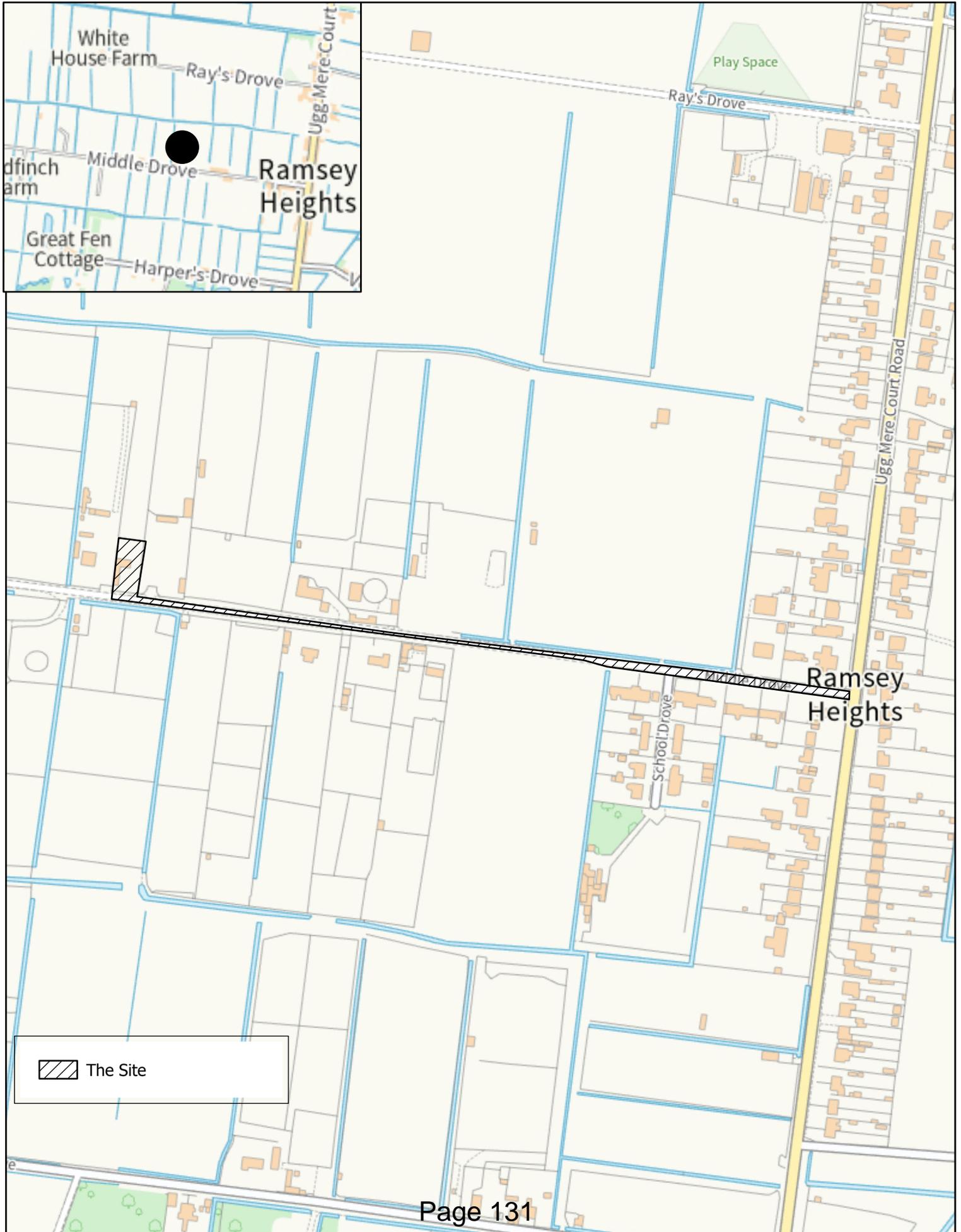
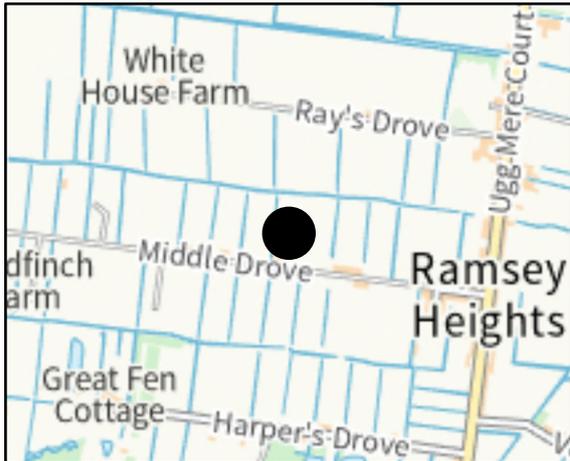
Customer Details

Name:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk
Address:	[REDACTED]

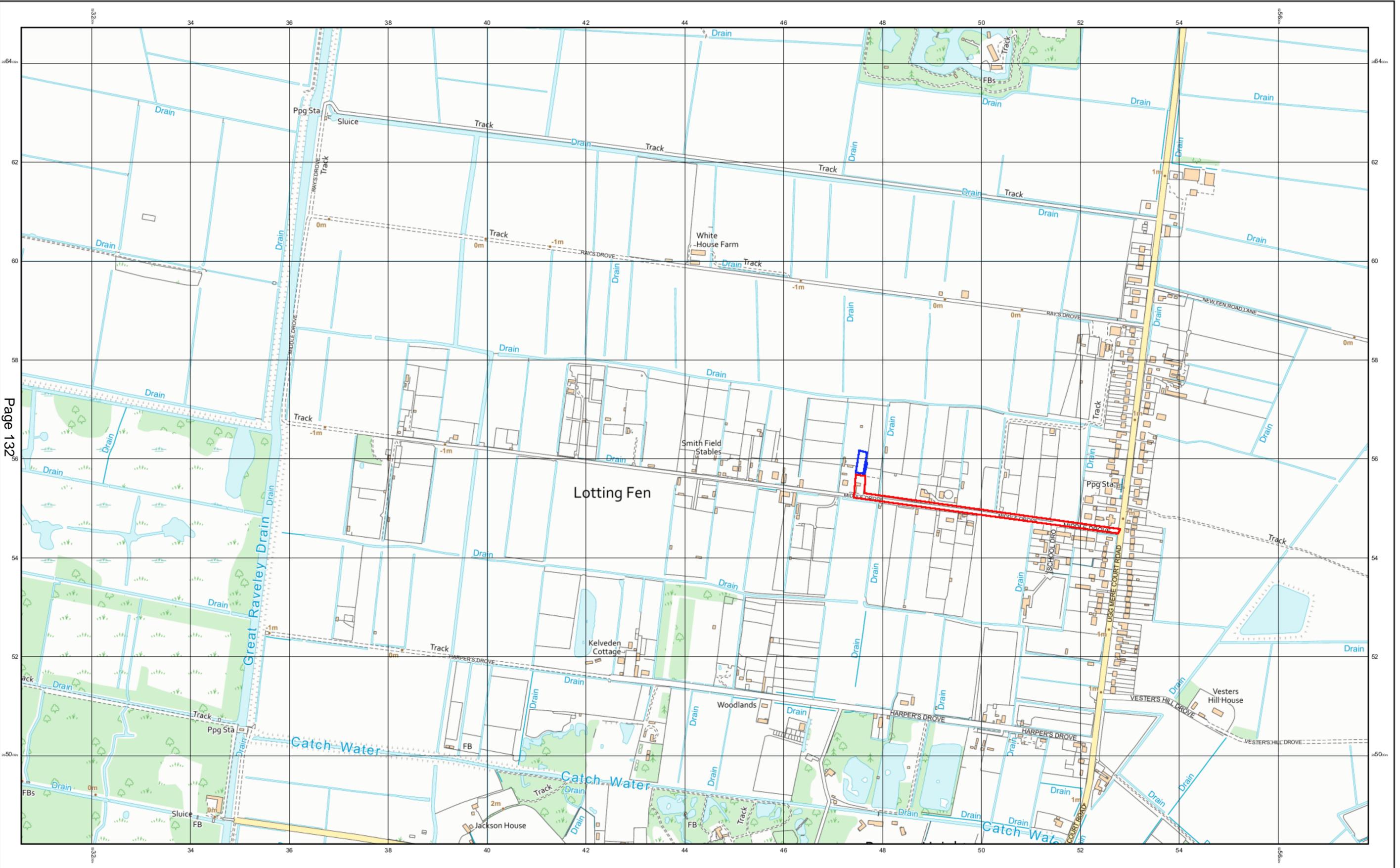
Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Town or Parish Council
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	Unanimously refused. Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

Kind regards



 The Site



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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 23/02167/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE PROPOSED SINGLE TRAVELLER PITCH WITH ASSOCIATED MOBILE HOME, TOURING CARAVAN AND DAYROOM FOR FAMILY THAT HAVE THEIR IMMEDIATE FAMILY ADJACENT THE SITE.

Location: WHITES YARD, MIDDLE DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS, HUNTINGDON, PE26 2RG

Applicant: MR MICHAEL BOSWELL

Grid Ref: 524518 285572

Date of Registration: 13th November 2023

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Middle Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km. This access also serves a group of dwellings at School Drove, immediately behind the ribbon of dwellings fronting Ugg Mere Court Road, School Drive.
- 1.2 Middle Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Middle Drove itself serves 4 permanent dwellinghouses, and 7 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted across the Drove. All bar one of the residential uses are found along the northern side of Middle Drove. The area is considered rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land extending in all directions and with the aforementioned School

Drove and ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a similar character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.
- 1.4 The application site itself comprises of a stables and a previous gypsy and traveller pitch, and lies along the northern side of Middle Drove.
- 1.5 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest.
- 1.6 Immediately to the west is a gypsy and traveller pitch approved under 15/00273/FUL. The site itself also benefits from a previous 5 year temporary consent for 1 pitch under 17/00593/FUL which expired on the 11th September 2022. However, this has expired and the land has changed ownership.

Proposal

- 1.7 This planning application seeks retrospective consent for a single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for a family that have their immediate family adjacent the site.
- 1.8 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.9 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as

follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation
 - LP14: Amenity
 - LP15: Surface Water

- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Application site

- #### 4.1 17/00593/FUL - Change of use of land to Travellers site involving the siting of one static and one touring caravan (retrospective) (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 11.09.2022)

Immediate vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.2 1400997/FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.3 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.4 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.5 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.7 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Wider vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.12 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.13 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)
- 4.14 21/01475/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

REFUSED unanimously. Council cited the following reasons and asked the Clerk to forward the email from the Police to the Planning Department with the issues of theft and drugs down Middle Drove. Highways- extra traffic going in and out of Middle Drove, Drainage, there is no public drainage, Density of building design, Flood zone 3A as a permanent site, It is in the open countryside.

- 5.2 Highway Authority – No objection.
- 5.3 Environment Agency – No objection.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.
- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the

2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”

- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal would not result in the loss of Agricultural Land. The proposal is therefore in accordance with this element of Policy LP10.
- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 It is recognised that planning permission was granted on the site immediate to the west to the application site for 1 pitch, and the permanent dwelling of Goodlife Cottage is also found east of the site between these approved pitches. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered.
- 7.10 The site is generally only partially visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. One Acre and Two Acre are further to the south-west and can be seen within the same context but only within a very immediate setting when approaching from either the west or east.
- 7.11 The application site is therefore considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is not considered to cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b.
- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.

7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises a static caravan, a touring caravan and a dayroom.

7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a small settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.

7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.

7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.

7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside

apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -

* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -

* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.

7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.

7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.

7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:

- a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
- b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
- c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
- d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and
- e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.

7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:

- a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;
- b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;
- c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
- d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.

- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15;
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
 - d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
 - e) protect local amenity and environment.
- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.
- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:
- PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:*
- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site

accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.

- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller (GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes on to state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need

may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.

- 7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

- 7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.

- 7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

- 7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.

- 7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.

- 7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

- 7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.

- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the site is generally only partially visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. One Acre and Two Acre are further to the south-west and can be seen within the same context but only within a very immediate setting when approaching from either the west or east.
- 7.53 The application site is therefore sufficiently separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is not considered to cause significant visual harm to the character of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: "Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure." No definition is provided of what should be considered the 'nearest settled community'. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.
- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Middle Drove amounts to 6 lawful pitches with a further lawful 4 pitches on Harpers Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 6 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. 1 of these being located further to the east and closer towards Ugg Mere Court Road, and the other 5 being located in a grouping at the far western end of the Drove. There is also 1 additional pitch proposed for consideration on Harpers Drove by an application which is also on this same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.

- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.
- 7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, "It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances." Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development's impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

- 7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, The site is

generally only partially visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. One Acre and Two Acre are further to the south-west and can be seen within the same context but only within a very immediate setting when approaching from either the west or east.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

- 7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

- 7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

- 7.64 The land is located off Middle Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The Highway Authority has advised for each application that the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal won't be a significant intensification of use of the junction. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.

- 7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised on other applications along Harpers Drove and Middle Drove that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are

implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.

- 7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).
- 7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).
- 7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.
- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability food risk areas should not be permitted.
- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.

- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.
 - Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land

available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.

- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

- 7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that 'Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams' personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower

risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.'

- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it's need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.

- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided an site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.
- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.
- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.
- 7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.
- 7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level

Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.

- 7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.

LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles

- 7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes

- 7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.

LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure

- 7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

- 7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

- 7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. It is considered that there would be some degree of loss in biodiversity given the proposal would replace a grassed paddock. However, it is considered that the level of biodiversity loss in this instance would be relatively minor. In this case it is considered that

the low level of biodiversity loss could be satisfactorily mitigated by ecological enhancements which could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest. However, given the location and scale of development, no significant impact upon the SSSI should occur. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles

would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

- 7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.
- 7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.
- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that the that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance.
- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also

the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, officer deems the justification for temporary consents to have fallen away. This means there no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.

7.118 The proposal is in overall accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused. Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans
- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 18/12/2023 12:36 PM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address: Whites Yard Middle Drove Ramsey Heights Huntingdon PE26 2RG

Proposal: Proposed single traveler pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site.

Case Officer: Lewis Tomlinson

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk

Address: [REDACTED]

Comments Details

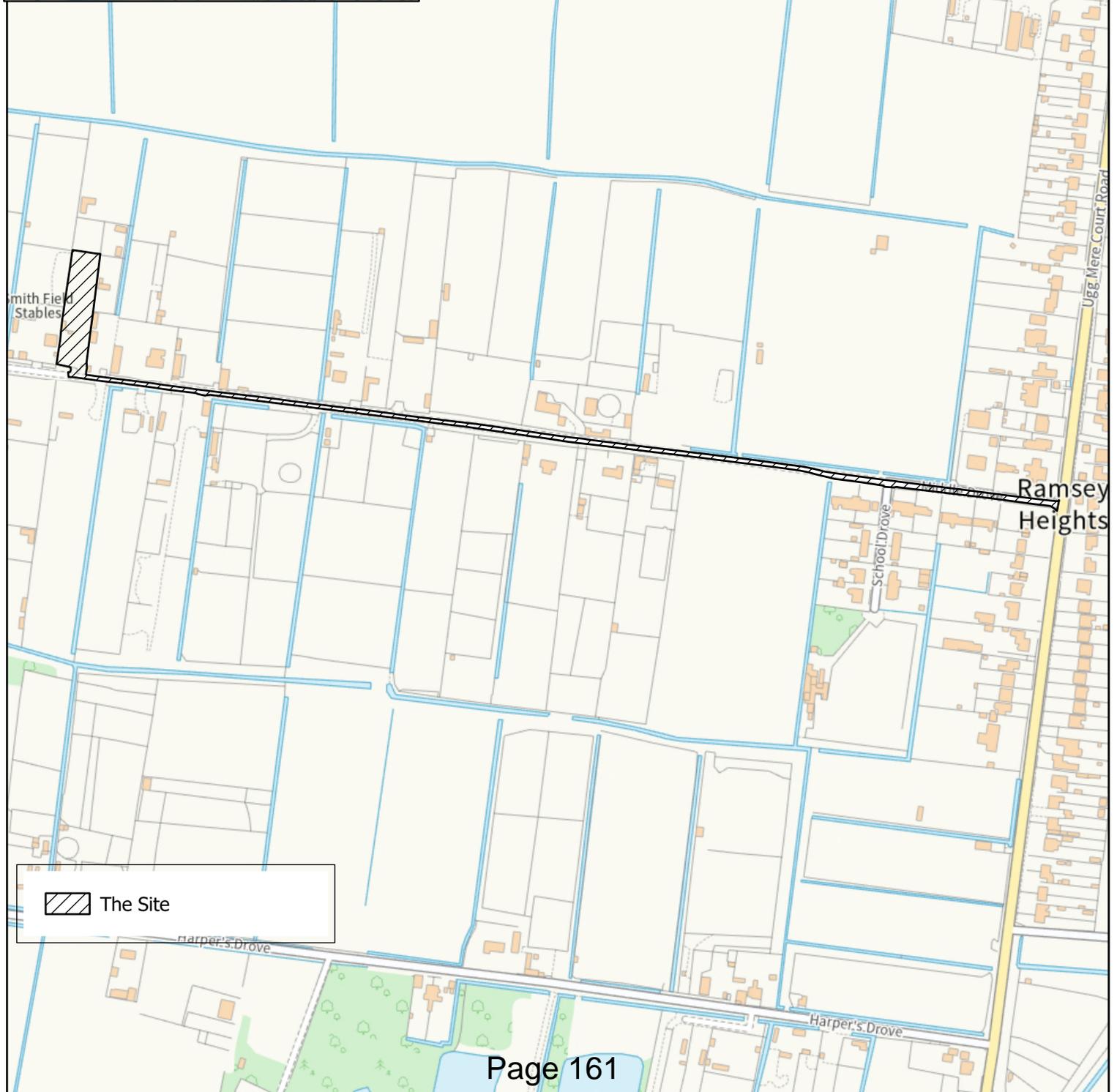
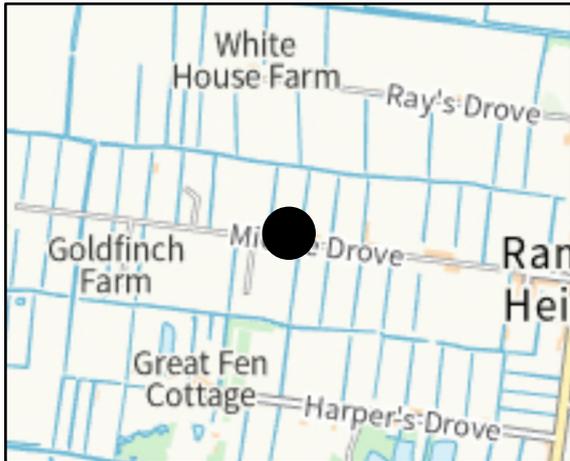
Commenter Type: Town or Parish Council

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

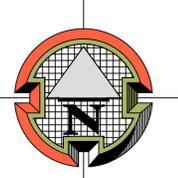
Reasons for comment:

Comments: REFUSED unanimously. Council sited the following reasons and asked the Clerk to forward the email from the Police to the Planning Department with the issues of theft and drugs down Middle Drove. Highways- extra traffic going in and out of Middle Drove, Drainage, there is no public drainage, Density of building design, Flood zone 3A as a permanent site, It is in the open countryside.

Kind regards



 The Site



Existing Location Plan 1:1250



Proposed Location Plan 1:1250

General Notes:
 -Dimensions on all drawings are shown in "mm".
 -The contractor,sub-contractor and supplies must verify all dimensions before commencement of any works on site.
 -This drawing is to be read in conjunction with any relevant engineers and specialist sub-contractor drawings and specifications.

Landscaping Key (hard and soft)

- Lawn area
- Driveway/Parking/Courtyard permeable loose gravel or similar to aid

Native hedgerow retention
 Hedgerow planted with a balanced mix of:
 • Leylandi

Revisions:
 reduce size by 5m to frontage

Reference: 167/PL01/A	Pages: 2
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Scale:
 as shown

Project:
 Proposed Traveller Plot and Day room

Site Address:
 Land adjacent traveller plots
 Middle Drove
 Ramsey Heights
 PE26 2RG

Client:
 Mr and Mrs Boswell
 Middle Drove
 Ramsey Heights
 PE26 2RG

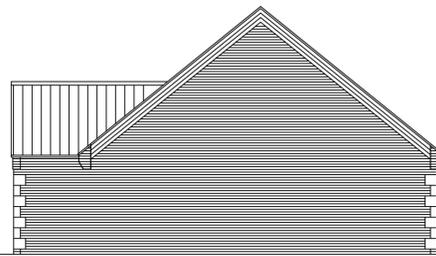


Southfork Farm
 Seadyke Bank
 Murrow
 Cambridgeshire
 PE13 4SD

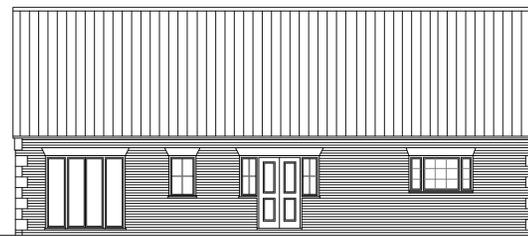
T: 07891175649
 E: info.alexandradesign@gmail.com



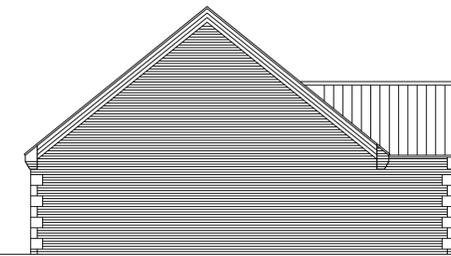
Proposed Front Elevation 1:100



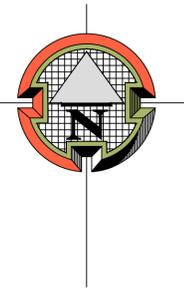
Proposed Side Elevation 1:100



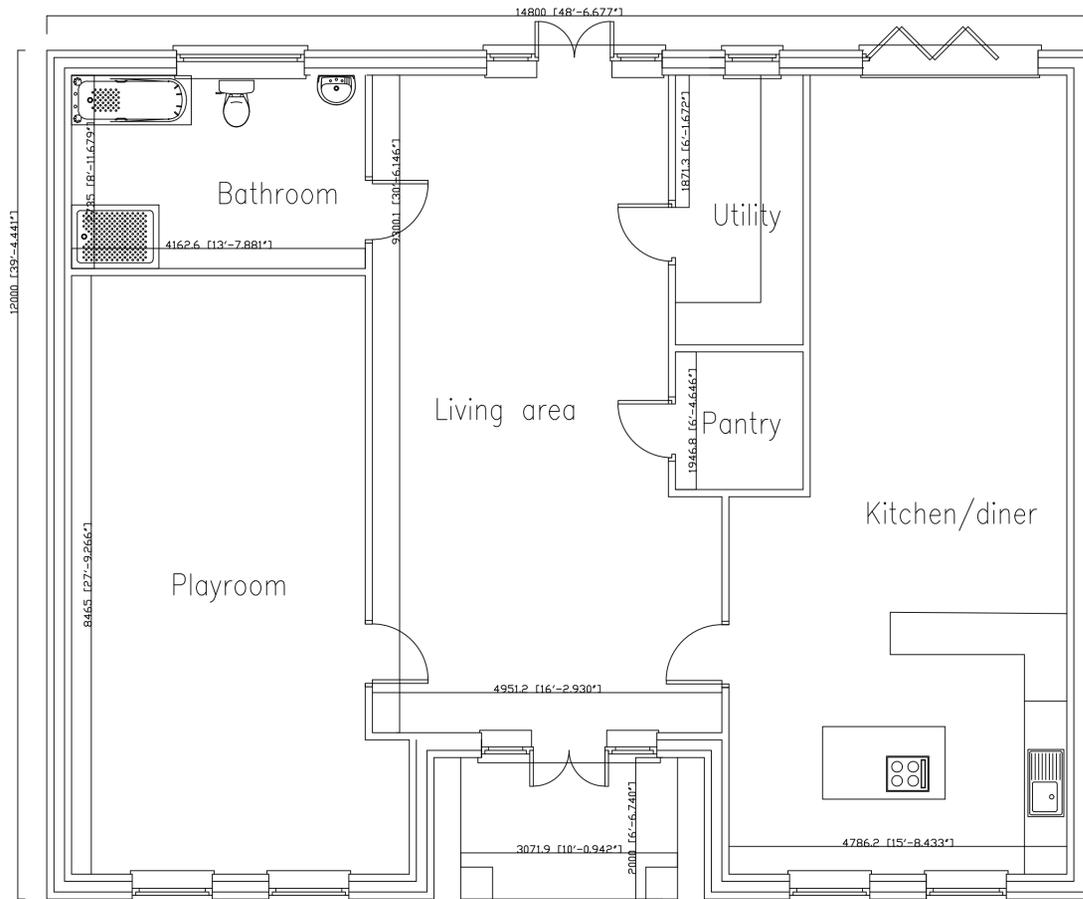
Proposed Rear Elevation 1:100



Proposed Side Elevation 1:100



Example of mobile home style and size, all prefabricated by manufacturer



Proposed Ground Floor Plan 1:50



Existing Site Plan 1:500



Proposed Site Plan 1:500

General Notes:
 -Dimensions on all drawings are shown in "mm".
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- Lawn area
- Driveway/Parking/Courtyard permeable loose gravel or similar to aid

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 reduce size by 5m to frontage

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Scale: as shown

Project: Proposed Traveller Plot and Day room

Site Address:

Land adjacent traveller plots
 Middle Drive
 Ramsey Heights
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Client:
 Mr and Mrs Boswell
 Middle Drive
 Ramsey Heights
 PE26 2RG



Southfork Farm
 Seadyke Bank
 Murrow
 Cambridgeshire
 PE13 4SD

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**DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026**

Case No: 21/01476/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO ONE GYPSY / TRAVELLER PITCH WITH TWO RESIDENTIAL STATIC CARAVANS AND TWO TOURING CARAVANS, ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCESS AND FORMATION OF HARDSTANDING (TEMPORARY OR PERMAMENT) FOR EXTENDED GYPSY / TRAVELLER FAMILY.

Location: LAND SOUTH EAST OF TRUE BRITON, MIDDLE DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS

Applicant: MR SMITH

Grid Ref: 524090 285495

Date of Registration: 27th June 2021

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Middle Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km. This access also serves a group of dwellings at School Drove, immediately behind the ribbon of dwellings fronting Ugg Mere Court Road, School Drive.
- 1.2 Middle Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Middle Drove itself serves 4 permanent dwellinghouses, and 7 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted across the Drove. All bar one of the residential uses are found

along the northern side of Middle Drove. The area is considered rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land extending in all directions and with the aforementioned School Drove and ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a similar character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.
- 1.4 The application site itself comprises agricultural land and lies along the southern side of Middle Drove and at the far western end of Middle Drove. The application site is part of a cluster of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. The application site fronts onto Harpers Drove, and consists of 1 pitch with a garden area to the rear.
- 1.5 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest.

Proposal

- 1.6 This planning application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family.
- 1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.8 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as

follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation
 - LP14: Amenity
 - LP15: Surface Water

- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Immediate vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.1 1400997FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)

- 4.2 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.3 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.4 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.5 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.7 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 23/02167/FUL - Retrospective single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Wider vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.12 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.13 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)
- 4.14 21/01475/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

- 5.2 Environment Agency – No objection.

- 5.3 Environmental Health – No objection,

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.
- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the

2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”
- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal would result in the loss of small amount of Agricultural Land. This loss would conflict with Policy

LP10 to a degree. However, this amount of loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the availability of best and most versatile land across the district.

- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 The application site is part of a cluster of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered.
- 7.10 The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.
- 7.11 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.
- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive

light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.

7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises 2 static caravans, 2 touring caravans and a dayroom.

7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a Small settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.

7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.

7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.

- 7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -
- * Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
 - * Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.
- 7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.
- 7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.
- 7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:
- a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
 - b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
 - c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
 - d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and
 - e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
- a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;
 - b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;

- c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15:
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
 - d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
 - e) protect local amenity and environment.
- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.
- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:

PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:

- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller (GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation

is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.

7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.

7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.

7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.

7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.

7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section

149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.
- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered. The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

- 7.53 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: "Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural

areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.” No definition is provided of what should be considered the ‘nearest settled community’. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.

- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Middle Drove amounts to 6 lawful pitches with a further lawful 4 pitches on Harpers Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 6 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. 1 of these being located further to the east and closer towards Ugg Mere Court Road, and the other 5 being located in a grouping at the far western end of the Drove. There is also 1 additional pitch proposed for consideration on Harpers Drove by an application which is also on this same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.
- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.
- 7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance

on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

- 7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, "It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances." Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development's impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

- 7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

- 7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

- 7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. In addition to this, the application site also contains a garden. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

- 7.64 The land is located off Middle Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The Highway Authority has advised for each application that the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal won't be a significant intensification of use of the junction. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.
- 7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised on other applications on Harpers Drove and Middle Drove, that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.
- 7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).
- 7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).
- 7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.
- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application

passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability food risk areas should not be permitted.

- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.
- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to

accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.

- Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.
- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion

the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

- 7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that ‘Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams’ personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.’
- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it’s need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.
- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided an site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.
- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.

- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.
- 7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.
- 7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.
- 7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.

LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles

- 7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes

- 7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.

LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure

- 7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

- 7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.
- 7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. It is considered that there would be some degree of loss in biodiversity given the proposal would replace a grassed paddock. However, it is considered that the level of biodiversity loss in this instance would be relatively minor. In this case it is considered that the low level of biodiversity loss could be satisfactorily mitigated by ecological enhancements which could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest. However, given the location and scale of development, no significant impact upon the SSSI should occur. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

- 7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

- 7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the

situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

- 7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.
- 7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.
- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>

- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. There is an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove. It is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b which is also afforded negative weight in the balance.

- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet need and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, Officers deem the justification for temporary consents has fallen away. This means there no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.
- 7.118 Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans

- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2021 14:18
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 21/01476/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/07/2021 2:17 PM from [REDACTED]

Application Summary

Address: Land South East Of True Briton Middle Drove Ramsey Heights

Proposal: Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family.

Case Officer: [REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk

Address: [REDACTED]

Comments Details

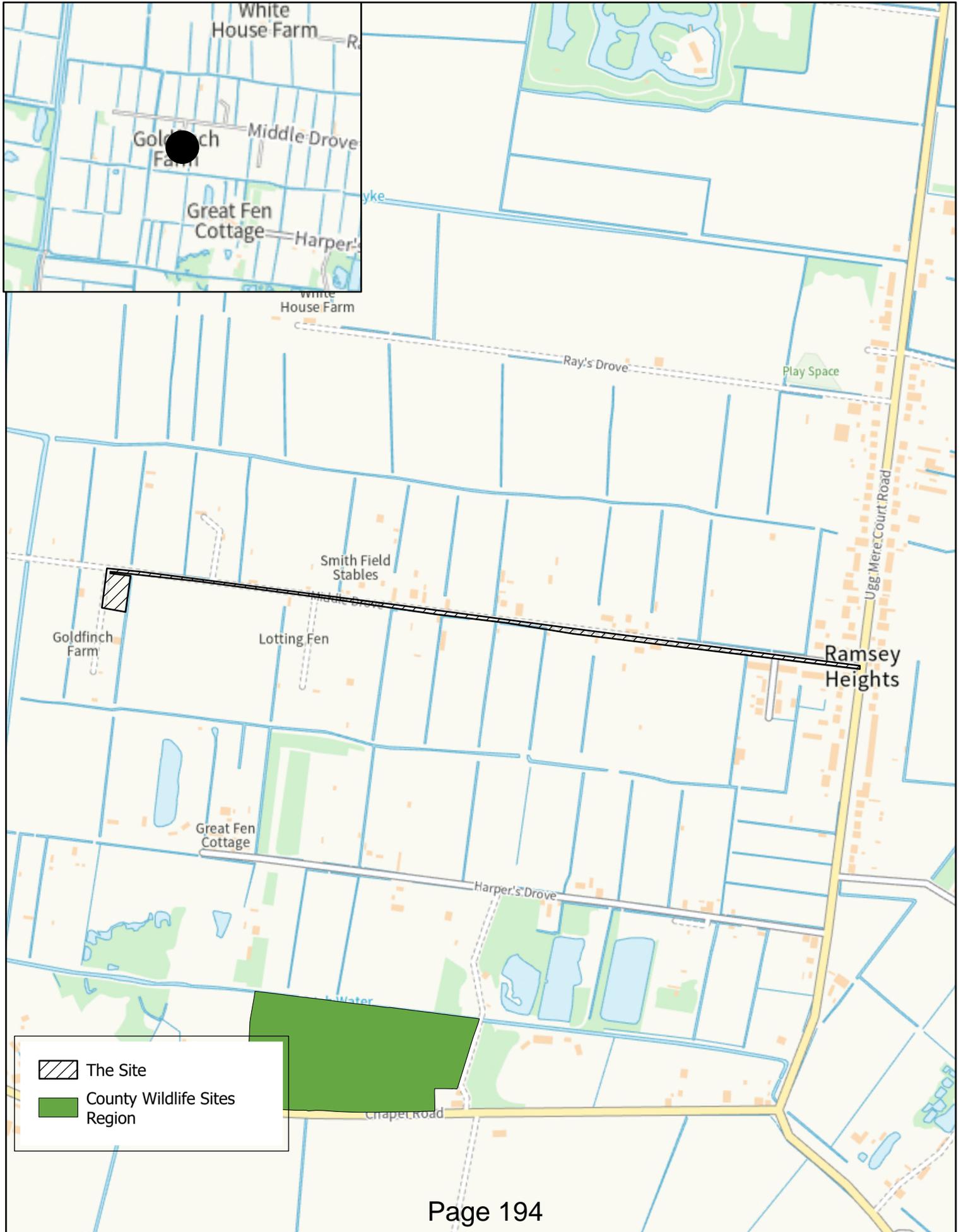
Commenter Type: Town or Parish Council

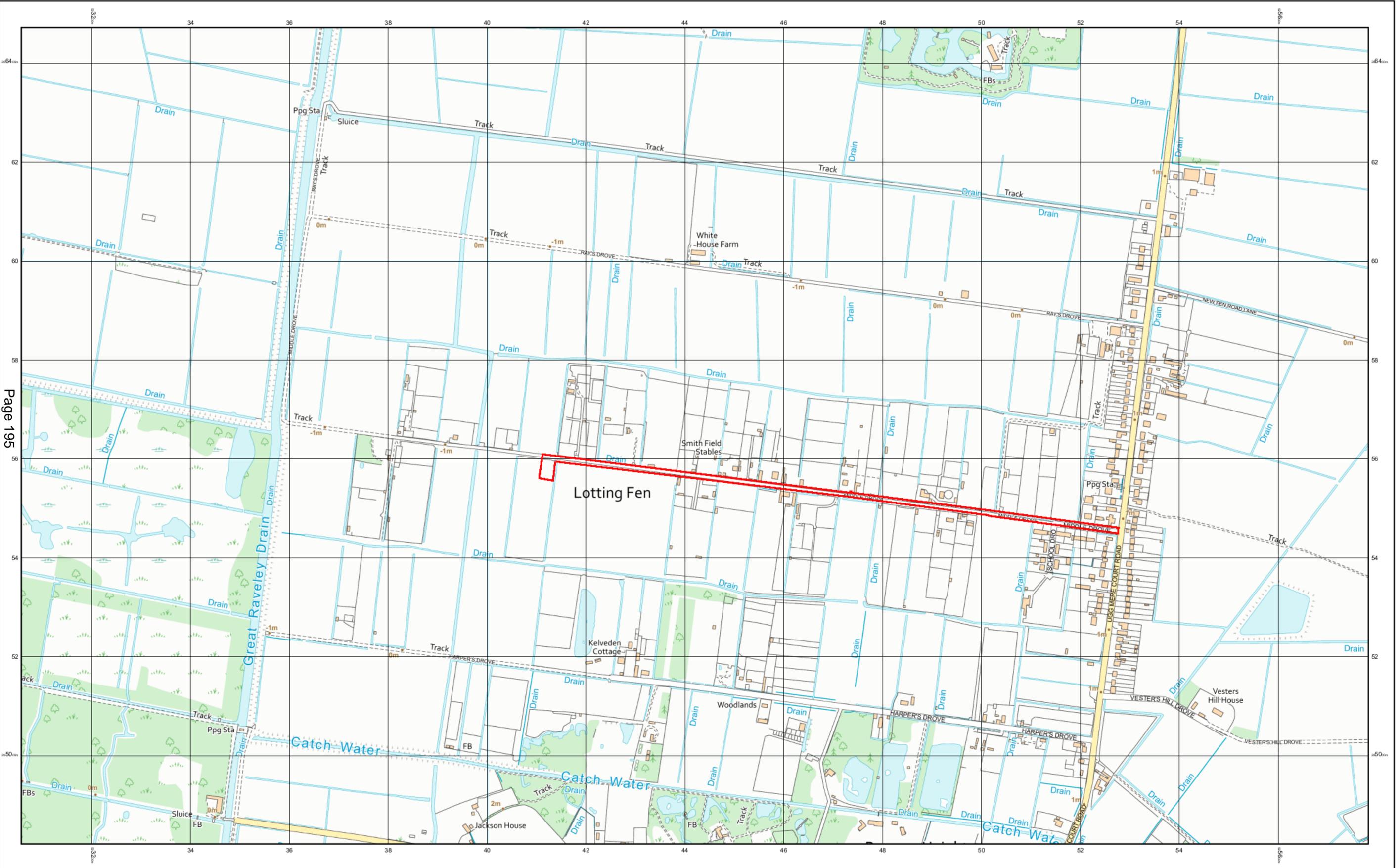
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: Unanimously refused.
Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

Kind regards





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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 21/01477/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO ONE GYPSY / TRAVELLER PITCH WITH FIVE RESIDENTIAL STATIC CARAVANS AND FIVE TOURING CARAVANS, ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCESS AND CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING HARDSTANDING FOR OCCUPATION BY THE APPLICANTS AND THEIR FAMILY.

Location: LAND SOUTH EAST OF TRUE BRITON, MIDDLE DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS

Applicant: MR SMITH

Grid Ref: 524090 285495

Date of Registration: 27th June 2021

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Middle Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km. This access also serves a group of dwellings at School Drove, immediately behind the ribbon of dwellings fronting Ugg Mere Court Road, School Drive.
- 1.2 Middle Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Middle Drove itself serves 4 permanent dwellinghouses, and 7 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted across the Drove. All bar one of the residential uses are found along the northern side of Middle Drove. The area is considered

rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land extending in all directions and with the aforementioned School Drove and ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a similar character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.
- 1.4 The application site itself comprises agricultural land and lies along the southern side of Middle Drove and at the far western end of Middle Drove. The application site is part of a cluster of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. The application site fronts onto Harpers Drove, and consists of 1 pitch.
- 1.5 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest.

Proposal

- 1.6 This planning application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. It does appear that the site may have been subdivided over time but this is not reflected in the application. Officers have therefore assessed the application as submitted.
- 1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.8 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the

planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation

- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Immediate vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.1 1400997FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)

- 4.2 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.3 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.4 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.5 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.7 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 23/02167/FUL - Retrospective single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Wider vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.12 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.13 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)
- 4.14 21/01475/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

- 5.2 Environment Agency – No objection.

- 5.3 Environmental Health – No objection,

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.
- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the

2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”
- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal would result in the loss of small amount of Agricultural Land. This loss would conflict with Policy

LP10 to a degree. However, this amount of loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the availability of best and most versatile land across the district.

- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered.
- 7.10 The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.
- 7.11 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.
- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive

light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.

7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises 5 static caravans, 5 touring caravans and a dayroom. It does appear that the site may have been subdivided over time but this is not reflected in the application. Officers have therefore assessed the application as submitted.

7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a Small settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.

7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.

7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.
- 7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -
* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.
- 7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.
- 7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.
- 7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:
a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and
e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;

- b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;
 - c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15:
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
 - d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
 - e) protect local amenity and environment.
- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.
- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:

PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:

- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller (GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or

temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

- 7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.
- 7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

- 7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.
- 7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.
- 7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section

149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.
- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered. The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

- 7.53 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: "Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural

areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.” No definition is provided of what should be considered the ‘nearest settled community’. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.

- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Middle Drove amounts to 6 lawful pitches with a further lawful 4 pitches on Harpers Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 6 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. 1 of these being located further to the east and closer towards Ugg Mere Court Road, and the other 5 being located in a grouping at the far western end of the Drove. There is also 1 additional pitch proposed for consideration on Harpers Drove by an application which is also on this same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.
- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.
- 7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance

on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

- 7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, "It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances." Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development's impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

- 7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

- 7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

- 7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

- 7.64 The land is located off Middle Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The Highway Authority has advised for each application that the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal won't be a significant intensification of use of the junction. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.
- 7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised on other applications on Harpers Drove and Middle Drove, that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.
- 7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).
- 7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).
- 7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.
- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the

development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability food risk areas should not be permitted.

- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.
- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not

all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.

- Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.
- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion

the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

- 7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that ‘Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams’ personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.’
- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.
- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided a site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.
- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.

- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.
- 7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.
- 7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.
- 7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.

LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles

- 7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes

- 7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.

LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure

- 7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

- 7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.
- 7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. It is considered that there would be some degree of loss in biodiversity given the proposal would replace a grassed paddock. However, it is considered that the level of biodiversity loss in this instance would be relatively minor. In this case it is considered that the low level of biodiversity loss could be satisfactorily mitigated by ecological enhancements which could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest. However, given the location and scale of development, no significant impact upon the SSSI should occur. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

- 7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

- 7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the

situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

- 7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.
- 7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.
- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>

- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. There is an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove. It is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b which is also afforded negative weight in the balance.

- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet need and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, Officers deem the justification for temporary consents has fallen away. This means there no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.
- 7.118 Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans

- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2021 14:13
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 21/01477/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/07/2021 2:12 PM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address: Land South East Of True Briton Middle Drove Ramsey Heights

Proposal: Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family.

Case Officer: [REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk

Address: 7A Church Green, Ramsey, Huntingdon PE26 1DW

Comments Details

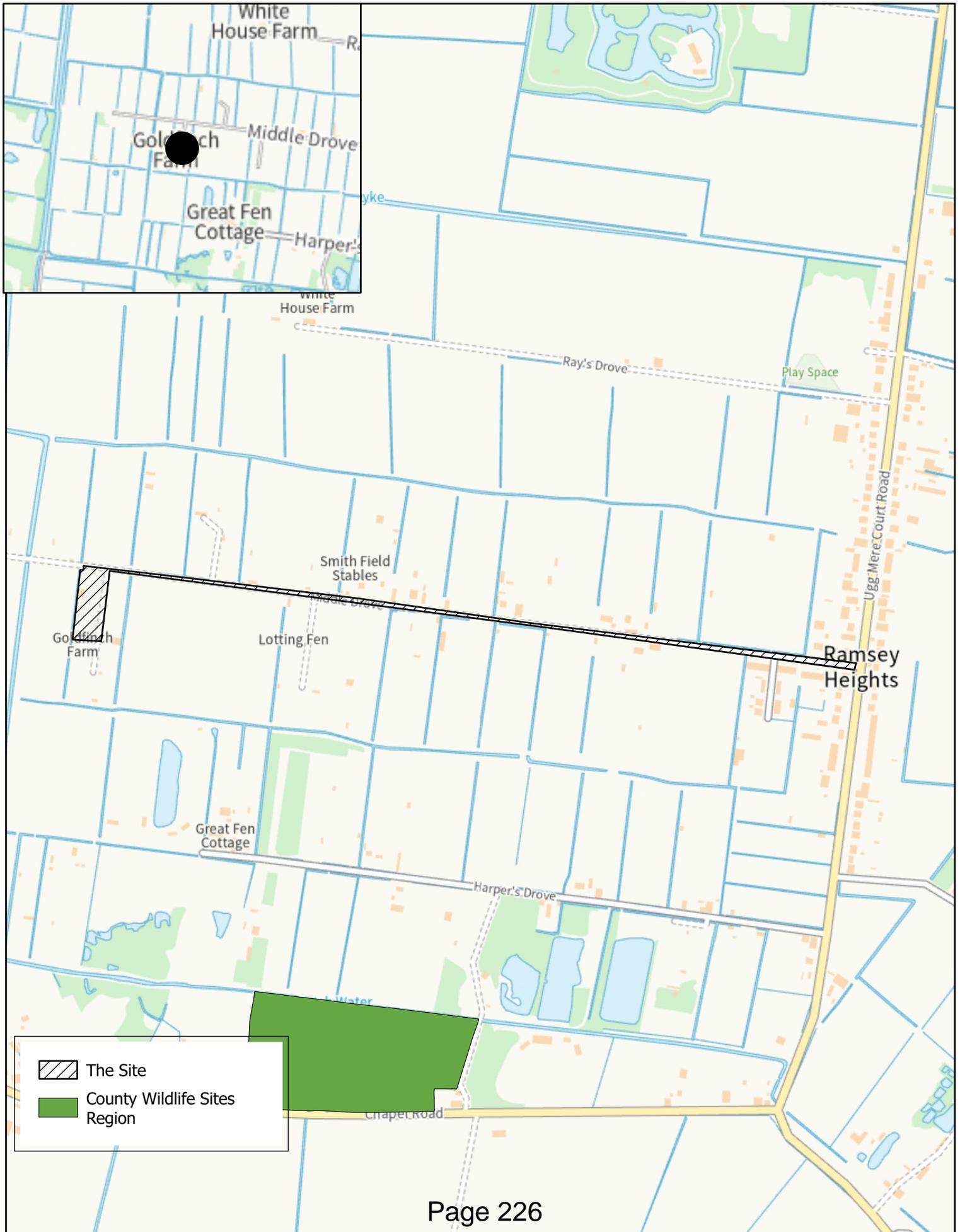
Commenter Type: Town or Parish Council

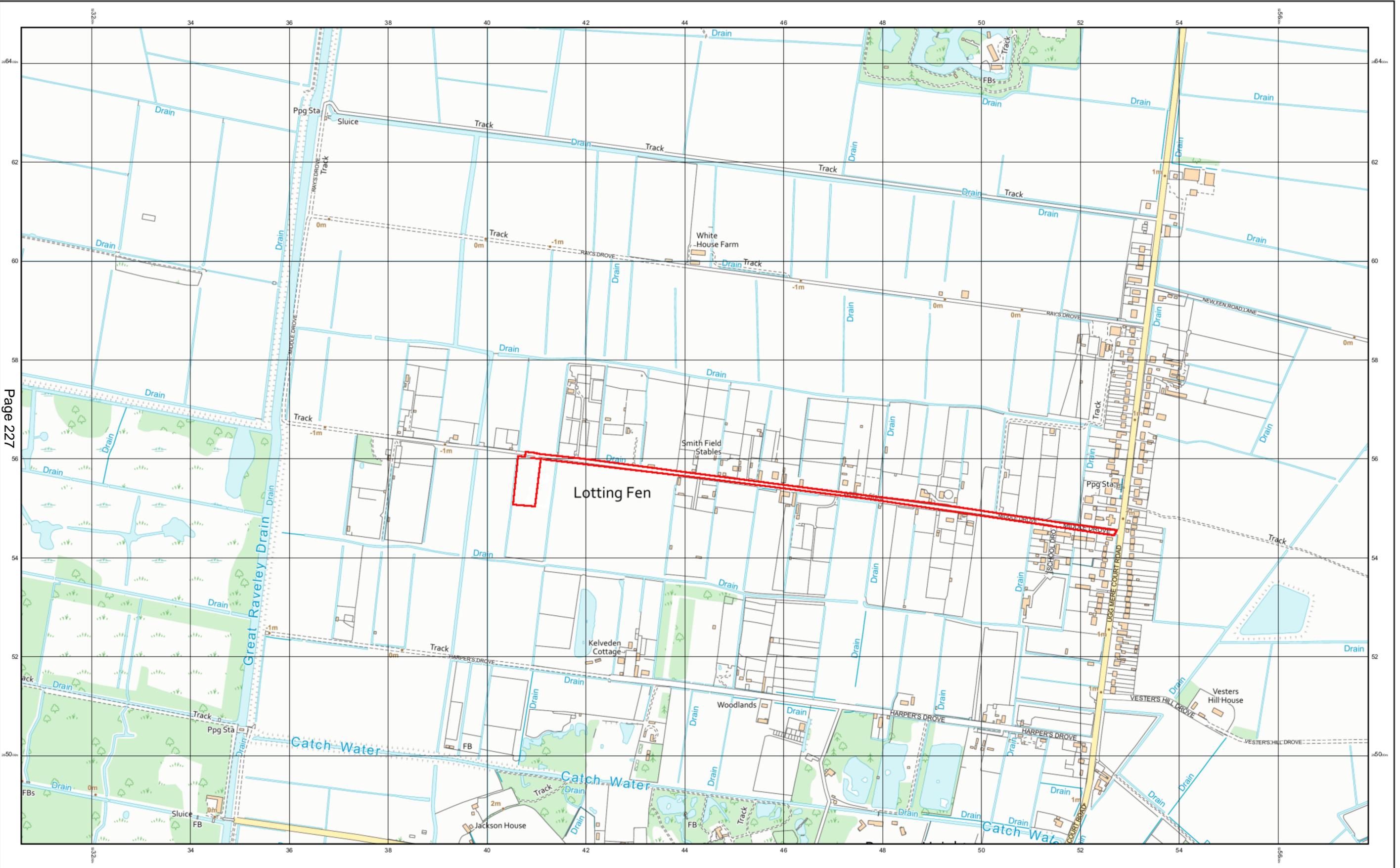
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: Unanimously refused.
Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

Kind regards





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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 21/01478/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO ONE GYPSY / TRAVELLER PITCH WITH FIVE RESIDENTIAL STATIC CARAVANS AND FIVE TOURING CARAVANS, ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCESS AND USE OF HARDSTANDING FOR OCCUPATION BY THE APPLICANTS AND THEIR FAMILY.

Location: LAND SOUTH EAST OF TRUE BRITON, MIDDLE DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS

Applicant: MR DAVIS

Grid Ref: 524090 285495

Date of Registration: 27th June 2021

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Middle Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km. This access also serves a group of dwellings at School Drove, immediately behind the ribbon of dwellings fronting Ugg Mere Court Road, School Drive.
- 1.2 Middle Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Middle Drove itself serves 4 permanent dwellinghouses, and 7 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted across the Drove. All bar one of the residential uses are found along the northern side of Middle Drove. The area is considered

rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land extending in all directions and with the aforementioned School Drove and ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a similar character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.
- 1.4 The application site itself comprises agricultural land and lies along the southern side of Middle Drove and at the far western end of Middle Drove. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. The application site sits behind another application that fronts onto Harpers Drove, and consists of 1 pitch.
- 1.5 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest.

Proposal

- 1.6 This planning application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. It does appear that the site may have been subdivided over time but this is not reflected in the application. Officers have therefore assessed the application as submitted.
- 1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.8 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the

planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation

- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Immediate vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.1 1400997FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)

- 4.2 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.3 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.4 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.5 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.7 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 23/02167/FUL - Retrospective single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Wider vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.12 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.13 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)
- 4.14 21/01475/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

- 5.2 Environment Agency – No objection.

- 5.3 Environmental Health – No objection,

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.
- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the

2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”
- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal would result in the loss of small amount of Agricultural Land. This loss would conflict with Policy

LP10 to a degree. However, this amount of loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the availability of best and most versatile land across the district.

- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 The application site is part of a cluster of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered.
- 7.10 The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.
- 7.11 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.
- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive

light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.

7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises 5 static caravans, 5 touring caravans and a dayroom. It does appear that the site may have been subdivided over time but this is not reflected in the application. Officers have therefore assessed the application as submitted.

7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a Small settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.

7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.

7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.
- 7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -
* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.
- 7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.
- 7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.
- 7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:
a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and
e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;

- b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;
 - c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15:
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
 - d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
 - e) protect local amenity and environment.
- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.
- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:

PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:

- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller (GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or

temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.

7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.

7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.

7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.

7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.

7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section

149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.
- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered. The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

- 7.53 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: "Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural

areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.” No definition is provided of what should be considered the ‘nearest settled community’. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.

- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Middle Drove amounts to 6 lawful pitches with a further lawful 4 pitches on Harpers Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 6 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. 1 of these being located further to the east and closer towards Ugg Mere Court Road, and the other 5 being located in a grouping at the far western end of the Drove. There is also 1 additional pitch proposed for consideration on Harpers Drove by an application which is also on this same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.
- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.
- 7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance

on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

- 7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, "It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances." Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development's impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

- 7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

- 7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

- 7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

- 7.64 The land is located off Middle Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The Highway Authority has advised for each application that the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal won't be a significant intensification of use of the junction. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.
- 7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised on other applications on Harpers Drove and Middle Drove, that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.
- 7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).
- 7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).
- 7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.
- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the

development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability food risk areas should not be permitted.

- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.
- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not

all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.

- Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.
- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion

the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

- 7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that ‘Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams’ personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.’
- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it’s need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.
- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided a site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.
- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.

- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.
- 7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.
- 7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.
- 7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.

LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles

- 7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes

- 7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.

LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure

- 7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

- 7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.
- 7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. It is considered that there would be some degree of loss in biodiversity given the proposal would replace a grassed paddock. However, it is considered that the level of biodiversity loss in this instance would be relatively minor. In this case it is considered that the low level of biodiversity loss could be satisfactorily mitigated by ecological enhancements which could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest. However, given the location and scale of development, no significant impact upon the SSSI should occur. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

- 7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

- 7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the

situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

- 7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.
- 7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.
- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>

- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. There is an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove. It is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b which is also afforded negative weight in the balance.

- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet need and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, Officers deem the justification for temporary consents has fallen away. This means there no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.
- 7.118 Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans

- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2021 14:19
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 21/01478/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/07/2021 2:19 PM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address:	Land South East Of True Briton Middle Drove Ramsey Heights
Proposal:	Change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family.
Case Officer:	[REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

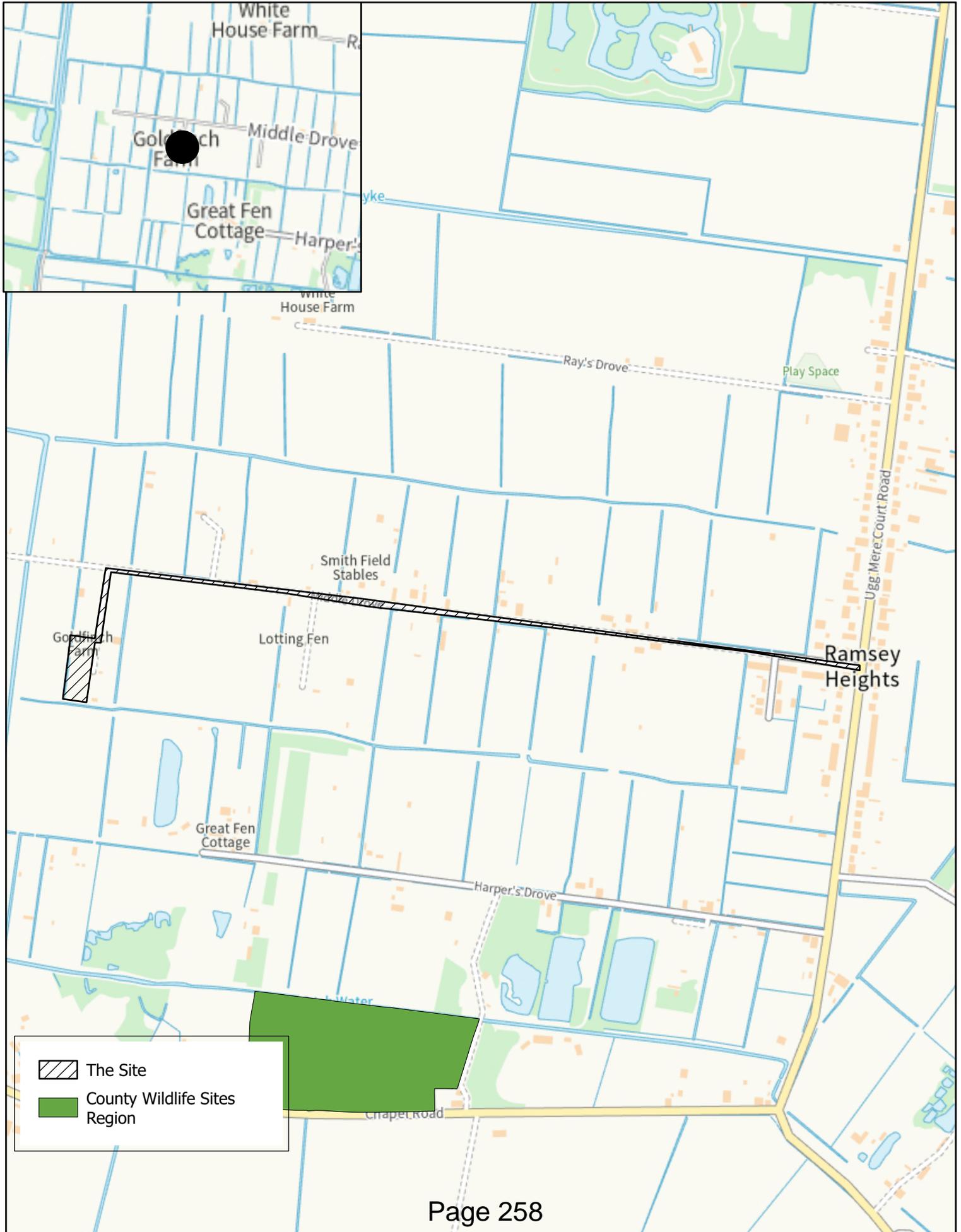
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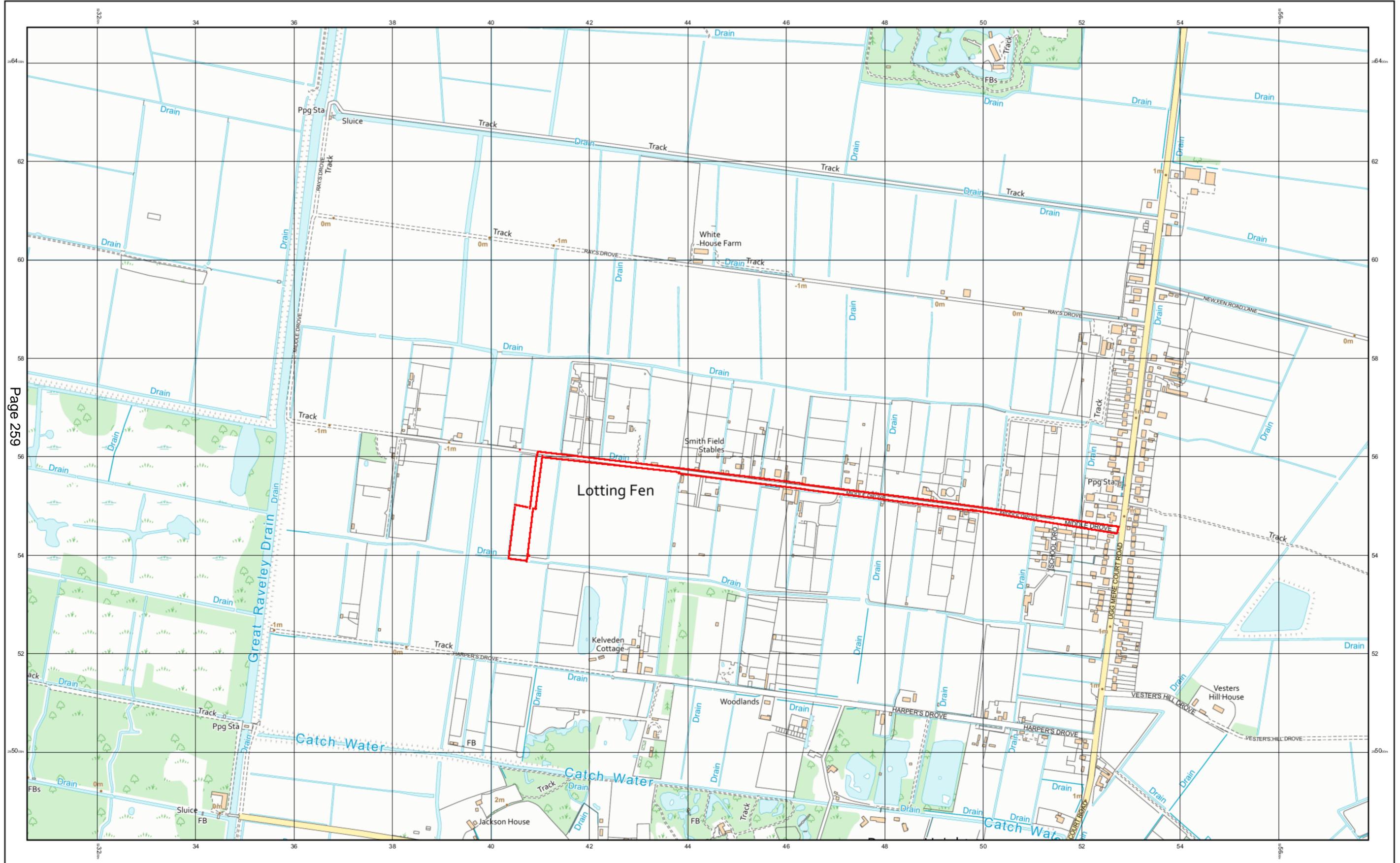
Name:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk
Address:	7A Church Green, Ramsey, Huntingdon PE26 1DW

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Town or Parish Council
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	Unanimously refused. Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

Kind regards





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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 21/01479/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO ONE GYPSY / TRAVELLER PITCH WITH FIVE RESIDENTIAL STATIC CARAVANS, AND FIVE TOURING CARAVANS, ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCESS AND USE OF HARDSTANDING FOR OCCUPATION BY THE APPLICANTS AND THEIR FAMILY (TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT).

Location: MAGPIE FARM, MIDDLE DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS, PE26 2RG

Applicant: MS HOLMES

Grid Ref: 524098 285443

Date of Registration: 27th June 2021

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Middle Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km. This access also serves a group of dwellings at School Drove, immediately behind the ribbon of dwellings fronting Ugg Mere Court Road, School Drive.
- 1.2 Middle Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Middle Drove itself serves 4 permanent dwellinghouses, and 7 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted across the Drove. All bar one of the residential uses are found

along the northern side of Middle Drove. The area is considered rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land extending in all directions and with the aforementioned School Drove and ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a similar character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.
- 1.4 The application site itself comprises agricultural land and lies along the southern side of Middle Drove and at the far western end of Middle Drove. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. The application site sits behind another application that fronts onto Harpers Drove, and consists of 1 pitch.
- 1.5 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest.

Proposal

- 1.6 This planning application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. It does appear that the site may have been subdivided over time but this is not reflected in this application. Officers have therefore assessed the application as submitted.
- 1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.8 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'
- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside

- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Immediate vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.2 1400997/FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.3 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.4 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.5 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.7 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

- 4.12 23/02167/FUL - Retrospective single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Wider vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.13 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.14 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)
- 4.15 21/01475/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

- 5.2 Environment Agency – No objection.

- 5.3 Environmental Health – No objection,

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local

Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside;
- and

c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”

- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal would result in the loss of small amount of Agricultural Land. This loss would conflict with Policy LP10 to a degree. However, this amount of loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the availability of best and most versatile land across the district.
- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 The application site is part of a cluster of 5 applications all seeking permission for 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered.
- 7.10 The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.
- 7.11 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered

that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.

- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

- 7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.
- 7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

- 7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises 5 static caravans, 5 touring caravans and a dayroom. It does appear that the site may have been subdivided over time but this is not reflected in this application. Officers have therefore assessed the application as submitted.
- 7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a Small settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.
- 7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.

- 7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.

- 7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -

* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.

- 7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.

- 7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.

- 7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:

a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and

- e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
- a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;
 - b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;
 - c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15:
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
 - d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
 - e) protect local amenity and environment.
- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.

- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:
- PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:*
- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to

2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.

- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

- 7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.
- 7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

- 7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.
- 7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.
- 7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would

be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

- 7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.

- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large

settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered. The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

- 7.53 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: “Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.” No definition is provided of what should be considered the ‘nearest settled community’. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.
- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Middle Drove amounts to 6 lawful pitches with a further lawful 4 pitches on Harpers Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 6 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. 1 of these being located further to the east and closer towards Ugg Mere Court Road, and the other 5 being located in a grouping at the far western end of the Drove. There is also 1 additional pitch proposed for consideration on Harpers Drove by an application which is also on this same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.
- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.

7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, "It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances." Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development's impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. The application site contains a garden area. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

7.64 The land is located off Middle Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The Highway Authority has advised for each application that the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal won't be a significant intensification of use of the junction. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.

7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised on other applications on Harpers Drove and Middle Drove, that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.

7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).

7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).

7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.

- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability food risk areas should not be permitted.
- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.
- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved

over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.

- Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.
- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams

eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

- 7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that 'Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams' personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.'
- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it's need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.

- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.
- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided a site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.

- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.
- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.
- 7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.
- 7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.
- 7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.
- LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles*
- 7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.
- LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes*
- 7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.
- LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure*
- 7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package

sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. It is considered that there would be some degree of loss in biodiversity given the proposal would replace a grassed paddock. However, it is considered that the level of biodiversity loss in this instance would be relatively minor. In this case it is considered that the low level of biodiversity loss could be satisfactorily mitigated by ecological enhancements which could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest. However, given the location and scale of development, no significant impact upon the SSSI should occur. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.

7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.

7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.

- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that the that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site

now known as Gypsy Lane. There is an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove. It is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b which is also afforded negative weight in the balance.

- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet need and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, Officers deem the justification for temporary consents has fallen away. This means there are no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.
- 7.118 Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans
- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2021 14:22
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 21/01479/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/07/2021 2:20 PM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address: Magpie Farm Middle Drove Ramsey Heights PE26 2RG

Proposal: Change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent).

Case Officer: [REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk

Address: [REDACTED]

Comments Details

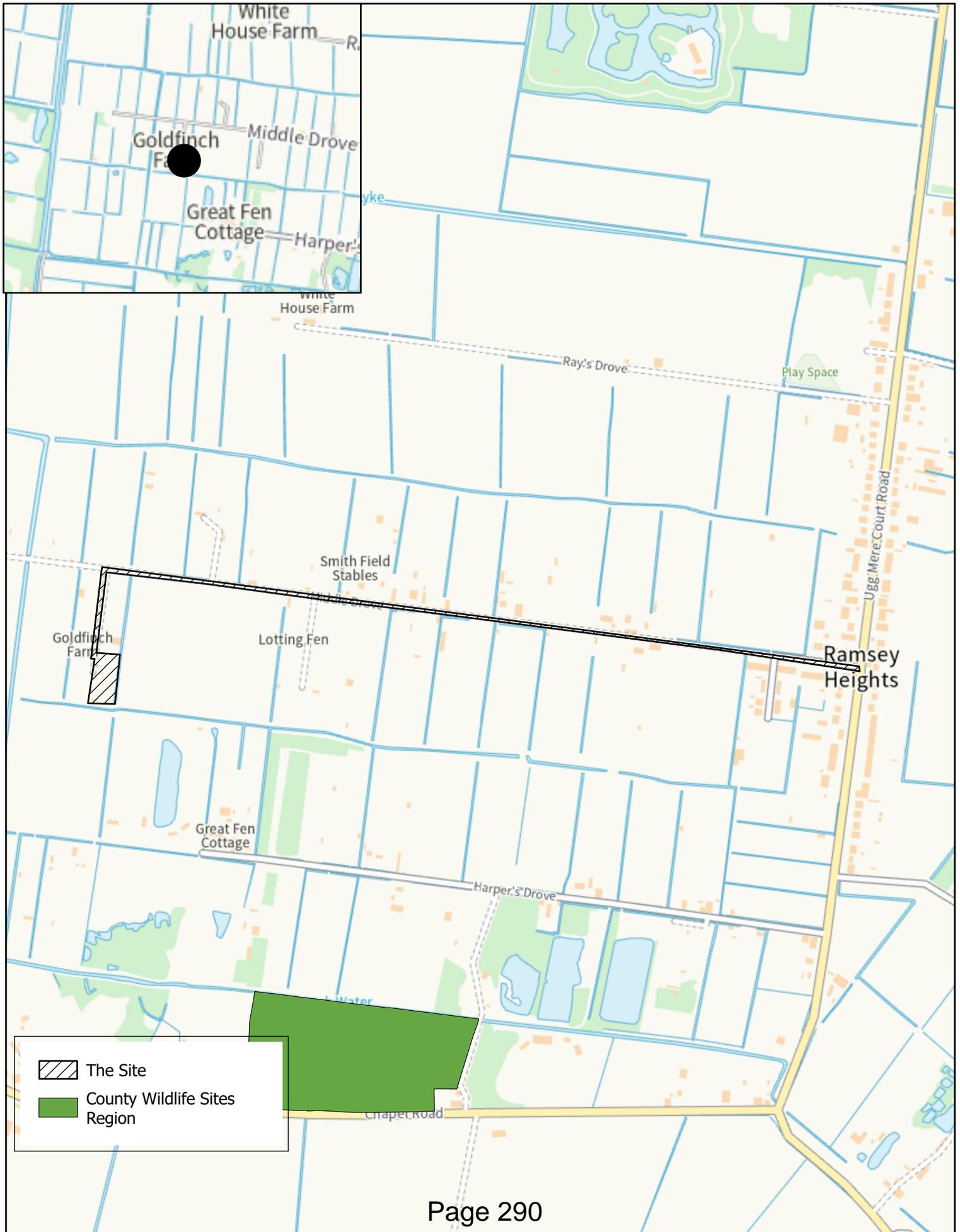
Commenter Type: Town or Parish Council

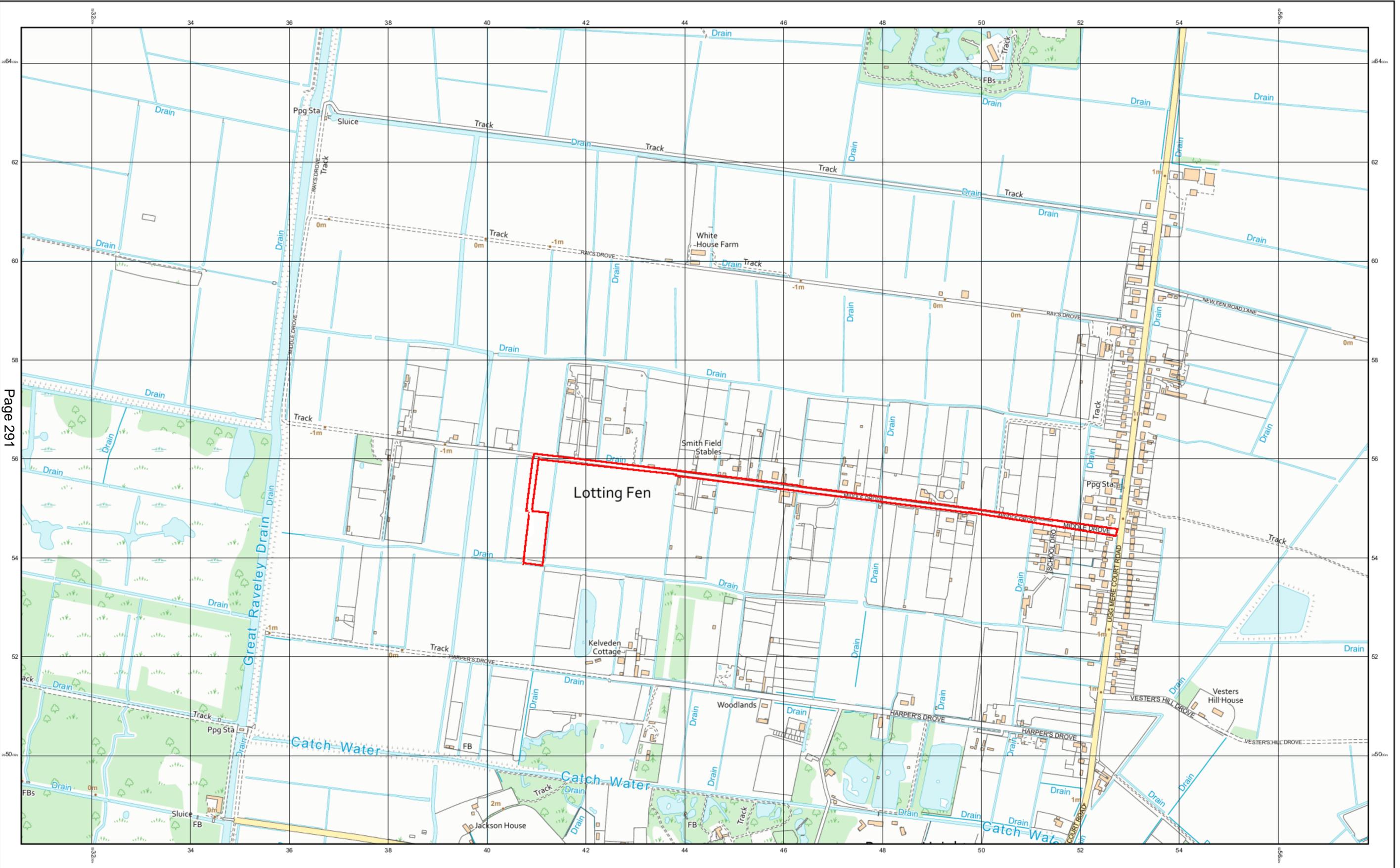
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: Unanimously refused.
Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

Kind regards





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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 21/01480/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO ONE GYPSY / TRAVELLER PITCH WITH TWO RESIDENTIAL STATIC CARAVANS AND TWO TOURING CARAVANS (TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT), DEVELOPMENT OF DAY ROOM, ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCESS AND USE OF EXISTING HARDSTANDING FOR OCCUPATION BY THE APPLICANTS AND THEIR FAMILY.

Location: INDIANAS PADDOCK, MIDDLE DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS, HUNTINGDON, PE26 2RG

Applicant: MS HOLMES

Grid Ref: 524109 285529

Date of Registration: 27th June 2021

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Middle Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km. This access also serves a group of dwellings at School Drove, immediately behind the ribbon of dwellings fronting Ugg Mere Court Road, School Drive.
- 1.2 Middle Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Middle Drove itself serves 4 permanent dwellinghouses, and 7 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted

across the Drove. All bar one of the residential uses are found along the northern side of Middle Drove. The area is considered rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land extending in all directions and with the aforementioned School Drove and ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a similar character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.
- 1.4 The application site itself comprises agricultural land and lies along the southern side of Middle Drove and at the far western end of Middle Drove. The application site is part of a cluster of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. The application site fronts onto Harpers Drove, and consists of 1 pitch with a garden area to the rear.
- 1.5 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest.

Proposal

- 1.6 This planning application seeks retrospective permission for the change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, development of dayroom, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family.
- 1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.8 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the

planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'

- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside
 - LP11: Design Context
 - LP12: Design Implementation

- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Immediate vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.1 1400997FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)

- 4.2 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.3 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.4 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.5 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.7 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 23/02167/FUL - Retrospective single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Wider vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.12 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.13 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)
- 4.14 21/01475/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

- 5.2 Environment Agency – No objection.

- 5.3 Environmental Health – No objection,

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations have been received.

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.
- 7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the

2004 Act as “the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area”.

- 7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:
- Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
 - Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
- 7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.
- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”
- 7.7 With regard to part a, the proposal would result in the loss of small amount of Agricultural Land. This loss would conflict with Policy

LP10 to a degree. However, this amount of loss is not considered to be significant in terms of the availability of best and most versatile land across the district.

- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 The application site is part of a cluster of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered.
- 7.10 The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.
- 7.11 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.
- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive

light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.

7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises 2 static caravans, 2 touring caravans and a dayroom.

7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a Small settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.

7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.

7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.

- 7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -
* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.
- 7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government's Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.
- 7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.
- 7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:
a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and
e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;
b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;

- c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15:
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;
 - d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
 - e) protect local amenity and environment.
- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.
- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:

PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:

- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it's need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation

is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.

7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.

7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.

7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.

7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.

7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.

7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section

149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.
- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in a notable cluster of pitches and built form and the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses. The visual impacts of these cumulative sites on the wider landscape must be considered. The site is visible from Harpers Drove which runs parallel to Middle Drove from the south and from Ray's Drove to the north. Even then views are often obscured by existing buildings and hedgerow to the rear of curtilages and field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Middle Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. Notwithstanding this, the site sits by itself and is quite exposed within the wider countryside. Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

- 7.53 The application site is therefore not considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is considered to cause harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b. This will need to be weighed up at the end of the report.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: "Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural

areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.” No definition is provided of what should be considered the ‘nearest settled community’. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.

- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Middle Drove amounts to 6 lawful pitches with a further lawful 4 pitches on Harpers Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 6 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. 1 of these being located further to the east and closer towards Ugg Mere Court Road, and the other 5 being located in a grouping at the far western end of the Drove. There is also 1 additional pitch proposed for consideration on Harpers Drove by an application which is also on this same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.
- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.
- 7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance

on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

- 7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, “It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances.” Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development’s impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

- 7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, Within the group of 5 application, there are 3 garden areas serving pitches on the eastern side and also 2 undeveloped areas on the western side which has helped break up the development. There is also hedging along the boundaries of the wider site which also helped soften the visual impact. There is however an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

- 7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

- 7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. In addition to this, the application site also contains a garden. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

- 7.64 The land is located off Middle Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The Highway Authority has advised for each application that the additional vehicle movements associated with the proposal won't be a significant intensification of use of the junction. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.
- 7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.
- 7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).
- 7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).
- 7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.
- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the

development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability food risk areas should not be permitted.

- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.
- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not

all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.

- Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.
- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion

the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

- 7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that ‘Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams’ personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.’
- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.
- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided a site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.
- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.

- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.
- 7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.
- 7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.
- 7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.

LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles

- 7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes

- 7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.

LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure

- 7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

- 7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.
- 7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. It is considered that there would be some degree of loss in biodiversity given the proposal would replace a grassed paddock. However, it is considered that the level of biodiversity loss in this instance would be relatively minor. In this case it is considered that the low level of biodiversity loss could be satisfactorily mitigated by ecological enhancements which could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Further to the west is the Woodwalton Site of Special Scientific and Fenland Special Area of Conservation interest. However, given the location and scale of development, no significant impact upon the SSSI should occur. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

- 7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

- 7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the

situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

- 7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.
- 7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.
- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>

- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance. The application site is part of a group of 5 applications all seeking 1 pitch each on wider site now known as Gypsy Lane. There is an impact on the visual amenity of the Countryside due to the cluster of pitches, and the separation from other built form on Middle Drove. It is considered that the proposed development would not recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b which is also afforded negative weight in the balance.

- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet need and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, Officers deem the justification for temporary consents has fallen away. This means there no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.
- 7.118 Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans

- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2021 14:04
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 21/01480/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/07/2021 2:03 PM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address: Indianas Paddock Middle Drove Ramsey Heights Huntingdon PE26 2RG

Proposal: Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family.

Case Officer: [REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk

Address: [REDACTED]

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Town or Parish Council

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: Unanimously refused.
Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

Kind regards

Development Management Committee

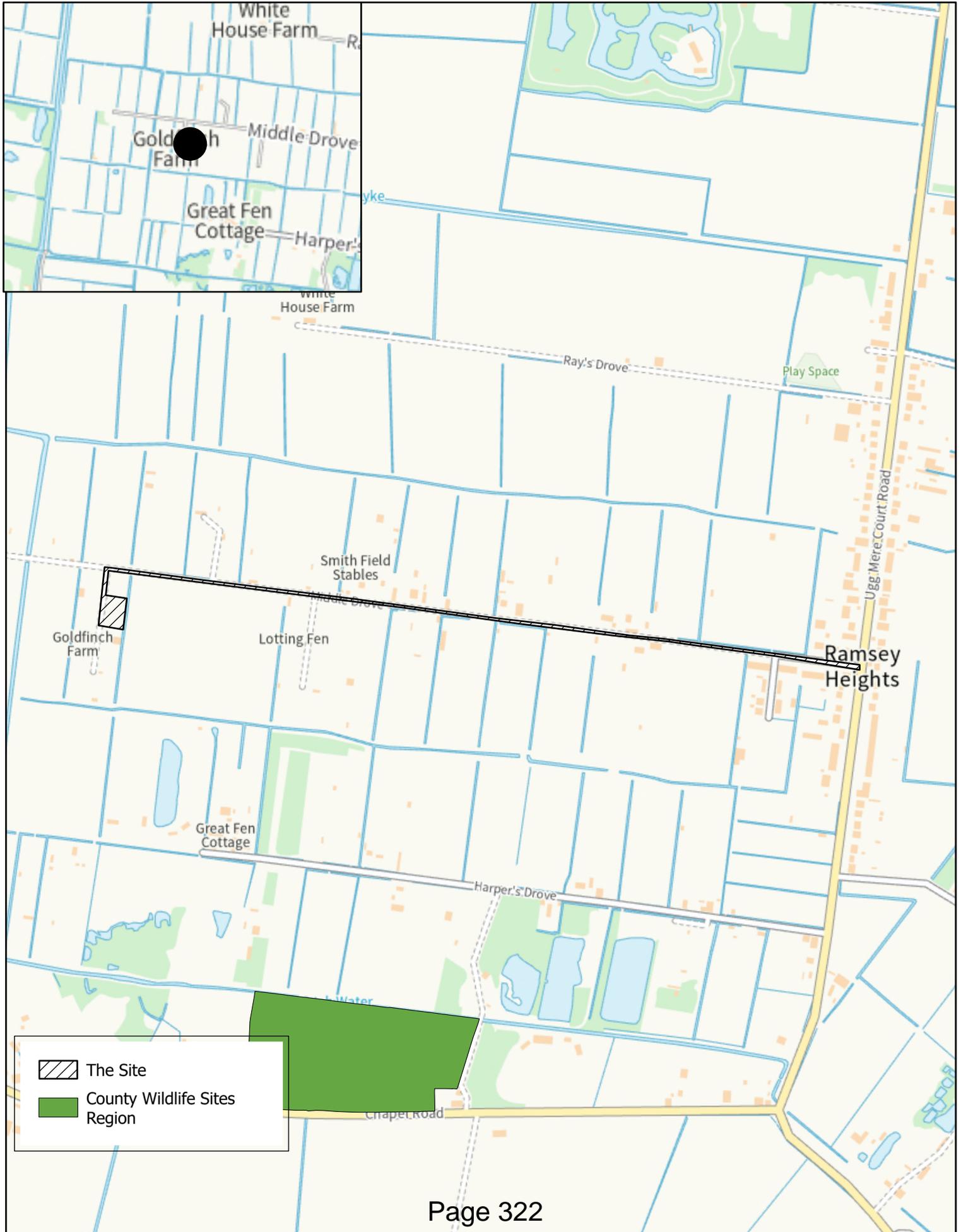
Application Ref: 21/01480/FUL

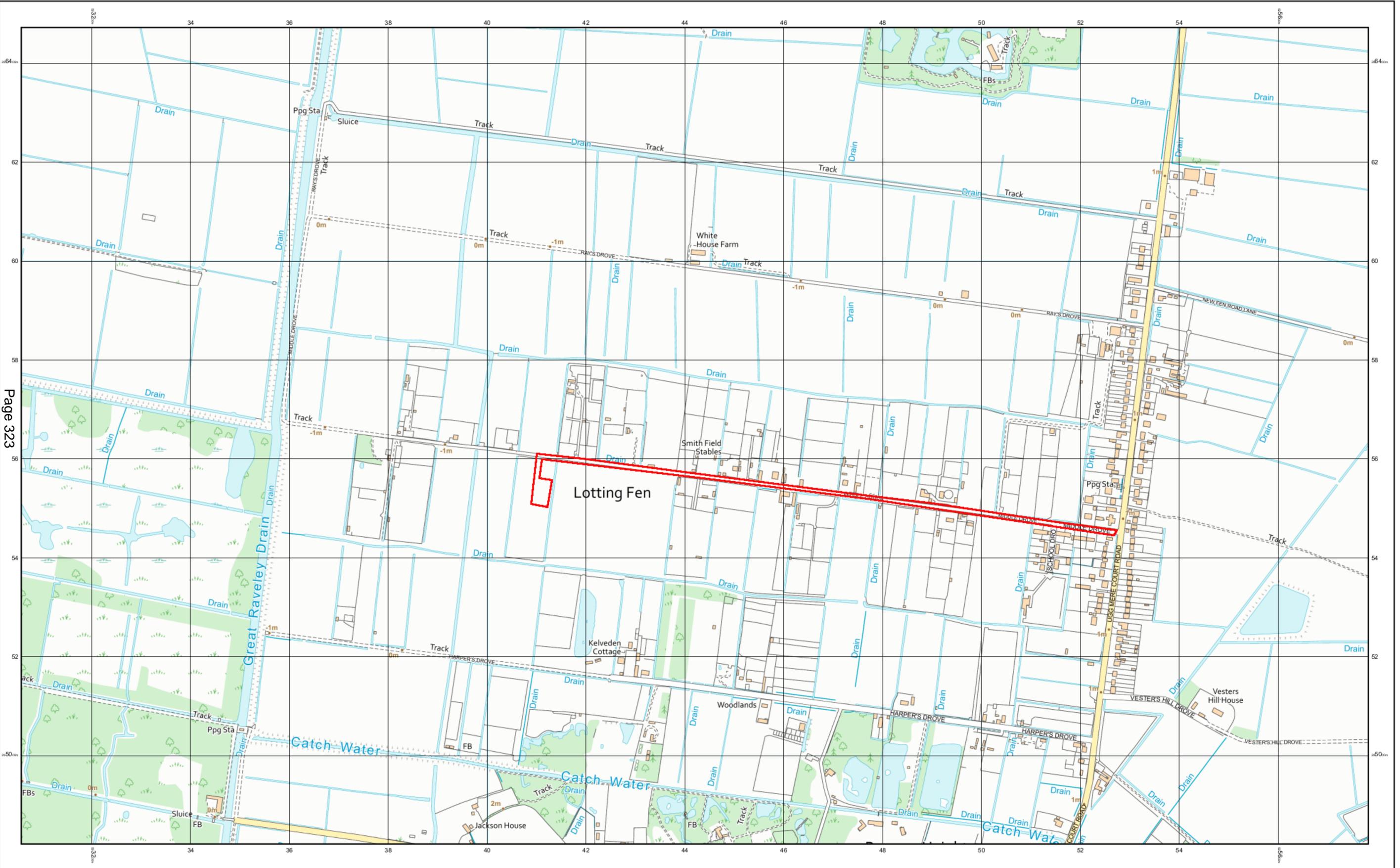


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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 16th MARCH 2026

Case No: 21/01475/FUL

Proposal: RETROSPECTIVE CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO ONE GYPSY / TRAVELLER PITCH WITH DAY ROOM, TWO RESIDENTIAL STATIC CARAVANS AND A TOURING CARAVAN (TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT), ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL ACCESS AND USE OF EXISTING HARDSTANDING FOR RESIDENTIAL OCCUPATION BY THE APPLICANTS AND THEIR FAMILY.

Location: LAND WEST OF KELVEDON COTTAGE, HARPERS DROVE, RAMSEY HEIGHTS

Applicant: MS CRUMP

Grid Ref: 524185 285286

Date of Registration: 27th June 2021

Parish: RAMSEY

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation as the Officer recommendation of approval is contrary to that of the Town Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

- 1.1 The site lies to the west of the settlement of Ramsey Heights and is accessed via Harpers Drove, a predominantly single track, unmade and unadopted road which extends westwards from Ugg Mere Court Road for approximately 1.7Km.
- 1.2 Harpers Drove is characterised by sporadic and sparse development set in open countryside. Harpers Drove runs parallel to Middle Drove with a ditch separating the two Drovers. Harper Drove has a character, with a mixture of permanent dwellinghouses and lawful gypsy and traveller pitches. There are also a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Harpers Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are also pepper potted across the Drove.

- 1.3 Harpers Drove itself serves 8 permanent dwellinghouses, and 4 lawful gypsy and traveller pitches on both sides of the Middle Drove. There are a number of unauthorised gypsy and traveller pitches on Middle Drove. Various small scale stables and structures are pepper potted across the Drove. The area is considered rural in character, with open countryside and agricultural land extending in all directions and with the ribbon of development of along Ugg Mere Court Road found to the east. Middle Drove is of a similar character and nature.
- 1.4 The site lies along the northern side of Harpers Drove at the far western part. The application site has been subdivided from a larger site now known as Lakeview which had permission for the 'Retention of pond for breeding fish, retention of soil bunding and proposed erection of workshop building and proposed mobile home for use as a day room/office' under planning permission 1100633FUL. There have been other consents such as 1400607S73 on that site which allowed residential on the site for the first 3 years until 2017. Lakeview has a park home lodge building.
- 1.5 Further to the east is the park home lodge building at Lakeview. Further beyond that is 3 permanent dwellinghouses, Kelveden Cottage being the closest of the 3.
- 1.6 The majority of the site lies within Flood Zone 3a as defined by the Environment Agency mapping and within the 1 in 100 year with climate change allowance areas as defined by the Councils Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, 2017.

Proposal

- 1.7 This planning application seeks permission for Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family.
- 1.8 This application has been accompanied by the following:
 - Design and Access Statement
 - Supporting information
 - Drawings
 - Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.9 Officers have scrutinised the plans and have familiarised themselves with the site and surrounding area.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

- 2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2024 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: 'So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).'
- 2.2 The NPPF 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
- delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
 - building a strong, competitive economy;
 - achieving well-designed, beautiful and safe places;
 - conserving and enhancing the natural, built and historic environment
- 2.3 Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.
- 2.4 For full details visit the government website [National Guidance](#)
- 2.5 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 2.6 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

3. PLANNING POLICIES

- 3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15th May 2019)
- LP1: Amount of Development
 - LP2: Strategy for Development
 - LP3: Green Infrastructure
 - LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
 - LP5: Flood Risk
 - LP6: Waste Water Management
 - LP8: Key Service Centres
 - LP10: The Countryside

- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision
- LP27: Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2017)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2017)
- LDF Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2020)
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

Local policies are viewable at <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

3.3 The National Design Guide (2021):

- C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
- I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
- I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
- B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
- M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
- N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
- H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
- H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
- H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

Wider vicinity (Middle Drove)

- 4.1 1400997/FUL - Two static and two touring caravans with retrospective use of day/room facilities block for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.2 23/02167/FUL - Retrospective single traveller pitch with associated mobile home, touring caravan and dayroom for family that have their immediate family adjacent the site. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.3 15/00075/FUL - Proposed one static caravan and touring caravan with a day room/facilities block/tack room for one extended gypsy/traveller family (APPROVED)
- 4.4 15/00273/FUL - Change of use of stables and land to 1 gypsy and traveller extended family - to include retention of 1 static caravan, 1 touring caravan and existing stables, and erection of utility block, day room, 1 static caravan and 1 touring caravan. (APPROVED)
- 4.5 22/01787/S73 - Removal of Condition 2 (expiration date) and 3 (scheme of improvement) of 17/00592/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.6 22/01915/S73 - Variation of conditions 1 and 8 and removal of conditions 2 and 3 of 16/02196/FUL (APPROVED TEMP UNTIL 23.04.2030)
- 4.7 21/01476/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with two residential static caravans and two touring caravans, establishment of access and formation of hardstanding (temporary or permanent) for extended Gypsy / Traveller family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.8 21/01477/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller Pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and change of use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.9 21/01478/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.10 21/01479/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with five residential static caravans, and five touring caravans, establishment of access and use of hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family (temporary or permanent). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)
- 4.11 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with two residential static caravans and two

touring caravans (temporary or permanent), development of day room, establishment of access and use of existing hardstanding for occupation by the applicants and their family. (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

- 4.12 21/01481/FUL - Retrospective development of day room and standing of two additional residential static caravans and two touring caravans on land granted planning consent in 2015 (Ref: 14/00997/FUL). (PENDING CONSIDERATION)

Immediate vicinity (Harpers Drove)

- 4.13 1100981CLED - Certificate of lawfulness (existing) for continued siting of mobile home for residential use (APPROVED)
- 4.14 17/01874/FUL - Gypsy and traveller use four statics, four touring caravans and facilities for extended family. (APPROVED)

Application site

- 4.15 1100633FUL - Retention of pond for breeding fish, retention of soil bunding and proposed erection of workshop building and proposed mobile home for use as a day room/office. (APPROVED)
- 4.16 1400607S73 - Variation of Condition 3 of Planning Permission 1100633FUL to add... "except for 10 consecutive weeks within each calendar year for the first 3 years after the date of this permission during which time the business is being established". (APPROVED)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Ramsey Town Council – Objection.

Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

- 5.2 Environmental Health Team – The superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce quantities of ground gases namely methane and carbon dioxide. A day room is proposed to be located upon permeable hardstanding at the site so would have a direct connection to the ground and any hazardous ground gas could ingress into the building. The day room includes a lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility and wet room so it is likely that residents would spend a significant amount of time here and there will be utility pipe routes that

might act as a pathway for any hazardous ground gas. If you are minded to approve the application then I would recommend a condition requiring either; a ground gases risk assessment, which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed building requires protection against the ingress of ground gases, or; a hydrocarbon gas mitigation method statement, which will provide details of the gas resistant barrier to be used, the method of its installation and its verification.

5.3 Environment Agency – No objection.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 One representation received from a neighbouring property on the following grounds:

- the access road is an un-adopted dirt track which already has problems with the quantity of traffic.
- These fields turn into soft bog when sufficient rain has fallen, making the stability of caravans etc an issue

7. ASSESSMENT

7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan (relevant to this applications) consists of:

- Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)

7.4 The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: *Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor* [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan,

paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

- 7.5 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:
- The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)
 - Biodiversity
 - Developer Contributions
 - Other matters

The Principle of Development (Including Impact upon the Character and Appearance of the Area, Amenity, Flood Risk and Highway Safety, Access, and Parking Provision)

- 7.6 The application site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against Policy LP10 of the Local Plan which states that “Development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan and that all development in the countryside must:
- a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:
 - i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and
 - ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;
 - b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and
 - c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.”
- 7.7 With regard to part a, the site had consent for the retention of ponds and temporary residential accommodation. This proposal therefore is acceptable in regards to this element of Policy LP10.
- 7.8 The site is located in an area defined as 'Fens' according to the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG and is "distinctive for its low-lying, flat, and often regimented open character". Indeed views north and south from the site reinforce the area's open, low-lying character with generally uninterrupted views across the Fen landscape to distant horizons with generally agricultural fields surrounding the site. The SPG identifies that the flat and horizontal nature of the landscape can give vertical features an unusual prominence.
- 7.9 It is recognised that planning permission was granted on the site itself for the retention of ponds and temporary residential accommodation. Taking into account the existing development, the cumulative impact of the development on the open character

of the area must be considered. Cumulatively, this would result in the encroachment of built form, as well the associated paraphernalia which would come with the residential uses further into the countryside. The visual impacts of the cumulative impact on the wider landscape must be considered.

- 7.10 The site is generally only partially visible from Middle Drove which runs parallel to Harpers Drove from the north. Even then views are often obscured by hedgerow to the rear of field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Harpers Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. The site, however, does have a good level of screening via mature hedges which has provided mitigation in terms of any countryside impact.
- 7.11 The application site is considered to be sufficiently visually separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is not considered to cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b.
- 7.12 Given the scale and location of the proposed development, it is considered that it would not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light, or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others in accordance with Policy LP10 part c.

Gypsy and Traveller Status

- 7.13 A primary consideration is whether planning policies relating to gypsies and travellers are relevant in the consideration of this application.
- 7.14 The national Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document was updated December 2024 with an amended definition of Gypsies and Travellers in paragraph 1 within Annex 1:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

- 7.15 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. A pitch generally comprises one mobile caravan, one static caravan and an amenity block. However, pitches can contain a higher number

of caravans given the size of the household. In this instance the pitch comprises 2 static caravans, a touring caravan and a dayroom.

- 7.16 When assessing the location of the site against the built-up areas definition and the tables on pages 53 to 55 of the Local Plan to 2036, the site lies outside the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, which is a Small Settlement, the site is therefore considered to be located within the countryside.
- 7.17 Local Plan policy LP27 relates to Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and its purpose, as stated in paragraph 7.33 of the Local Plan, is to enable the appropriate provision of sites to meet the specific needs of such groups. It states that new traveller sites outside of the built-up area could be supported in sustainable locations where they respect the scale of the nearest settled community and would be very strictly limited in open countryside that is away from existing settlements.
- 7.18 The Council would therefore support a proposal which contributes to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller pitches where it satisfies each of criteria a) to j) of Policy LP27.

Need for Gypsy and Traveller sites

- 7.19 The Local Plan to 2036 does not specifically allocate any sites for gypsies, travellers or travelling showpeople.
- 7.20 As stated above, the site is not located within the built-up area of Ramsey Heights, and therefore in planning policy terms it is in the open countryside where planning policies for the countryside apply. The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) updated in December 2024 is not opposed in principle to traveller sites being located in the countryside, so long as they are not within Green Belt land. Huntingdonshire does not have any areas of Green Belt. Stipulations in the PPTS include: -
* Local planning authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan; -
* Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate, the nearest settled community, and avoid placing undue pressure on the local infrastructure’.
- 7.21 Paragraph 4 of the NPPF (2024) states that it should be read in conjunction with the Government’s Planning Policy for Traveller Sites and that decisions on traveller sites should also have regard to the Framework so far as relevant.
- 7.22 The Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government’s overarching aim to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic

way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community. The PPTS includes policies on plan-making and on decision-taking. Paragraph 24 of the PPTS states that local planning authorities should determine applications in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the policies in the NPPF and PPTS.

- 7.23 Paragraph 25 of the PPTS states that when considering planning applications local planning authorities (LPAs) should consider the following:
- a) The existing level of local provision and need for sites,
 - b) The availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants,
 - c) Other personal circumstances of the applicant,
 - d) The locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches/plots should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites, and
 - e) That LPAs should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections.
- 7.24 Paragraph 27 of the PPTS requires weight to be attached to factors such as:
- a) Effective reuse of brownfield land, untidy or derelict land;
 - b) Sites which positively enhance the environment for example by soft planting;
 - c) Promoting opportunities for healthy lifestyles, such as provision of adequate landscaping and play areas for children
 - d) Not over enclosing or isolating a site with hard landscaping, walls and fences.
- 7.25 The criteria and means by which new traveller development is to be controlled is set out in further policies within the PPTS and in local policies which closely reflect the NPPF policies, and these are considered below.
- 7.26 Under the PPTS Policy B (plan making), planning authorities should, amongst other things, set pitch targets for gypsies and travellers which address likely needs in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. In producing their local plans, planning authorities should, amongst other things:
- a) identify and update annually, a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of sites against their locally set targets;
 - b) identify a supply of specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years 11-15:
 - c) consider production of joint development plans that set targets on a cross-authority basis, to provide more flexibility in identifying sites;

- d) relate the number of pitches to the circumstances of the specific size or location of the site and the surrounding population's size and density;
- e) protect local amenity and environment.

- 7.27 Paragraph 11 of The PPTS (2024) sets out that criteria should be set to guide land supply allocations where there is identified need. Where there is no identified need, criteria-based policies should be included to provide a basis for decisions in case applications nevertheless come forward. Criteria based policies should be fair and should facilitate the traditional and nomadic life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 7.28 Paragraph 13 of the PPTS (2024) requires LPAs to ensure that traveller sites are sustainable economically, socially and environmentally and includes the criteria that should be used in the setting of LPA policies.
- 7.29 Policy H (decision taking), paragraph 23 of the PPTS (2024) notes that planning law requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the provisions of the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.30 In line with PPTS Paragraph 25, following factors are considered:
- PPTS Paragraph 25 (a) The existing level of provision and need for traveller pitches:*
- 7.31 For the purposes of plan preparation, paragraph 9 of PPTS advises local planning authorities that they should set pitch targets which address the likely permanent and transit site accommodation needs of Travellers in their area, working collaboratively with neighbouring local planning authorities. Policy H, para 28 of the PPTS, states that the absence of a 5-year supply of deliverable sites paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF apply. Local Planning authorities should consider how they could overcome planning objections to a particular proposal using planning conditions or planning obligations.
- 7.32 Policy LP27 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 refers to The Cambridgeshire, Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Peterborough and West Suffolk Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2016 (GTAA 2016), which identified a need within Huntingdonshire for an additional 9 permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches between 2016 and 2036, of which 5 were needed between 2016 and 2021.
- 7.33 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical

evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.

- 7.34 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.35 In addition to this, and part of the evidence base document that will inform and shape the new Local Plan, the Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.36 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it's need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.37 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.38 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.39 On the basis of this, it is considered that there is a need for pitches within the district. This will be weighed up at the end of the report.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (b) the availability (or lack) of alternative accommodation for the applicants:

- 7.40 As discussed above, there is a shortage of Gypsy and Traveller sites in Huntingdonshire. The only public site in the district, in St Neots, is full.
- 7.41 It is therefore considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for the applicants.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (c) other personal circumstances of the applicant:

- 7.42 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch.
- 7.43 Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections.
- 7.44 Article 1 of the First Protocol Human Rights sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 7.45 The future potential occupants of the proposed pitches are an ethnic minority, and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (d) that the locally specific criteria used to guide the allocation of sites in plans, or which form the policy where there is no identified need for pitches, should be used to assess applications that may come forward on unallocated sites:

- 7.46 The criteria within policy LP27 is therefore relevant and is discussed within material considerations below.

PPTS Paragraph 25 (e) that they should determine applications for sites from any travellers and not just those with local connections:

- 7.47 This proposal seeks to provide 1 gypsy and traveller pitch. Information regarding gypsy/traveller status or personal circumstances has been provided with the application. Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is therefore relevant and the application will be assessed with regard to any travellers not just those with local connections, which can be secured via a planning condition.

Sustainability in terms of Policy LP27 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036

- 7.48 Policy LP27 of the Local Plan to 2036 sets out a range of criteria to be satisfied. These are set out below, and the scheme is subsequently assessed against the provisions of each of these criteria:

LP27.a) The location is within 1.5 miles of a primary school and 2 miles of a GP surgery:

- 7.49 Paragraph 26 of the PPTS states that Local Planning Authorities should very strictly limit new traveller site development in open countryside that is away from existing settlements or outside areas allocated in the development plan.

- 7.50 Ramsey Heights itself has no such facilities. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.

- 7.51 The location of the proposed development is broadly in accordance with the aims of the PPTS, and there would not be a significant level of harm associated with the required car journeys in this instance.

LP27.b) The character and appearance of the wider landscape would not be significantly harmed:

- 7.52 As discussed earlier in this report during the assessment against Policy LP10 part b, the site is generally only partially visible from Middle Drove which runs parallel to Harpers Drove from the north. Even then views are often obscured by hedgerow to the rear of field margins. The site is only really visible when approaching along Harpers Drove itself which again is characterised by a sporadic and sparse mixture of built form, hedgerow and open spaces. The site, however, does have a good level of screening via mature hedges which has provided mitigation in terms of any countryside impact.

- 7.53 The application site is therefore sufficiently separated from other lawful gypsy and traveller sites or sites where applications are pending. As such, the proposal is not considered to cause significant visual harm to the character of the area when considered in isolation and cumulatively with existing development in the locality. For the above reasons, it is considered that the proposed development would recognise the intrinsic character

and beauty of the countryside in accordance with Policy LP10 part b.

LP27.c) The location and scale of sites does not dominate the nearest settled community, when the proposal is considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites

- 7.54 LP27, criterion c) is based on the National Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2024) paragraphs 14 and 26. Paragraph 26 states that: “Local planning authorities should ensure that sites in rural areas respect the scale of, and do not dominate the nearest settled community, and avoid placing an undue pressure on the local infrastructure.” No definition is provided of what should be considered the ‘nearest settled community’. However, the nearest settled community in this context is considered to be the village of Ramsey Heights rather than the sporadic dwellings nearby.
- 7.55 Gypsy and Traveller sites on Harpers Drove amounts to 4 lawful pitches with a further lawful 6 pitches on Middle Drove.
- 7.56 There is a further 7 in total proposed on Middle Drove by other planning applications which are due for consideration on the same 16 March 2026 DMC meeting agenda. If all applications currently under consideration at this DMC meeting were granted, the total amount of pitches would be 12 on Middle Drove and 5 of Harpers Drove.
- 7.57 It should be noted that Ramsey Heights is considered a Small Settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan. Ramsey Heights has no services or facilities available. A convenience store, public house and Primary School exists approximately 2.1 miles north of the site at Ramsey St Mary's (also a Small Settlement) and a pedestrian footpath links these settlements. The site is located approximately 3 miles from the main services and facilities that the nearest large settlement, Ramsey (Market Town – Ramsey Spatial Planning Area Policy LP7) has to offer. This includes primary and secondary education, doctor's surgery, library and other amenities. It is noted that Ramsey Town is not connected to Ramsey Heights by continual footpath but a bus top exists at Ugg Mere Court Road and regular bus trips are available throughout the weekday to Ramsey.
- 7.58 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches. There has most likely also been an additional demand on local services and facilities. Officers however cannot comment further on the unauthorised Traveller pitches.
- 7.59 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of

existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.

- 7.60 Paragraph 7.41 of the Local Plan which states, “It is anticipated that new Gypsy and Traveller sites will be in the form of small family sized sites of up to four pitches although some larger sites that already exist, or new sites of up to eight pitches, may be appropriate depending upon local circumstances.” Overall, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.d) The proposed boundary treatment provides a good balance between minimising the development’s impact on surrounding countryside and its integration into the local community

- 7.61 Paragraph 7.42 of the Local Plan states that appropriate boundary treatments should be provided which facilitate integration with the local community rather than completely enclose the site forcing a sense of isolation. As discussed under part b above, The site is generally screened by hedging. A condition should be recommended to retain and maintain the hedging.

LP27.e) There will not be a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or the effective operation of adjoining uses

- 7.62 Given the context and nature of the Drovers, nearby properties have experienced an increase in vehicular movements along the Drove as a result of the accumulation of authorised and unauthorised Traveller pitches along the drove. There has therefore been a degree of impact upon adjoining uses through noise and disturbance which conflicts with criterion e and Policy LP14 of the Local Plan.

LP27.f) The site provides a high level of residential amenity for the proposed residents, for example in relation to protection from noise and provision of play facilities

- 7.63 Gypsy and Traveller sites tend to be self-sufficient sites. Children would play within the relatively large pitch areas without the need to be located near to formal recreation facilities. Given the countryside location of the site, it is considered that the proposal would result in a high standard of residential amenity for future occupiers.

LP27.g) The health and safety of occupants is not put at risk, including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality, contamination or unacceptable flood risk

- 7.64 Concerns raised by the neighbouring property about the track is noted. The land is located off Harpers Drove which is a private road with a junction onto the C110 Ugg Mere Court Road. As outlined above, there is existing development located on the Drovers. The access is therefore considered safe, in highway safety terms.
- 7.65 In regard to contamination, Environmental Health have advised that the superficial geology at this application site is Peat, which can produce significant quantities of hazardous ground gases, namely methane and carbon dioxide. Whilst the caravans will not be at risk of ground gasses, the day room will unless measures are implemented to prevent gas from entering the building. A condition requiring either a ground gas risk assessment which will be used to determine whether or not the proposed day room building requires protection against the ingress of gas, or the installation of a methane gas resistant membrane to the day room foundations. Even though this application is retrospective, it is considered that this condition should be imposed on any consent.
- 7.66 The site is recognised as lying within Flood Zone 3a in accordance with the EA's latest planning flood mapping and the Council's 2017 level 1 SFRA and therefore at a high probability of flooding. The 2017 SFRA does not take into account the existing defences under control by the Middle Level Commissioners Internal Drainage board (IDB).
- 7.67 National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 170-182 of the NPPF 2024).
- 7.68 The applicant has submitted an FRA in which it concurs that the applications site is within Flood Zone 3 but considers the residual risk to be low due to the existing maintenance of current flood defences by the IDB.
- 7.69 This application is supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA).
- 7.70 The EA considers that the main source of flood risk at the location is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the IDB and therefore raises no objection. However, the EA does remind the LPA of their requirement to determine whether the application passes the sequential test based on the flood vulnerability of the development and SFRA maps. They go on to advise that caravans are classed as 'highly vulnerable' development for the purposes of

flood risk whereby the NPPF and associated PPG advise that highly vulnerable development in high probability flood risk areas should not be permitted.

- 7.71 Where development is proposed in areas of high or moderate probability of flooding (FZ3 and FZ2 respectively), the proposal must be sequentially assessed to identify through evidence whether there are other site(s) in lower areas of flood risk reasonably available to accommodate the proposal. It is for local planning authorities, taking advice from the Environment Agency as appropriate, to consider the extent to which Sequential Test considerations have been satisfied, taking into account the particular circumstances in any given case. The developer should justify with evidence to the local planning authority what area of search has been used when making the application, in accordance with Policy LP5.
- 7.72 Members should note that the Council recently considered and resolved to approve permanent gypsy and traveller pitches on Legacy Park Somersham under application reference 25/00973/S73. Legacy Park also sits within Flood Zone 3. Members debated the item in September last year and resolved to grant permanent permission. That application contained a sequential test. For completeness, the assessment of that sequential test will be set out in the subsequent paragraphs.
- 7.73 The applicant and the Council agreed that that the appropriate geographical area for the test is the Huntingdonshire District Council area. This satisfied Stage A (Geographical Area over which the Test is to be applied) of the sequential test.
- 7.74 Stage B of the sequential test is for the applicant to identify reasonably available sites. The applicant sets out that the following:
- Social Rented Site: only social rented site in Huntingdonshire is the former local authority site at St Neots. The site is fully occupied with a waiting list for pitches.
 - Local Plan Allocations: There are no allocations for Gypsy and Traveller residential use in the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
 - Sites with Permanent Planning Permission for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Development: None of the sites approved over the last 5 years can be considered as reasonably available for the occupants of the pitches at Legacy Park (with the possible exception of the two pitches at Straight Drove, Farcet, but that is because at the time of writing we have been unable to confirm whether the site is occupied. Given the nature of the site, consider it highly unlikely it would be available). Whilst this is unknown, given that this site is only for 2 pitches, it wouldn't be suitable to accommodate the required need on this application. Most, if not all the sites that have been approved are small, family owned sites, or extensions to such sites. Such sites tend to be strongly

favoured by gypsy's and travellers, and in most cases, once they have secured permissions, such families tend to hold onto them for their children and grand-children, which means that they are rarely available for sale. While the Council has been willing to approve appropriate Zone 1 sites, because of the challenges for gypsy's and travellers in acquiring suitable land, such sites are not coming forward at a fast enough rate to keep up with the need for accommodation. Secondly, there are a significant number of sites with planning applications undetermined or granted for temporary periods in Flood Risk Zone 3, notably at Ramsey Heights. Reflecting land prices and other factors there is a strong tendency for the sites which have been acquired by Gypsies in recent years to be in Flood Risk Zone 3.

- Land and Sites for Sale: Generally, estate and land agents do not deal much in Traveller sites.. Where land is sold, it tends to be within the community, although Travellers do monitor land available for auction with a view to acquiring suitable sites. 3.12 The only source of information about Traveller sites available for sale that we are aware of is the Dragon Driving website, which is used almost exclusively by Travellers. Excluding sites, which were described as sold, on 7 April 2025 the Equestrian Property, Land and Buildings section of the website contained four adverts for land or pitches with planning permission, one for a house with stables, 12 for land either without planning permission or with applications undetermined, and five for bungalows with land. Adverts were for properties all over the country. None was in Huntingdonshire.
- Applicant's personal experience: Mr Adams is a Romany Gypsy business man with strong local connections. Like many Gypsies and Travellers, he found it very difficult to acquire land where he and his family could live in a way that reflects their cultural preferences. At one stage he, his family and his parents lived at Crystal Lakes caravan park site at Fenstanton, but the site was badly flooded. (This was fluvial flooding along the Great Ouse, rather than flooding of the protected Fens.) They then lived on an industrial site at Wyton near Huntingdon, occupying a caravan and an industrial unit adapted for domestic use. Because of being unable to acquire a suitable site they then lived in a house near Huntingdon, although Mr Adams often slept in a caravan in the drive because of his intolerance of housing. While occupying the house he was actively looking to acquire an appropriate site with the potential for Gypsy and Traveller residential use. Mr Adams eventually purchased the land at Legacy Park in 2006. Drawn from his own experience, Mr Adams makes two points on why it is difficult for Gypsies and travellers to acquire land in Huntingdonshire. Most of the land that comes to the market is large scale agricultural land, or medium sized sites with potential for housing. Neither are affordable for gypsy's and travellers. Secondly, if people do try to buy land, and there is any suggestion the purchase is by gypsies and travellers, the sale is often withdrawn.

- 7.75 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.76 Stages C, D and E of the sequential test is for the Applicant to obtain flood risk information for all sites, apply the Sequential Test, and Conclusion.
- 7.77 The applicant set out the following argument that ‘Based on consideration of various potential sources of sites: social rented sites; local plan allocations; sites with permanent planning position; and information on land and sites for sale, together with Mr Adams’ personal experience of trying to buy land, we have been unable to identify any reasonably available sites within Huntingdonshire, which offer realistic alternative accommodation for the occupants of the application site, let alone any sites at lower risk of flooding than Legacy Park. This means the sequential test is passed.’
- 7.78 The Council has consulted on a Preferred Options Draft Local Plan to 2046. Comments received from stakeholders and statutory consultees will be processed, and reviewed, and further technical evidence will be gathered to inform the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The aim is to consult on that in summer 2026.
- 7.79 No gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process, and therefore none have been put forward as draft allocations in the new Local Plan.
- 7.80 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.81 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting it’s need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.82 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the Council should consider regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporary authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits.
- 7.83 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher

number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.

- 7.84 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers.
- 7.85 For those reasons, the Council agreed that the sequential test for 25/00973/S73 was passed, and the applications were granted permanent permission for gypsy and traveller pitches in Flood Zone 3.
- 7.86 Officers are of the view that this current application can rely upon that previously passed sequential test as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by Members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.87 The Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD states (page 33) that the passing of the sequential test 'does not mean that the proposed development is acceptable in terms of flood risk as it may be necessary to undertake the Exception Test and a site specific flood risk assessment.'
- 7.88 The applicant has provided an site specific flood risk assessment. The Exception Test will also be discussed below.
- 7.89 The Environment Agency has commented on the nearby applications in respect of the recent new 5 year temporary consents on One Acre Stables and Two Acre Stables, and supported the inclusion of various flood resilience measures. These can be implemented via a planning condition. Likewise, an evacuation plan condition is also recommended.
- 7.90 In respect of the wider community benefits, permitting the development would address the immediate housing needs of the applicant and their family thereby preventing a potential roadside existence for them.
- 7.91 The GTAA also states that much of the need is arising from sites on Middle Drove and recommends the regularising of sites that are not permanent authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place. Permitting the development would also help towards addressing the unmet need within the District in response to the GTAA.
- 7.92 The site is located within an Internal Drainage Board catchment and through the operation and maintenance of the pumping

stations and the channel system the Board seek to maintain a general standard capable to providing flood protection to agricultural land and developed areas of 1 in 20 and 1 in 100 years respectively.

7.93 Officers have considered this point in detail, especially in light of the PPG which sets out that initially, the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as the long-term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain.

7.94 However, Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. For all of these reasons, Officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.

7.95 It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.

LP27.h) There is adequate space for operational needs, including the parking and turning of vehicles

7.96 It is considered that the proposed plans demonstrate there is adequate space for vehicles to park, and enter and leave the site in a forward gear and therefore the proposal is acceptable against this criterion.

LP27.i) There are appropriate management arrangements in place, where the site may have multiple owners or tenants or be used for transit purposes

7.97 Given the context and the separation from other sites, a management condition is not considered necessary.

LP27.j) The site can be safely and adequately serviced by infrastructure

7.98 The adjoining site is served by mains water and mains electricity, and as such it is considered feasible for the proposed development to also be served by these utilities. Small package sewage treatment plants are the preferred means of waste disposal when connection to mains drainage is not possible or impractical.

Biodiversity

7.99 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on

biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity. A proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type, and location of development.

- 7.100 The application is not accompanied by an ecological assessment. Given that the site's planning history, the proposal is acceptable in terms of biodiversity. Ecological enhancements could be secured by a planning condition. The application is not subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain as it predates the legislation. Therefore, subject to a condition for ecological enhancements, it is considered that in this case the proposal would meet the aims of Policy LP30 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

Bins

- 7.101 Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A completed signed and date Unilateral Undertaking is being sought. On this basis the proposal would provide a satisfactory contribution to meet the tests within the CIL Regulations. The proposal would accord with Policy LP4 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

Other Matters

Intentional unauthorised development

- 7.102 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.

Conclusion

- 7.103 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 7.104 Article 1 of the First Protocol (Human Rights Act) sets out that a person is entitled to the peaceful enjoyment of his possessions and that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest. Article 8 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life and his home. Refusing would represent an interference with the home and family life of the proposed occupiers, such that both Articles would be engaged. There is also a positive obligation imposed by Article 8 to facilitate the gypsy way of life.
- 7.105 Occupants of gypsy and traveller pitches are an ethnic minority and thus have the protected characteristic of race under s149(7) of the Equality Act 2010. The proposal would meet the needs of those persons with a relevant protected characteristic, by reason of race, and so, as required by section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010, the public sector equality duty is applicable.
- 7.106 There is therefore a need to have due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations.
- 7.107 Officers are of the view that this application can rely upon the previously passed sequential test for permission 25/00973/S73 as the development proposal is for the same type of development, and the circumstances (such as the lack of local plan allocations has not changed and the site-specific is similar in nature) have not significantly changed. That decision was made by members in September 2025 and the decision is therefore very recent.
- 7.108 Officers have enough confidence that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. It is therefore considered that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed.
- 7.109 The Council has recently published an updated Gypsy and Traveller(GTAA), Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.110 This concludes that there is an overall minimum need for 127 additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches across Huntingdonshire District over the period 2023/24 to 2045/46. Of this need, 36 are needed in the first five years, 69 over the period 2028/29 to 2041/42 and 22 over the period 2042/43 to 2045/46. Due to this, the Council is not currently meeting its need in terms of gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 7.111 Within the conclusion section of the report, it advises that in order to meet its need for pitches, the council should consider

regularising sites that are not permanently authorised or temporarily authorised in flood zone 3 areas where flood mitigation is in place, alongside other approaches. It is considered that that there is flood mitigation possible which aligns with the above. Members should note that each site should be assessed on its own merits, and each application should be assessed on its own merits.

- 7.112 The conclusion section of the report also goes onto state that notwithstanding evidence in this GTAA on need, additional need may arise over the plan period, for instance from a higher number of households moving into Huntingdonshire than anticipated. It is therefore recommended that the Local Plan references the need in the GTAA as a minimum need which is likely to be met but sets out policies to inform future planning applications for private sites.
- 7.113 It is considered that there is a lack of alternative accommodation for gypsies and travellers. Approval of this pitch would go towards the Council meeting some of this unmet need.
- 7.114 The establishment of additional pitches on the site, without planning permission amounts to intentional unauthorised development, as such the 2015 ministerial statement (Green Belt and Intentional Unauthorised Development 2015) is relevant. This weighs negatively against the application. By way of mitigation, the occupants have had limited options in respect of accommodation and has sought to regularise the situation through a planning application. Officers also acknowledge that there has been a significant delay in determining the application, which has added to the uncertainty the applicant faced.
- 7.115 The noise and disturbance from increased vehicle activity is afforded negative weight in the balance.
- 7.116 Having regard to the number of lawful pitches in combination with the proposed number of Traveller pitches, against the number of existing permanent dwellings within the built up area of Ramsey Heights, and the impact this application proposal (and the cumulative impact of the lawful and proposed traveller pitches along Middle Drove and Harpers Drove) would have on the settled community, it is considered that it would not result in dominance on the settled community of Ramsey Heights and would not place an undue pressure on the local infrastructure. However, future applications would be assessed on their own merits, and whether a threshold for the area has been met.
- 7.117 5 year temporary consents have been granted along Middle Drove in the past. Members should note that the immediate vicinity also benefits from planning permissions for permanent gypsy and traveller pitches, and those permissions only had a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons

other than gypsies and travellers. The permissions were therefore not granted on a personal basis. This means that these permitted pitches can be occupied anybody who meets the definition of a gypsy/traveller as defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) December 2024. The reasoning for temporary consents was due to the nature of the sites being in Flood Zone 3 and to await the publishing of the GTAA and also the conclusion of the Call for Sites to see if any alternative sites could come forward in areas at lower risk of flooding. The Council has now concluded these matters. The publication of the GTAA has identified an unmet need and no draft allocations for gypsy and traveller sites have been put forward in the draft Local Plan. Therefore, officer deem the justification for temporary consents to has fallen away. This means there no strong planning reasons to restrict the planning permission to a temporary nature or on the basis of a personal consent.

7.118 The proposal is in overall accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused. Any identified conflict or harm does not warrant a refusal of the application when weighed against the unmet gypsy and traveller need within the District. Taken all of that in account, it is considered that the application should benefit from permanent planning permission with a condition imposed stating the site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- Approved plans
- Gypsy and traveller occupancy
- Maximum number of pitches/caravans
- Site development scheme (including landscaping, SuDS etc)
- Flood mitigation measures
- Flood evacuation plan
- Hazardous ground gases

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson Senior Development Management Officer** – lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

From: developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Sent: 23 July 2021 14:16
To: DevelopmentControl
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 21/01475/FUL

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 23/07/2021 2:15 PM from [REDACTED].

Application Summary

Address: Land West Of Kelvedon Cottage Harpers Drove Ramsey Heights

Proposal: Change of use of land to one Gypsy / Traveller pitch with day room, two residential static caravans and a touring caravan (temporary or permanent), establishment of additional access and use of existing hardstanding for residential occupation by the applicants and their family.

Case Officer: [REDACTED]

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]@ramseytowncouncil.org.uk

Address: [REDACTED]

Comments Details

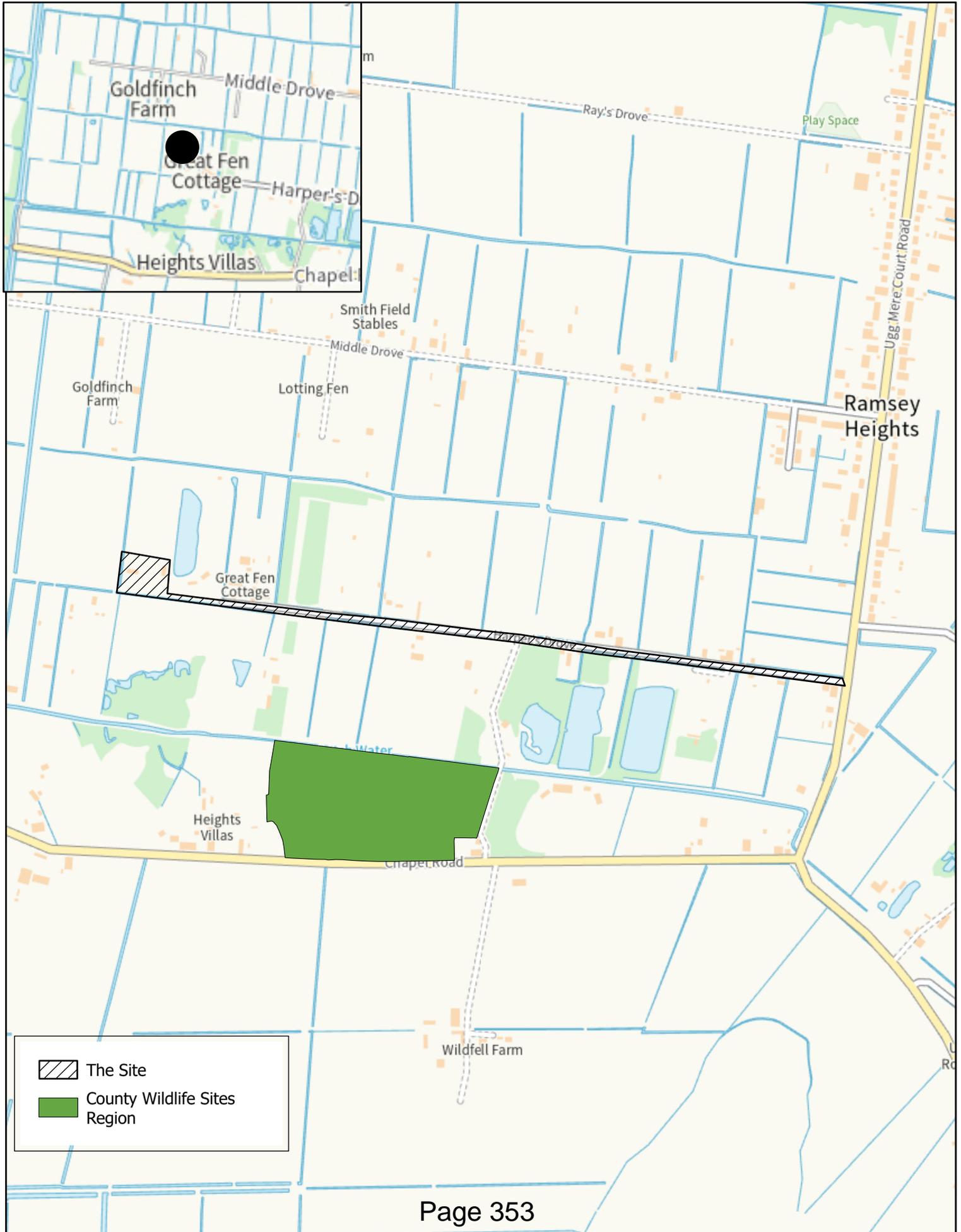
Commenter Type: Town or Parish Council

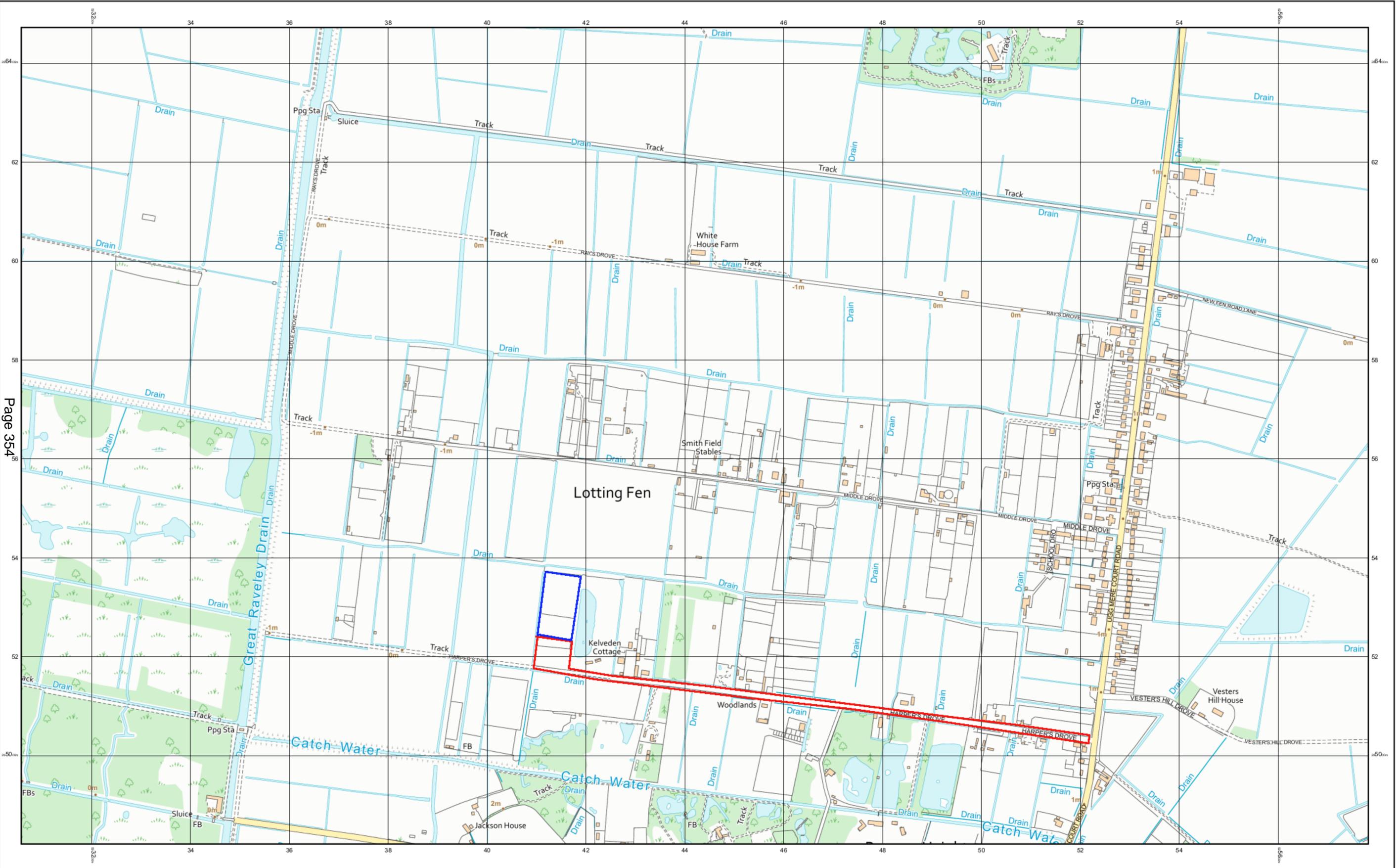
Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: Unanimously refused.
Development would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the landscape. It would also increase traffic and access issues resulting in concern over highway safety. The scale of the site dominates the existing settled community. Nor is the site adequately serviced by infrastructure and would contribute to a significant flood risk being situated in Flood Zone 3.

Kind regards





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Planning Appeal Decisions Since February 2026 Committee

Ref No	Appellant	Parish	Proposal	Site	Original Decision	Delegated or DMC	Appeal Determination	Costs
24/007 47/ FUL	Mr Raju Goraniya	Warboys	Installation of a ramp to the front entrance and internal alterations to create retail/convenience store (Use Class E) at ground floor and one residential unit (Use Class C3) at first floor	66 High Street Warboys Huntingdon PE28 2TA	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	Costs Refused
24/007 46/ LBC	Mr Raju Goraniya	Warboys	Installation of a ramp, bricking up two windows, removal of two internal walls and installation of stud walls, and associated alterations.	66 High Street Warboys Huntingdon PE28 2TA	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	Costs Refused
25/003 82/ HHFU L	Mr John Souter	Hamerton & Steeple Gidding	Extension to rear of property	Sycamore Cottage Leighton Road Hamerton Huntingdon PE28 5QT	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	N/a
25/004 74/ LBC	Mr John Souter	Hamerton & Steeple Gidding	Extension to rear property	Sycamore Cottage Leighton Road Hamerton Huntingdon PE28 5QT	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	N/a

24/022 28/ FUL	HW Unique Developme nts Ltd	St Neots	Erection of two- bedroom barn-style property & associated works	Land At 516 Great North Road Eaton Ford	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	N/a
25/009 50/ FUL	Mr And Mrs S Robinson	Warboys	Retrospective planning for a new 4 bed dwelling, following approval of planning Ref 21/01655/FUL Conversion of a disused agricultural building to form 1No. Dwelling	Agricultural Buildings South East of Rose Cottage Puddock Road Warboys	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	N/a
25/005 73/ PIP	Harriet Developme nts Ltd	Old Weston	Permission in principle for residential development for up to 9 dwellings	Land South of Agricultural Buildings Manor Farm Molesworth Road Old Weston	Non- Determination	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	