

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 14th April 2025

Case No: 23/01002/OUT

Proposal: Proposed development of up to affordable 30 dwellings to include public open space, landscaping, access and associated works. Approval sought for Access to Overcote Lane only at this stage with Layout, Landscaping, Scale and Appearance as reserved matters.

Location: Land North Of Lodel Farm, Overcote Lane, Needingworth

Applicant: Mr Mark Hudson

Grid Ref: 534680 271818

Date of Registration: 1st June 2023

Parish: HOLYWELL-CUM-NEEDINGWORTH

RECOMMENDATION – APPROVE

Application 23/01002/OUT was deferred by Members from Development Management Committee on 17th March 2025 to enable HDC's Environmental Health Officer to attend and provide clarification to Members on odour related matters.

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following the deferral by Members, HDC's Environmental Health Officer will be attendance at the April 2025 Development Management Committee to provide clarification and answer Members questions on odour related matters.
- 1.2 There have been no further representations received and no additional information submitted by the applicant following the deferral.
- 1.3 The Officer Recommendation remains as per Section 8 of the March 2025 Development Management Committee report, the March 2025 Late Representations Summary and Officers verbal update to Members which is set out below for ease of reference:

2. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 obligation relating to affordable housing, provision of open space and wheeled bins, and subject to conditions to include those listed below:

- Approval of Reserved Matters Time Limit and Time limit following last Reserved Matters
- Timing of permission and submission of Reserved Matters
- Approved Plans (site location and access)
- Reserved matters app accords with the broad layout principles established on Site Layout Plan dwg 22/09/201/01B
- Site levels and finished floor levels detailed as part of any reserved matters for layout
- Submission of updated Odour Assessment as part of any reserved matters for layout
- Submission of Noise Assessment to inform a Noise Mitigation Scheme as part of any reserved matters for layout
- Submission of Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment as part of any reserved matters for layout or landscaping
- External lighting scheme be provided as part of any application for reserved matters.
- Recommendations of Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to be adhered to and a net gain in biodiversity to be demonstrated as part of any reserved matters application
- Surface water drainage scheme
- Construction drainage
- Surface water drainage system sign off
- Submission of Foul Water drainage strategy, including identifying a sustainable point of connection to public foul water network
- Construction Environmental Management Plan to include details of lighting
- Construction and delivery times
- Fire Hydrants
- Internal road and associated infrastructure layout of the site
- Access gradient, width, 10m radius kerbs, metalled surface 20m, construction etc
- Temporary facilities for construction clear of highway
- Visibility splays
- Off-site high improvement works
- Written scheme of investigation
- 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.

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CONTACT OFFICER:

Enquiries about this report to **Lucy Pateman Senior Development Management Officer** – Lucy.Pateman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 – OFFICER REPORT
FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE 17TH MARCH 2025

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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 application site is a 1.39-hectare broadly rectangular parcel of Grade 2 agricultural land which adjoins the eastern edge of the built-up area of Needingworth. Existing hedges punctuated with occasional mature trees line the northern site boundary (to Overcote Lane) and eastern boundary (a farm track outside the application site leading to Lodel Farm). Residential development lies beyond in both directions. To the east is a further field lacking in any meaningful physical demarcation from the application site, beyond which is the Overcote Farm intensive poultry rearing unit, some 120m east of the application site. Opposite this is a water treatment works. To the south is Lodel Farm, the applicant's correspondence address but not edged in blue on the submitted

site location plan and therefore declared to be in separate ownership to the application site.

- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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 and there are no statutory habitat sites in close proximity.

Proposal

- 1.4 This application seeks outline permission for the erection of up to 30 dwellings with all matters reserved except access.
- 1.5 Vehicular access to the site would via a new priority junction to be formed on Overcote Lane, approval for which is sought within the application.
- 1.6 Dwelling mix has not been prescribed at this stage, being deferred as a reserved matter. Matters of layout, scale, appearance and landscaping would all also be determined at reserved matters stage.
- 1.7 The proposal is for 100% of the dwellings to be affordable for either rent or shared ownership, with the applicant offering additional flexibility to incorporate First Homes if required. The application seeks to respond to a shortfall of affordable housing at the national and district-wide level.
- 1.8 Post-submission the applicant amended the maximum quantum of development from 35 dwellings to 30 dwellings. Following a full reconsultation (in addition to this, the Council has also issued a further site notice and press advert stating it is a departure), the application has been assessed on this revised basis.
- 1.9 This application has been accompanied by the following drawings and documents:
 - Proposed plans
 - Planning, Design & Access and Affordable Housing Statement
 - Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Drainage Strategy
 - Foul Sewerage and Utilities Assessment
 - Odour Impact Assessment
 - Transport Statement
 - Arboricultural Statement

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

- 1.10 With regard to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 the development does not meet the criteria to require a detailed screening opinion, as the application proposes less than 150 dwellings. It is therefore not anticipated that the project would have significant environmental effects and is therefore not considered to be EIA development.
- 1.11 Indicative plans relating to layout, open space, landscaping and parking have been submitted but, as these are submitted on an illustrative basis only and not in the form of parameter plans, these are not for formal determination.
- 1.12 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 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
- 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. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 18/02401/OUT - Outline: Up to 30 new residential units, including 12 affordable housing units. (Disposed of undetermined 18th May 2022)

5. CONSULTATIONS

Initial consultation, July 2023 (“up to 35 dwellings”)

- 5.1 Needingworth Parish Council – Objects on several grounds:
- outside built-up area
 - loss of agricultural land
 - significant recent development in the village renders any more contrary to Local Plan Policy LP9
 - access is poor, with Overcote Lane serving commercial development and with no footway in places
 - surface water run-off, and proximity to land that is subject to flooding
 - lack of sewerage capacity
 - odour issues from nearby poultry farm
 - primary school is already at capacity
- 5.2 HDC Housing Officer – Comments:
- supports provision of affordable housing as a general principle, subject to conforming with the Council’s planning policies. Notes potential constraints relating to odour nuisance.
- 5.3 HDC Urban Design Officer – Comments:
- flat blocks inappropriate in this rural, edge of village location
 - open space too fragmented on the illustrative site layout
 - illustrative site layout shows a poor relationship with the adjacent footpath
 - poor relationship with the southern site boundary trees shown on the illustrative site layout
 - recommends a reduction in the number of units in order to accommodate more usable open space within the centre of the development, increase rear garden depths and to reduce the number of blocks of flats.
- 5.4 CCC Archaeology – No objection subject to a written scheme of investigation condition.
- 5.5 Local Highway Authority – No objection subject to conditions in respect of access width, visibility splays, kerb radii, cross-over construction specification (etc)

Revised plans consultation, February 2024 (“up to 30 dwellings”)

- 5.6 Needingworth Parish Council – Continues to object on several grounds:

- outside built-up area
- loss of agricultural land
- local need for affordable housing already met by recent affordable developments in the village
- access is poor, with Overcote Lane serving commercial development and with no footway in places
- surface water run-off, and proximity to land that is liable to flooding

5.7 HDC Environmental Health Officer – Comments:

- notes that the sniff tests within the odour report were done when the development site was upwind of the odour sources
- some odour present at the site briefly during some upwind conditions but this was not found to be significant
- odour was assessed at locations downwind of the odour sources during the assessment and again these were not considered to cause a significant adverse impact
- consequently taking all aspects into account there is not sufficient evidence to object to the proposals
- recommends conditions relating to both acoustic and odour mitigation at reserved matters stage, as well as construction-related conditions

5.8 HDC Urban Design Officer – Comments:

- reduced development quantum and omission of apartments from the illustrative layout is supported
- consolidated location and quantum of open space on the illustrative site layout is supported
- recommends conditions that would inform scheme design at reserved matters stage

5.9 CCC Archaeology – No objection subject to a written scheme of investigation condition.

5.10 Environment Agency – No objection, noting that the site may be subject to some odour nuisance despite best achievable techniques being used by nearby permitted uses.

5.11 Lead Local Flood Authority – No objection subject to conditions regarding detailed surface water drainage design (etc)

5.12 Local Highway Authority – No objection subject to conditions in respect of access width, visibility splays, kerb radii, cross-over construction specification (etc)

5.13 Cambridgeshire County Council Policy Team:

Proximity to Needingworth Water Recycling Area: The proposed development site lies within the consultation area (CA) for the Needingworth Water Recycling Area (WRA) as identified under Policy 16 (Consultation Areas) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021). Policy 16

seeks to safeguard water recycling areas (also known as sewage treatment works) and is as set out above. In this instance the Environmental Health Officer has not raised any objection in relation to the odour assessment. Consequently, the MWPA is satisfied that the proposal complies with Policy 16 and has **no objection**.

Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Similar to the previous site, this site lies within a Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area which is safeguarded under Policy 5 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (July 2021). As before, should the Planning Authority be of the view that there is an overriding need for the development, the MWPA will be content that Policy 5 has been addressed, subject to the following informative being included in any permission:

“The site lies within a Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area, which indicates that there may be an underlying sand and gravel resource. In this instance, the Planning Authority considers that prior extraction is unlikely to be feasible and that there is an overriding need for the development. Prior extraction of the resource has, therefore, not been required in this instance. However, the applicant is encouraged to make best use of any sand and gravel that may be incidentally extracted as part of the development.”

6. REPRESENTATIONS

Initial consultation, July 2023 (“up to 35 dwellings”)

6.1 38 letters of objection received from 31 addresses:

Principle of development

- Poor accessibility other than by car means the site is not sustainably located
- Outside the built-up area and extending into the countryside – so contrary to Local Plan LP9
- Not infill, but an extension to the village
- This is high grade farmland that should be retained as such – so contrary to Local Plan LP10
- Brownfield land should be developed in preference to greenfield site
- Lack of medical facilities in the village including sufficient primary care or dentistry
- No children’s nursery in the village and local schools are already at capacity
- Must travel to St Ives for all but the most basic shopping
- Local need for affordable housing already met by recent affordable developments in the village
- Development density is excessive and out-of-keeping

- Harm to landscape, character and appearance
- Recent appeal dismissal on land next to Sunrhyl (APP/H0520/W/22/3302802) sets a precedent
- Increased air pollution and additional CO2 emissions
- No community benefits offered

Access

- Overcote Lane is too narrow to accommodate further development
- No footway near the application site
- Overcote Lane provides vehicular access between High Street and homes at Ashton Close/The Furlongs/Harris Crescent, and is well trafficked
- Overcote Lane provides the sole vehicular access to commercial premises at a chicken processing plant, the Pike & Eel Hotel, yacht marina, other farms and the RSPB's lakes
- Site access would be near a bend
- Poor visibility at the junction of The Furlongs with Overcote Lane
- Speeding on Overcote Lane
- Cycling not as convenient/attractive as the Transport Statement suggests
- Rail services from Huntingdon are remote
- Bus service is poor
- Congestion on the wider road network
- Poor physical condition of local roads

Flooding, drainage and water resources

- Shows as floodplain on some insurance company records
- Increased risk of flooding
- Sewage treatment works lacks capacity
- Pollution of nearby ditches and watercourses
- Additional pressure on already stretched fresh water supplies

Amenity

- Close to the sewage treatment plant which often gives off unpleasant smells
- Odour report is unrepresentative
- Noise and disruption during construction
- Loss of privacy

Ecology

- Impact on the wildlife and bird sanctuary further to the east
- Loss of onsite wildlife habitat, the land in recent years being used as set-aside
- Existing onsite trees and hedges provide valuable habitats
- Potential future pressure to remove trees due to shading

- 6.2 15 One respondent raised concerns in respect of loss of their view, which is not a consideration that the Local Planning Authority can lawfully take into account. A further respondent cited an unspecified breach of the Town and Country Planning

Act 1968, which it is noted has almost entirely been replaced by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and associated Statutory Instruments. One respondent raised Green Belt matters, which are not relevant to this site as it does not lie within a designated Green Belt.

Revised plans consultation, February 2024 (“up to 30 dwellings”)

- 6.3 15 further letters of objection received from 11 addresses which, in addition to those matters summarised above, raise the following additional concerns

Principle of development

- Site is not large enough for 30 dwellings
- No local need for the development
- Lack of funding for rural services, such as young work
- Loss of peace and tranquillity
- Threat to viability of the nearby intensive poultry unit, which has a lawfully implemented planning permission to redevelopment the site and increase from 175,000 to 348,000 chickens
- The “agent of change” principle applies
- General Permitted Development Order requires a 400m separation distance between housing and new Class A large livestock buildings; in this instance the separation is 120m
- Concerns raised by consultees pursuant to 18/02401/OUT remain unresolved in respect of highways, dust, noise and odour

Access

- Insufficient onsite car parking

Flood risk and drainage

- Submitted reports are inadequate

Amenity

- Harmful to existing residents’ mental health
- Reported adverse health impacts of living too close to a poultry farm
- Living conditions for future site residents would be unacceptable, resulting in a form of discrimination through housing inequality

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
 - Flood Risk, Surface Water and Foul Drainage

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 five-

year housing land requirement including a 5% buffer is 5,501 homes. The current 5YHLS is 4,430 homes equivalent to 4.03 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.

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

- 7.9 The application seeks outline planning permission for 30 dwellings (100% affordable dwellings) on a site within Needingworth.
- 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 LP9 identifies Needingworth as a Small Settlement, one of many settlements across Huntingdonshire which have limited or no available services and facilities. Small Settlements are less sustainable than those in the Spatial Planning Areas or the Key Service Centres, and inherently involve a greater need to travel on a regular basis to access services and facilities elsewhere. Consequently, the Local Plan does not make any development allocations in the Small Settlements, instead allowing only for a limited amount of sustainable development in order to contribute to the settlements' social and economic sustainability.
- 7.14 Policy LP9 states:

'Development Proposals within the Built-up Area

A proposal that is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to the:

- a. level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement;*
- b. opportunities for users of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling and public transport;*
- c. effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.*

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 LP9 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 LP9 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 LP9 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 or on land well-related to the built-up area.
- 7.17 The supporting text to Local Plan Policy LP7 provides extensive criteria-based guidance on the assessment of whether land falls within or outside the built-up area, specifically excluding:
- “Farmyards and associated agricultural buildings which extend into the countryside or primarily relate to the countryside in their use, form, character or connectivity.”
- 7.18 Consequently, neither Lodel Farm itself to the south, nor the intensive poultry unit to the east, fall within the built-up area. Taking this into account, the site’s relationship with the built-up area is limited to the development to the north (fronting Overcote Lane, extending further north to St John’s Close, Beldams etc) and the main body of the village to the west.
- 7.19 It is acknowledged that the settlement edge on the eastern boundary is well-defined by a substantial row of mature trees and associated hedgerow running alongside the track access to Lodel Farm. By contrast, the eastern site boundary is largely undefined and accordingly, in the context of adjoining fields and agricultural buildings, the application site from this point of view is perceived to be part of the wider surrounding countryside. However, the northern boundary of the site is defined by Overcote Lane where there a row of properties spanning the width of the application site. The front of these properties which are open in nature at the front with driveways and gardens. The application site does not extend beyond the last property in the row on Overcote Lane, nor does it extend beyond Lodel Farm. It is considered that there is an argument heading west along Overcote Lane that the site may appear to be visually well related to the built up given the properties to the north of the site and the properties to the west of the site. But it is also acknowledged from the other direction, the site appears more visually part of the Countryside. It is considered that the site does join the existing built-up area, as it is also physically and functionally related to the built-up area. For these reasons, the site is considered to be well-related to the built-up area.
- 7.20 Given the above commentary about how the site may appear more visually part of the countryside, policy LP10 is considered to be relevant.

- 7.21 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.
- 7.22 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.
- 7.23 With regard to Policy LP10 part (a) the application site comprises an undeveloped arable field which is classified as Grade 2 agricultural land, nationally considered as amongst the best and most versatile agricultural land.
- 7.24 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. While the site is relatively small in relation to the extent of the district’s most versatile land, and the development would not prevent the farming of the wider agricultural field. the irreversible loss of agricultural land which can be used for food or crop production would conflict with Policy LP10 part (a)(i).
- 7.25 In terms of Policy LP10 part (b), following revisions to reduce the maximum quantum of development the proposal is for a form of development which illustratively retains and enhances features of the site’s character through large retention of boundary trees and

hedgerows, the provision of and appropriate quantum of onsite open space, and new planting to enhance biodiversity.

- 7.26 Whilst layout is not for considered under the remit of this application, nonetheless the applicant's illustrative layout plan shows one potential way in which 30 dwellings could be accommodated on the site. The Council's Urban Design Officer is content that, in principle, a scheme of 30 dwellings could be designed in a manner that accords with the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD 2017.
- 7.27 In respect of the wider visual impact of residential development in this location, respondents' comments are noted in respect of the high leisure and amenity value placed on the countryside link between the village and the River Great Ouse to the east. Whilst pockets of tree planting, modern agricultural buildings and Overcote Lane's high hedgerows limit visibility of the application site in some longer views, development of the site would nonetheless inherently affect the intrinsic character of the adjoining countryside. Notwithstanding the potential for new landscape screening on the eastern boundary, Needingworth's countryside setting of arable fields wrapping around its well-defined eastern perimeter would be partially eroded. To this extent the proposed development would have some conflict with Policy LP10 part (b).
- 7.28 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 would remain controlled at reserved matters stage, such that in principle compliance with Policy LP10 part (c) would appear possible.
- 7.29 As outlined above, Needingworth is a small settlement. Smaller settlements are, by their nature, considered less sustainable than those locations identified higher up the settlement hierarchy under Policy LP2.
- 7.30 The site lies approximately 3.7km from the nearest Town Centre, at St Ives. The closest bus stop is at the junction of High Street and Overcote Lane (approximately half a kilometre away) where the 301 bus service provides a sporadically-timed schedule of 7 buses each way weekdays, once on Saturdays and with no Sunday service. At times the gap between weekday buses is 4.5 hours. The shared footway/cycleway alongside the heavily-trafficked A1123 between Needingworth and St Ives is unlit and fails to meet the width required for a cycle to pass a pedestrian or an opposing cycle as indicated in Local Transport Note 1/20.
- 7.31 Needingworth itself has a convenience store and Post Office, pre-schools, a primary school, public houses, places of worship, and a village hall. The closest secondary school, medical centre,

dentist and pharmacy are all at St Ives. The closest railway station (Huntingdon) by bus requires a change at St Ives and is approximately 1 hour 15 minutes by public transport.

7.32 NPPF Para 84 states: Planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside.

7.33 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.

7.34 It is considered that the development would have access to services and facilities within Needingworth, and also the means to access larger settlements such as the Market Towns of St Ives and 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 an over-reliance on the private motor vehicle.

7.35 Given that the proposed development is for 100% affordable housing, 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."

- 7.36 Whilst the application meets requirement (a), it fails to evidence the local need requirement at (b). Indeed, to the contrary, the applicant's supporting information is clear that the scheme seeks to address a much wider district-wide and national need. This approach is not supported by Policy LP28. LP28 (c) is not engaged in this instance. With regard to LP28 (d), the quantum of recent residential development at Needingworth is to be noted, especially as it includes a significant number of affordable homes:
- 17/01687/OUT – 120 dwellings, including 48 affordable
 - 18/01073/OUT – 45 dwellings, all affordable
 - 17/01077/FUL – 14 dwellings, all affordable
- 7.37 Regard has been had to the level of recent residential growth at Needingworth and how it has demonstrably made a significant contribution to meeting local housing need.
- 7.38 But regard is also given to the fact that there is a significant need for affordable housing at a district level and this development proposes 30 additional affordable dwellings towards that unmet need.
- 7.39 It is determined that the site is considered to be sustainable for the amount of development proposed.

Highway Safety and accessibility

- 7.40 Means of access is for consideration at this time and accordingly the applicant has submitted a Transport Statement which includes the general arrangement design of a proposed new priority junction on Overcote Lane as well as traffic modelling data.
- 7.41 The Local Highway Authority has no objection to the proposed development, a view which is not shared by the Parish Council or a number of objecting neighbours. In assessing network capacity, the Local Highway Authority has advised that, as the development is less than 50 homes, it is deemed not to have a significant impact on the surrounding network. Notwithstanding this general assumption, having assessed the applicant's Transport Statement the Local Highway Authority considers that the likely number of movements associated with the development, and the Transport Assessment's findings, are reasonable in relation to the number of dwellings proposed. The impact during peak time movements indicates an average of a single movement every two minutes, which the Local Highway Authority does not consider to be significant.
- 7.42 The Local Highway Authority is equally satisfied in principle with the design of the proposed new access. The applicant has proposed a 5.5m wide access with 6m kerb radii, which in the absence of tracking drawings to the contrary should be increased

to a 7.5m kerb radii. Were the Local Planning Authority minded to granted planning permission, this revised kerb radii could be secured by condition. The applicant has proposed adequate visibility splays in relation to the speeds of vehicles via the use of an 85th-percentile speed survey and noting objector's comments about excessive vehicle speeds they have observed on Overcote Lane, the Local Highway Authority is satisfied with the proposed junction location and design from a safety perspective.

- 7.43 Pedestrians are proposed to be catered for with a 2m wide footway alongside the road within the site, with the new footway extending westwards on the southern side of Overcote Lane to join the existing footway network. The Local Highway Authority has no objection to this type of provision, which would address the Parish Council's concerns at the lack of a southern footway and would also result in good connection to the main village.
- 7.44 Car parking provision, be it the total number of car parking spaces or their layout, is not for consideration at this stage but would be assessed and controlled at the reserved matters (layout) application stage.
- 7.45 In light of the above and subject to appropriate conditions, the proposed development is considered capable of according with Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan and section 9 of the NPPF (2024) in terms of highway safety, access and parking provision.

Residential Amenity

- 7.46 Local Plan Policy LP14 supports proposals only 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.
- 7.47 The submitted illustrative site layout plan demonstrates one way in which 30 dwellings could be accommodated on the site with causing any inherent significant harm to the living conditions of existing adjacent occupiers by way of overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impact. Exact details of site layout, separation distances, building design and so forth would be assessed and controlled at the reserved matters (appearance, layout, scale) application stage. It is noted that properties on the other side of Overcote Lane, and those on Ashton Close, front the application stage thereby inherently obscuring any new overlooking of their private rear amenity spaces. Only two houses present their side elevations to the application site and careful design at reserved matters stage would mitigate any lateral direct overlooking of their rear gardens.
- 7.48 In terms of the living conditions of future residents, the submitted illustrative site layout plan demonstrates that the site's size, shape

and constraints would not fetter the ability at reserved matters stage to secure appropriate design standards to mitigate internal overlooking, overshadowing or overbearing impacts.

7.49 The application site is in close proximity to an existing intensive poultry farm (approximately 120m away) and a sewage treatment works (approximately 150m away). Both are potentially significant sources of nuisance in terms of odour and noise, as raised by the Parish Council and several objectors.

7.50 NPPF (2024) paragraph 200 sets out the Government's "agent of change" policy:

"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed."

7.51 In assessing whether the agent of change principle is engaged in this instance it is necessary to understand whether the facility would have a "significant adverse effect" on the proposed new dwellings.

7.52 Advice from the Council's Environmental Health Officer is that the applicant's odour report indicated a slight adverse impact, in line with the Officer's previous findings. In some weather conditions/during some activities it is likely there would be some odour detectable at the proposed dwellings, probably more so than experienced by the receptors already present to the west.

7.53 The sniff tests within the odour report were all completed when the application site was upwind of the odour sources, with the frequency of downwind situations likely to be relatively low. The report indicated that there was some odour present at the site briefly during some upwind conditions but this was not found to be significant. The odour was assessed at locations downwind of the odour sources during the assessment and again these were not considered to cause a significant adverse impact.

7.54 The operator of the intensive poultry unit points out that the sniff tests were undertaken prior to the facility's redevelopment and enlargement. Given that planning permission is in place to almost double the number of chickens at the unit, the level of odour is likely to proportionately increase. The application site is almost due west of the intensive poultry unit, and south-west of the

sewage treatment works; prevailing winds from the south-west would generally blow odour away from the site. The Environmental Health Officer has advised that odour impact is more difficult to mitigate against than noise, but nonetheless distance (good buffers to the north and east of the site) and orientation of sensitive rooms/ amenity areas would assist. Exact details of site layout, separation distances, building orientation, floorplans and so forth would be assessed and controlled at the reserved matters (appearance, layout, scale) application stage.

- 7.55 An objector has referenced reported adverse health outcomes from living in close proximity to intensive poultry facilities. NPPF (2024) section 8 refers extensively to the need to promote healthy and safe communities, but does not in terms provide any guidance on this specific matter.
- 7.56 Taking all aspects into account the Environmental Health Officer considers there is insufficient evidence to object to the proposed development and whilst noting that some odour may be released during certain times of operation, the Environment Agency has not raised any objections either. On this basis, the agent of change principle is not considered to be engaged.
- 7.57 The proposed development site lies within the consultation area (CA) for the Needingworth Water Recycling Area (WRA) as identified under Policy 16 (Consultation Areas) of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021). Policy 16 seeks to safeguard water recycling areas (also known as sewage treatment works) and is as set out above. In this instance the Environmental Health Officer has not raised any objection in relation to the odour assessment. Consequently, the MWPA is satisfied that the proposal complies with Policy 16 and has no objection.
- 7.58 In light of the above assessment, subject to appropriate conditions the proposed development is considered capable of safeguarding the amenities of existing occupiers and providing acceptable living conditions for future occupiers in compliance with Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and paragraph 124 of the NPPF (2024).

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.59 Section 14 of the NPPF (2024) states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk. This is echoed at Local Plan Policy LP5 which only supports development where all forms of flood risk, including breaches of flood defences or other defence failures, have been addressed, including with reference to the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

- 7.60 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 objection 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, which the illustrative site layout makes provision for. This approach has both flow attenuation and water quality benefits and therefore subject to appropriate conditions, the proposed development is considered capable of complying with Policy LP5 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.
- 7.61 Concerns have also been raised in respect of the reliability and capacity of the Needingworth Sewage Treatment Works. No comments have been received from Anglian Water but given that the Water Industry Act 1991 entitles any domestic property to have foul and surface water from their property connected to the public sewerage system, details of a connection (which might or might not require upgrades to the Needingworth Sewage Treatment Works at the applicant's expense) could be secured by condition, were the Council minded to grant outline planning permission. Comments have been sought from Anglian Water and will be reported on the update report or at committee.
- 7.62 Local Plan Policy LP12 requires new dwellings to comply with the optional Building Regulation standard for water efficiency set out in Approved Document G of the Building Regulations, which could be secured by condition were the Council minded to grant planning permission.
- 7.63 Overall, it is considered that the risks of flooding have been fully assessed and it has been demonstrated that the development can be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Subject to conditions, the proposed development is considered to accord with Policies LP5, LP15 and LP16 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, Section 14 of the NPPF (2024), and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017.

Biodiversity

- 7.64 Local Plan Policy LP30 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated; to 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. This mirrors the ecological and environmental policies set out at Section 15 of the NPPF (2024).

- 7.65 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal submitted by the applicant comprised a desk study, Phase 1 habitat survey and an ecological scoping survey which assessed the potential of the site to support species of conservation concern or other species which could present a constraint to the development of the site. Describing the site in habitat terms as “an arable field, with improved grassland margins, species-poor hedges with trees and a ditch on two boundaries” the Appraisal considered the presence of great crested newts to be unlikely, with limited potential for nesting birds. No trees with potential for bat roosts were identified although the boundary hedgerows could be used by foraging / commuting bats and should be retained accordingly. Evidence of hedgehog was found during the survey, but no other mammals.
- 7.66 The Appraisal makes a number of recommendations to protect nesting birds and roosting / foraging bats during construction and after development, including a sensitive lighting design to minimise light spillage onto boundary features. A range of habitat enhancement measures - including the provision of bat and bird boxes on new buildings and retained trees, the creation of additional hedgerows and the use of native species - could deliver a biodiversity net gain of 20% for area-based habitats and 54% for hedgerows. This would exceed the minimum legislative requirements under the Environment Act 2021, had it applied to this application (which it does not).
- 7.67 In light of the above, and notwithstanding the habitat value placed on the application site by some objectors, subject to conditions the proposed development is considered to accord with Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and section 15 of the NPPF (2024).

Trees

- 7.68 The application is supported by an Arboricultural Assessment which highlights that no works to trees are necessary to facilitate the proposed development. Two sections of hedge alongside Overcote Lane would need to be removed to form the proposed new access and a separate pedestrian link, a total length of approximately 15m. Careful siting of these two access points would allow the existing trees along the northern boundary to be retained, whilst new onsite planting could be secured by condition and is considered to offer sufficient potential to mitigate the hedgerow loss.
- 7.69 Overall, it is not considered that the existing trees and hedgerows present a significant constraint to development and their predominant retention is supported. Any minor loss of hedgerow would be more than compensated through replacement planting as part of the development. Subject to conditions, the proposed development is considered capable of according with Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036.

Housing Mix and Accessible

- 7.70 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'. The illustrative masterplan demonstrates that the site is capable of accommodating a mix of dwelling types and sizes, which would be assessed and controlled at reserved matters stage. A condition would need be imposed to provide for accessible and adaptable dwellings.

Developer Contributions

CIL

- 7.71 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.
- 7.72 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 but nonetheless, objections in respect of a paucity of infrastructure in this Small Settlement are noted and would not be capable of mitigation through CIL funding from the proposed development. However, this is not a planning issue.

Affordable Housing

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

Open/Green Space

- 7.74 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.
- 7.75 When assessed against the adopted Developer Contributions SPD sufficient green space could 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 the Council minded to grant outline planning permission.

Residential Wheeled Bins

- 7.76 Each dwelling would require the provision of one black, blue and green wheeled bin. The current cost of such provision to the developer is £150 per dwelling and would be secured through S106 Agreement were the Council minded to grant outline planning permission.

Other matters

Carbon emissions

- 7.77 This matter has been raised by an objector. With reference to the judgement in the case of R (on the application of Finch of behalf of the Weald Action Group)(Appellant) v Surrey County Council and others (Respondents) there is not the same certainty of greenhouse gas emissions as featured in Finch from an affordable housing development which the Court found would be inherent to an oil extraction scheme. Conditions could secure provision of low-carbon heating solutions, renewable energy technologies and electric vehicle charging facilities, were the Council minded to grant outline planning permission. The urgent need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is balanced at a national level by Government policies including those in the NPPF (2024) in respect of the need for, and presumption in favour of, sustainable development.

Tranquillity:

- 7.78 This matter has been raised by an objector. Paragraph 198(b) of the NPPF (2024) requires planning decision-takers to identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason. Whilst the application site may have personal value to the objector for its perceived tranquillity, this needs to be balanced against its proximity to nearby housing, the lawful operations of the nearby intensive poultry unit and sewage treatment works, and the level of passing traffic on Overcote Lane identified by the Parish Council and other objectors. On balance the site is unlikely to meet the threshold of tranquillity that the Government intended for protection under NPPF paragraph 198(b).

Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Areas

- 7.79 This site lies within a Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area which is safeguarded under Policy 5 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (July 2021).
- 7.80 Cambridge County Council Policy Team have been consulted and advise that this policy seeks to prevent mineral resources of local and/or national importance being needlessly sterilised. Policy 5 sets out a number of exemptions (criteria (a) – (h)), for when Policy 5 is not applicable, none of which relevant in this case. It then goes on to set out that that development will only be permitted in certain circumstances (criteria (i) – (k)). The application documentation does not appear to make any reference to the safeguarded minerals, or Policy 5. Consequently criteria (i) – (k) have not been demonstrated, leaving criterion (l), which states that:
- “development will only be permitted where it has been demonstrated that there is an overriding need for the development (where prior extraction is not feasible) **”.
- 7.81 In this instance the MWPA considers that, although the extent of the resource within the site is unknown that complete prior extraction is, in this case, is unlikely to be feasible. Cambridge County Council Policy Team advised that should the Planning Authority be of the view that there is an overriding need for the development, the MWPA will be content that Policy 5 has been addressed, subject to an informative to make best use of any sand and gravel that has been incidentally extracted as part of the development. This will be weighed up in the planning balance below.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 7.82 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.
- 7.83 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.84 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.

7.85 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'.

7.86 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.'*

7.87 As outlined in the report, in light of my 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.

- 7.88 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.
- 7.89 The application seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved, except for access, for the erection of 100% affordable 30 dwellings in Needingworth.
- 7.90 It has been determined that overall the site is on land well-related to the built-up area but will visually appear as part of the countryside when looking east. Policies LP9 and LP10 are therefore relevant. 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.
- 7.91 It has been established that the proposed development 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.
- 7.92 It is considered that the application site could satisfactorily accommodate 30 dwellings and the general layout could be made acceptable for reserved matters applications.
- 7.93 The proposed access is considered to be safe and acceptable in highway terms. The level of traffic generated by the development would not result in adverse traffic impacts.
- 7.94 The site would operate as Flood Zone 1, and the site is therefore acceptable in principle in terms of flood risk and drainage.
- 7.95 The development of the site would result in Grade 2 agricultural land, nationally considered as amongst the best and most versatile agricultural land. While the site is relatively small in relation to the extent of the district's most versatile land, and the development would not prevent the farming of the wider agricultural field. the irreversible loss of agricultural land which can be used for food or crop production would conflict with Policy LP10 part (a)(i). Significant weight is attached to this.

- 7.96 Notwithstanding the potential for new landscape screening on the eastern boundary, Needingworth's countryside setting of arable fields wrapping around its well-defined eastern perimeter would be partially eroded. To this extent the proposed development would have some conflict with Policy LP10 part (b). Moderate weight is attached to this.
- 7.97 The proposal will result in the delivery of 30 homes towards the housing supply. Substantial weight is afforded to this.
- 7.98 The proposal will result in the delivery of 30 affordable homes towards a significant district affordable need. The development would also be 100% affordable. Significant weight is afforded to this.
- 7.99 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.
- 7.100 In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the proposal offers potential for the incorporation of energy efficiency measures (to be considered in detail at reserved matters stage) as well as the delivery of green space and a 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 within wider St Ives Spatial Planning Area; and is accessible by sustainable transport modes. Moderate weight is afforded to this.
- 7.101 Whilst some conflict/harm has been identified in relation to agricultural land and countryside impact, 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.
- 7.102 It has therefore been concluded that there is an overriding need for the development given the lack of a five-year housing land supply and the need for affordable housing in the district. This alongside the size of the site and the fact that the wider agricultural field remains undeveloped, it is considered that the aims of Policy 5 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (July 2021) has been met.
- 7.103 Having regard to all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that approval be granted for the outline planning with all matters reserved except access.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 obligation relating to affordable housing, provision of open space and wheeled bins, and subject to conditions to include those listed below:

- Approval of Reserved Matters Time Limit and Time limit following last Reserved Matters
- Timing of permission and submission of Reserved Matters
- Approved Plans (site location and access)
- Reserved matters app accords with the broad layout principles established on Site Layout Plan dwg 22/09/201/01B
- Site levels and finished floor levels detailed as part of any reserved matters for layout
- Submission of Noise Mitigation Scheme as part of any reserved matters for layout
- Submission of Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment as part of any reserved matters for layout or landscaping
- External lighting scheme be provided as part of any application for reserved matters.
- Recommendations of Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to be adhered to and a net gain in biodiversity to be demonstrated as part of any reserved matters application
- Surface water drainage scheme
- Construction drainage
- Surface water drainage system sign off
- Construction Environmental Management Plan to include details of lighting
- Construction and delivery times
- Fire Hydrants
- Internal road and associated infrastructure layout of the site
- Access gradient, width, 10m radius kerbs, metalled surface 20m, construction etc
- Temporary facilities for construction clear of highway
- Visibility splays
- Off-site high improvement works
- Written scheme of investigation
- 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.

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APPENDIX 2 – LATE
REPRESENTATIONS SUMMARY
FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE 17TH MARCH 2025

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 17TH MARCH 2025

LATE REPRESENTATIONS SUMMARY

3(a) 24/00938/FUL – Retrospective change of use of land from equestrian use (sui generis) to a mixed use of equestrian and gypsy/traveller residential use (sui generis) creating 1 pitch comprising 1 mobile home with associated parking and amenity – Tower Farm and Stables, Toseland Road, Yelling

A further neighbour representation (Mill View, Toseland Road) has been received. This representation raises concerns in relation to: the principle of development in a rural location; impact on the countryside; the inadequacy of the access; and the need for the proposed development. These concerns have been raised previously and have been addressed in the Officer report and do not change the recommendation.

3(b) 23/01002/OUT – Proposed development of up to affordable 30 dwellings to include public open space, landscaping, access and associated works. Approval sought for Access to Overcote Lane only at this stage with Layout, Landscaping, Scale and Appearance as reserved matters – Land North of Lodel Farm, Overcote Lane, Needingworth

Further comments were received on 5th March 2025 from Needingworth Parish Council in response to the consultation comments from Cambridgeshire County Council Minerals and Waste Team (dated 11th February 2025). The comments from Needingworth Parish Council do not raise any new/additional concerns which have not been previously addressed in the Officer report.

A further neighbour representation (18 Overcote Lane) has been received raising concerns in relation to the proximity of the site to the existing chicken farm and potential impacts on human health. These concerns have been raised previously and has been addressed in Paragraphs 7.49 to 7.58 of the Officer Report.

A further neighbour representation (Overcote Farm) has been received raising the following matters:

- The redevelopment of the farm is under construction and due to be operational from the end of May;
- Concern is that the operation of the farm will draw complaints from new residents which could see onerous restrictions placed on future operations;
- A further odour assessment should be undertaken to understand the full impact of the poultry farm on this site;
- An acoustic assessment should be undertaken to understand the noise impact on future occupants acknowledging the impact of the upgraded poultry farm.

The redevelopment of the farm was granted pursuant to planning permission 1101863FUL for '*Upgrade of poultry unit including demolition of 12 poultry sheds and erection of 6 replacement poultry sheds and 3 service buildings with associated equipment.*' Once constructed and operational, this would result in an intensification of the site in terms of the number of chickens. Following further discussions with HDC's Environmental Health Officer, it is considered that the newly constructed buildings would create a more controlled environment and a betterment in terms of odour dispersal. For instance, the Odour Impact Report for 1101863FUL Point 5 page 22 states: 'If the new [poultry] houses were to be constructed, the total odour emissions from Overcote Farm would increase slightly. However, as the emissions from the proposed houses would be from elevated point sources, with a significant initial vertical velocity, dispersion of odour would be greatly enhanced and this would mitigate against increased ground level concentrations in the surrounding area'.

It is also noted that intensive farming activities require an Environmental Permit from the Environment Agency (EA) which will include an odour management plan for the prevention or minimisation of odour.

It is considered that the relationship between the proposed residential development and Overcote Farm is acceptable in terms of odour impact, noting that the proposed dwellings would be in similar proximity to the farm as existing dwellings on Overcote Lane. However, the submitted Odour Assessment was carried out prior to the redevelopment of the farm which is under construction and therefore it is recommended that an updated Odour Assessment be undertaken and secured by way of condition to inform the layout of the proposed development.

Similarly, the relationship between the proposed residential development and Overcote Farm (over 120 metres) is acceptable in terms of potential noise impacts. Officers have already recommended a condition requiring a Noise Mitigation Scheme (paragraph 8 of the Officer Report), however it is recommended that the condition wording be more prescriptive to require that the Noise Mitigation Scheme is informed by a noise assessment to take account of the intensification at the intensive poultry facility.

For clarity, the following amended/additional conditions are added to paragraph 8 of the Officer Report:

- Submission of updated Odour Assessment as part of any reserved matters for layout
- Submission of Noise Assessment to inform a Noise Mitigation Scheme as part of any reserved matters for layout

Lastly, as set out in paragraph 7.61 of the Officer Report, comments have been sought from Anglian Water however no response has been received at the time of writing. An update will be provided at the committee meeting.

3(c) 24/02258/FUL -

There are no late representations for this item.

3(d) 24/01867/OUT -

A signed and dated Unilateral Undertaking for the provision of wheeled bins was received by the Local Planning Authority on 7th March 2025.

3(e) 23/02319/S73 -

There are no late representations for this item.

APPENDIX 3 – SUMMARY OF OFFICERS VERBAL UPDATE FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 17TH MARCH 2025

Consultation comments from Anglian Water were received 17/03/2025 (available to view on public access) and a verbal update was provided to Members. The following text was included in the Officers presentation to Members:

Policy LP6 of the Local Plan states:

A proposal for any scale of development will be supported if: d. Anglian Water Services do not raise concerns relating to the ability of waste water infrastructure to accommodate waste water flows from the proposal.

Anglian Water does not state that it is not possible to increase the capacity of the Needingworth Water Recycling Centre, the case is that funding has not currently been allocated to increase the capacity. This is therefore an issue for their business plan (and the allocation of funding to increase capacity to address new development) and is not a land use issue.

The following amended/additional conditions have been added to paragraph 8 of the Officer Report:

- Submission of updated Odour Assessment as part of any reserved matters for layout
- Submission of Noise Assessment to inform a Noise Mitigation Scheme as part of any reserved matters for layout
- Submission of Foul Water drainage strategy, including identifying a sustainable point of connection to public foul water network

From: DevelopmentControl <developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 05 March 2025 13:51:46 UTC+00:00
To: "DevelopmentControl" <DevelopmentControl@huntingdonshire.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 23/01002/OUT

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 05/03/2025 1:51 PM from Miss Jane Bowd - Needingworth PC.

Application Summary

Address:	Land North Of Lodel Farm Overcote Lane Needingworth
Proposal:	Proposed development of up to affordable 30 dwellings to include public open space, landscaping, access and associated works. Approval sought for Access to Overcote Lane only at this stage with Layout, Landscaping, Scale and Appearance as reserved matters.
Case Officer:	Lewis Tomlinson

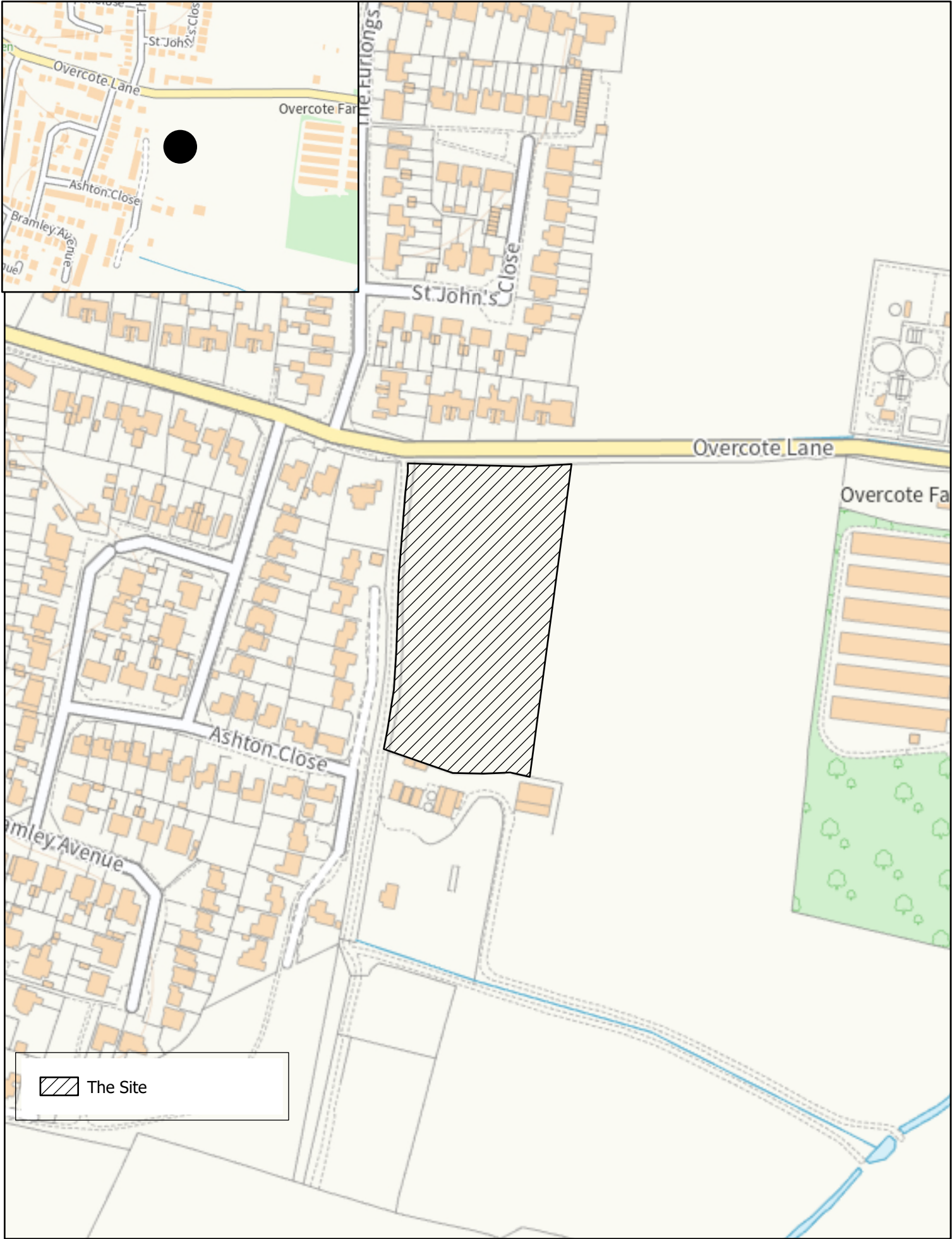
[Click for further information](#)

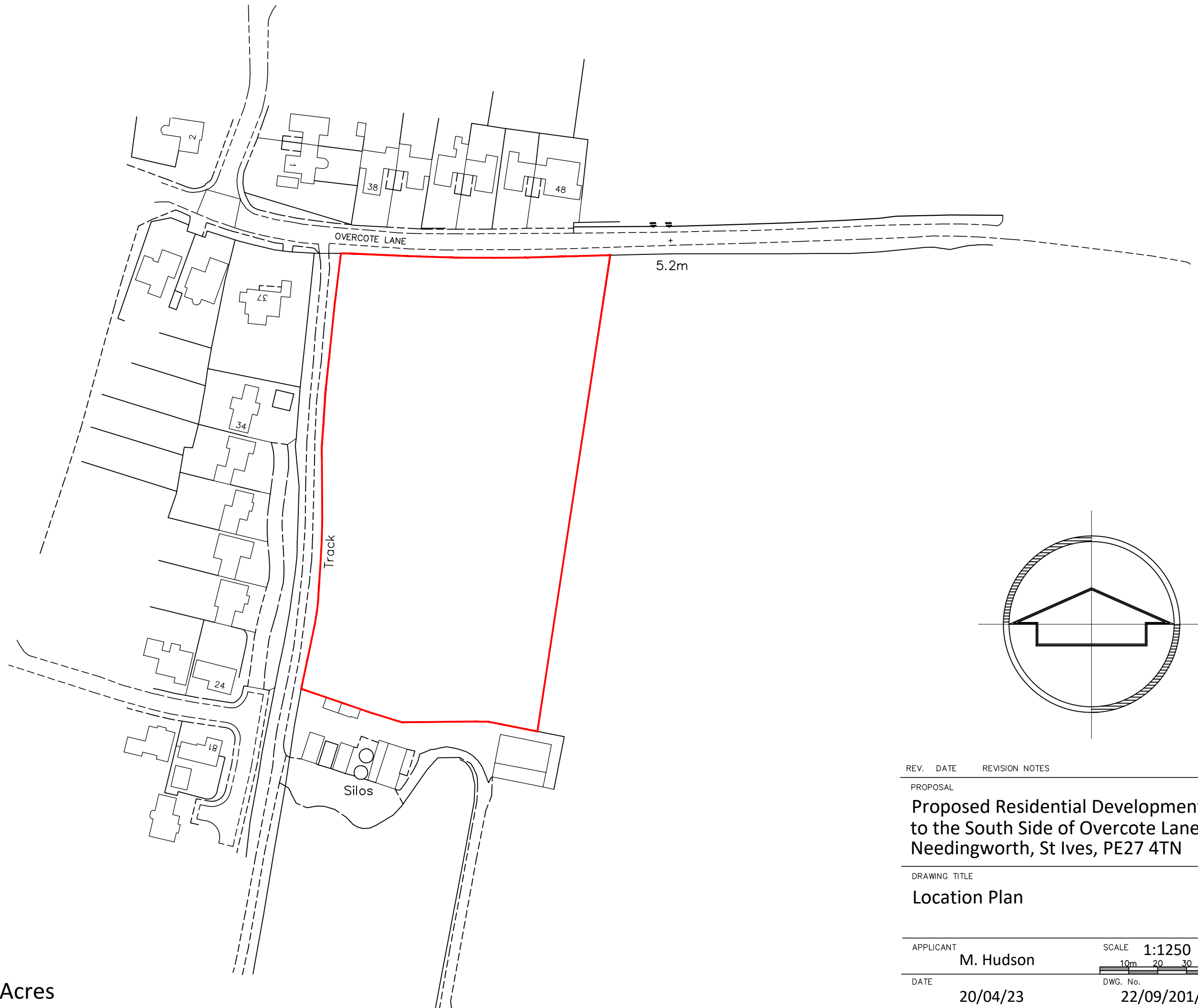
Customer Details

Name:	Miss Jane Bowd - Needingworth PC
Email:	needingworthpc@btconnect.com
Address:	Village Hall Overcote Lane Needingworth Cambridgeshire

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Town or Parish Council
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	The Parish Council has reviewed the letter from M Breeze CCC dated 11th February 2025. The Parish Council does not support the findings in relation to this application and wishes to register its continued objection to this application.





Site Area - 3.45 Acres

REV.	DATE	REVISION NOTES
PROPOSAL		
Proposed Residential Development at Land to the South Side of Overcote Lane, Needingworth, St Ives, PE27 4TN		
DRAWING TITLE		
Location Plan		
APPLICANT		SCALE 1:1250 @ A3
M. Hudson		10m 20 30 40 50 60
DATE	DWG. No.	REV.
20/04/23	22/09/201/02	-





REV	DATE	REVISION NOTES
A	11/10/23	Updated layout as per urban design comments
B	20/11/23	Updated landscaping details

PROPOSAL

Proposed Residential Development at Land to the South Side of Overcote Lane, Needingworth, St Ives, PE27 4TN

DRAWING TITLE

Site Layout Plan

APPLICANT	M. Hudson	SCALE	1:250 @ A0
DATE	10/02/23	OWNED BY	22/09/201/01
		REV	B