



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, 15 SEPTEMBER 2025** 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

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th August 2025.

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) Hemingford Abbots - 25/01248/FUL (Pages 9 - 44)

Change of use from dwelling (Use Class C3) & agricultural land to a wellness centre (Class E) and wedding and events venue (Sui Generis) with guest sleeping accommodation and parking - Hemingford Park, Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots.

(b) Somersham - 25/00972/S73 (Pages 45 - 68)

Variation of Conditions 1 (Permitted Use), 6 (Access Time Frame and Removal of Condition 2 (5 Year Limit) of 18/00840/FUL - Legacy Park, Chatteris Road, Somersham.

(c) Somersham - 25/00973/S73 (Pages 69 - 92)

Removal of Conditions 1 (5 Year Time Limit), 5 (Permanent Pitches), 6 (90 Days), 7 (Transient Pitches) and Variation of Condition 10 (Access) of 23/02358/FUL - Legacy Park, Chatteris Road, Somersham.

4. PLANNING SERVICES PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN (Pages 93 - 100)

To consider a report by the Change Programme Lead – Planning Services.

5. APPEAL DECISIONS (Pages 101 - 102)

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

LATE REPRESENTATIONS

5 day of September 2025

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

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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, 18 August 2025

PRESENT: Councillor S Mokbul – 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, R A Slade and C H Tevlin.

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

19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st August 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

20 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor B Pitt declared an Other Registrable Interest in Minute No 22 (a) by virtue of the fact that he had participated in the debate when the application was considered at a meeting of St Neots Town Council's Planning Committee, left the room and took no part in the discussion or voting on the application.

Councillor B Pitt also declared an Other Registrable Interest in Minute No 22 (b) by virtue of the fact that he was a Member of St Neots Town Council's Planning Committee but he had not been present when the application was considered, remained in the room and took part in the discussion and voting on the application.

Councillor R Slade declared an Other Registrable Interest in Minute No 22 (a) by virtue of the fact he was Chair of St Neots Town Council's Planning Committee when the application was considered, left the room and took no part in the discussion or voting on the item.

Councillor R Slade also declared an Other Registrable Interest in Minute No 22 (b) by virtue of the fact he was Chair of St Neots Town Council's Planning Committee when the application was considered, left the room and took no part in the discussion or voting on the item.

21 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT OTHER APPLICATION - INSTALLATION OF A SOLAR PARK TO EXPORT UP TO 25 MW (AC) ELECTRICITY, COMPRISING UP TO 40,000NO. PHOTOVOLTAIC PANELS, UP TO 7NO. INVERTERS & TRANSFORMERS, 2NO. ELECTRICAL BUILDINGS, 1NO. ONSITE CONTROL BUILDING, BOUNDARY FENCING AND GATES,

SECURITY CAMERAS, AND ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENGINEERING OPERATIONS - LAND EAST OF BILLING BROOK AND NORTH AND SOUTH OF PETERBOROUGH ROAD, HADDON - 25/00652/FUL

(Councillor I Ross, Elton Parish Council, Councillors T Alban and M Beutell, Ward Members, Councillor S Bywater, Cambridgeshire County Council, and B Walsh and J Speechley, objectors, addressed the Committee on the application).

Consideration was given to a report by the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) on the application, which was the subject of an appeal against non-determination. The Local Planning Authority (LPA) was no longer able to make a formal determination of the application; however, the LPA was required to confirm its stance and, following call-in of the application by Councillor T Alban, the Committee was invited to consider the Council's position. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

The Committee discussed the recommendation contained in the report and representations which had been received since the publication of the report together with other matters including flooding, highways and landscape. Having taken into account relevant local and national policies and legislation, it was

RESOLVED

that powers be delegated to the Head of Planning, Infrastructure & Public Protection to make representations on the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the District Council, in accordance with the following putative reason for refusal: The application has failed to demonstrate that it would not materially harm the safe functioning of Sibson Aerodrome or private flying strips through adverse impacts of glint and glare, and the loss of land necessary to facilitate emergency landings. The development is therefore contrary to policies LP14 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

22 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) Erection of four dwellings and associated works - Land Adjacent 31, Luke Street, Eynesbury - 25/00596/FUL

(Councillor J Dunford, St Neots Town Council, and S Richardson, agent, addressed the Committee on the application).

See Minute No 20 for Members' interests.

that the application be refused because the site sits within the St Neots Conservation Area. The development would appear unduly cramped, due to the lack of space around the buildings, which with the undue dominance of hard landscaping for vehicles and a lack of space for adequate soft landscaping would result in a poor quality development which would detract from the appearance of the site, the special character and appearance of the St Neots Conservation Area and surrounding area. The proposal does not conserve or enhance the historic environment or respond positively to its context or appear to draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings or contribute positively to the area's character and identify or successfully integrate with adjoining buildings and spaces. The harm to the designated heritage asset would be less than substantial as set out in the NPPF and therefore the harm has to be weighed against the public benefits but the limited public benefit of the development that include the tidying of the site, the provision of additional market dwellings and the employment opportunities associated with the construction, would not outweigh the harm caused. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, and Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

b) Erection of three-bedroom bungalow with garage & associated works (inc new planting and creation of off-street parking & turning to both existing and proposed properties) - Land Rear of 34 to 38 Ackerman Street, Eaton Socon - 25/00756/FUL

(C Hamilton, objector, and S Richardson, agent, addressed the Committee on the application).

See Minute No 20 for Members' interests.

that the application be refused for the following reasons:

- a) The site is an area of undeveloped open land to the rear of and associated with the Grade II Listed Building, 36 Ackerman Street and sits within the St Neots Conservation Area. As an area of open land, the application site contributes to the setting of the Listed Building at 36 Ackerman Street as an element which allows space around the Listed Building for it to be seen and also seen within the group of historic buildings. The application site also provides a buffer which creates a physical separation between the historic group of buildings containing the Listed Building and the modern housing estate to the south and east. By virtue of the scale, design and siting of the proposed dwelling, the proposed development is considered harmful to the significance of the adjacent Listed Building and harmful to the significance of the Conservation Area. The proposal is not considered to preserve the Conservation Area's character or appearance as it does not maintain the historic grouping of buildings along Ackerman Street nor the grain, scale or character of the historic agricultural settlement. Given the nature of the proposed development, any public benefits are considered to be negligible and would not outweigh the identified harm in this instance. As such, the proposal is considered to be contrary to Sections 66 and 72 of the

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document, and Section 12 and 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

- b) The proposed development by virtue of the siting, scale and massing of the proposed dwelling, and close proximity to the small private rear amenity spaces of Nos. 34 and 36 Ackerman Street, would result in overbearing, overshadowing and loss of light impacts to the detriment of the residential amenity of occupiers of No.'s 34 and 36 Ackerman Street. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policy LP14 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).

Chair

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 15th SEPTEMBER 2025

Case No: 25/01248/FUL

Proposal: Change of use from dwelling (Use Class C3) & agricultural land to a wellness centre (Class E) and wedding and events venue (Sui Generis) with guest sleeping accommodation and parking.

Location: Hemingford Park, Common Lane, Hemingford Abbots

Applicant: Dr Phil Kaziewicz

Grid Ref: 527646 270899

Date of Registration: 09.07.2025

Parish: Hemingford Abbots

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) as the Officer's recommendation is contrary to that of the Parish Council.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

- 1.1 Hemingford Park Hall is a Grade II* Listed private residence situated within generous grounds to the south-west of Hemingford Abbots and within the Hemingfords Conservation Area (CA). Outside of the residential curtilage of Hemingford Park Hall, the parkland is in agricultural use. Within the residential curtilage, there is a pool/spa building and various other ancillary structures – some of which are already in use as short term visitor accommodation. There are other Grade II Listed Buildings within the grounds and some structures (given their relationship and construction date) are considered to be curtilage listed. The Lodge House at the Rideaway entrance is a Grade II listed building.
- 1.2 The Hall and associated contemporary buildings are attributed to the architect Decimus Burton and originally constructed in c1843 for the Reverend James Linton. The buildings, garden and Parkland, within which they are located are within the designated Hemingford Abbots Conservation area.
- 1.3 The Hall and Park are accessed from two points, the first off Common Lane in the village and the second at the Lodge House off the Rideaway on the south side of the Park beyond the outskirts of the village on its southern side.

- 1.4 In terms of other constraints, the site is considered to be within the Countryside. There are some trees subject to Preservation Orders to the north-eastern access to the site (from Common Lane) and, given the location within the CA, any trees within the site are afforded formal protection. The site is also within Flood Zone 1 and has a low risk of flooding as per the most recent Environmental Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data.
- 1.5 The application seeks planning permission for the Change of use from dwelling (Use Class C3) & agricultural land to a wellness centre (Class E) and wedding and events venue (Sui Generis) with guest sleeping accommodation and parking.
- 1.6 The Planning Statement sets out the following:

The proposed development at Hemingford Park entails a change of use to enable the estate to function as a wedding venue and wellness centre. This will create a viable and sustainable future for the estate by diversifying its use and enhancing public access and enjoyment of its heritage assets. In summary, the estate will operate as follows:

(a) Wedding Events: The venue will host weekend wedding events primarily between May and September and in December but they can take place all year round. Each event will typically span Friday to Sunday. Guests may arrive on Friday, the main event will take place on Saturday, and departure and cleaning will occur on Sunday.

(b) Holiday Accommodation and Wellness Centre: When not in use for weddings, the hall and cottages will be available for holiday lets. The wellness centre will be open to the public Monday through Thursday and on non-event weekends, offering individual or small group bookings for spa and wellness experiences.

(c) Operational Capacity and Employment: The operation will support year-round economic activity, employing 5 full-time staff and full-time equivalent of 2 to 3 part-time or contract staff. Local service providers such as traffic and noise marshals, caterers, florists will also be engaged, supporting local economic growth.

(d) Local Economic Benefits: As well as providing a sustainable economic future for the heritage assets contained on the site and generating jobs in the process, the business plan demonstrates significant economic benefits for local businesses; supporting worthwhile employment especially within small companies and sole traders. The business described in this application will increase trade at the only local pub in Hemingford Abbots and the only local shop in the whole of the Hemingfords (Hemingford Grey), helping to secure the future viability of both, and to pubs and tourist destinations slightly further afield in villages like Houghton.

(e) Energy and Sustainability: The event and wellness centre will operate without the use of fossil fuels, using air-source heat pumps and supplemented by an existing 50kW solar array. This

ensures a low-carbon operation in line with national and local climate objectives.

(f) Community Benefits: The venue will offer free or discounted access to local charities and residents on a limited basis, helping to foster community engagement and support.

Weddings and Events

Wedding receptions will take place in the pool house. The swimming pool has been designed and constructed to have a special cover to allow the main pool area to operate as either a private function space or a pool. The proposed mixed use will take place within buildings already constructed and no new buildings are required to facilitate the expanded commercial use thereby making efficient use of existing facilities. The applicant proposes the following scope to the wedding business:

(a) Maximum of 26 weddings per year held on Saturdays (although spanning Friday to Sunday).

(b) Maximum of 180 guests.

(c) Event guests to use the Rideaway and eastern track access only (shown green on the Vehicle Access Plan HP004 –PB003(A).

(d) Event guests to be ‘managed’ in terms of their space usage by on-site marshals in accordance with HP004-PB004(A).

(e) Event guests to park on the hard standing outside the existing agricultural barn (future hotel) only (shown on the associated car parking layout plan).

(f) Operational Hours 0800 and closing at midnight.

(g) No external amplified music and indoor amplified music to stop at 2300.

(h) No guests to be allowed outside in front of the facility after 1900.

(i) No fireworks or Chinese lanterns.

The wedding ceremony will either take place within the pool house or on the eastern terrace of Hemingford Park Hall (shown pale orange on HP004–PB004(A). Any use of the eastern terrace and lawn (shown pale orange on HP004–PB004(A) would cease by 1900. Use of outdoor areas for weddings after 1900 would be limited to the walled garden (shown Purple on HP004–PB004(A).

Proposed Wellness Centre Use

The applicant proposes the following for the commercial use of the proposed wellness centre:

(a) Opening time 1000 and closing time 1800, 7 days per week.

(b) No more than 14 guests allowed to use the spa facility at any one time

(c) The same access and parking arrangements would apply to wellness centre guests as event guests.

(d) The spa would not operate independently on wedding days but would be available for use by up to 14 members of the wedding party at any one time.

Operational Requirements for all uses

The applicants are in a position to control the operational activities on the site and propose the following:-

(a) All guest vehicles will use the entrance from Rideaway for access and exit. There will be no guest access from Common Lane.

(b) All commercial service vehicles will use the entrance from Rideaway for access and exit. There will be no service vehicle access from Common Lane.

(c) On entry vehicles would then use the eastern access track leading to either the event facility or the parking area located around the existing agricultural barn (future hotel) to the north of the site.

(d) All guests would park in the area next to the agricultural building (future hotel) in the allocated parking area as per the submitted car parking plan.

(e) Access to the event facility by vehicle (shown orange) will be limited to drop-offs, deliveries, and emergency vehicles.

- 1.7 The original description of development was 'Change of use from dwelling (Use Class C3) & agricultural land to a wedding and events venue (Sui Generis) with guest sleeping accommodation and parking'. This was changed following discussions between officers and the agent to the current description. A full 21 day neighbour (over 100 letters sent to residents), parish, consultee, site notice and press advert was carried out on the revised description. Officers also granted an extension to the consultation period for both the Parish Council and neighbours. Officers are therefore satisfied that not only have the statutory duties been complied with but also the Parish Council and neighbours have had adequate time to consider the proposals.

- 1.8 This application has been accompanied by the following:

- Planning Statement
- Heritage Statement
- Transport Technical Note
- Noise Assessment
- Odour Assessment
- Economic Analysis
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Drawings

- 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) is a material consideration. It 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 Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provide statutory duties to be applied when considering impacts on Listed Buildings (including their settings) and Conservation Areas. The Planning Practice Guidance and the National Design Guide 2021 are also relevant and material considerations.

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
- LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP5: Flood Risk
- LP6: Waste Water Management
- LP7: Spatial Planning Areas
- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP21: Town Centre Vitality and Viability
- LP22: Local Services and Community Facilities
- LP25: Housing Mix
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD 2011
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)

- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)
- Hemingfords Conservation Area Character assessment (June 2008)

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

- 0500222FUL - Erection of an agricultural building for livestock (APPROVED)
- 1400578FUL - Original floor levels re introduced on ground floor of main house. Demolition of shed at rear of the property. Construction of a glazed link to run between the kitchen of the main house to a newly constructed, submerged pool house with sliding glass roof. Pool house will consist of two storeys with swimming pool and associated spa facilities. Ceiling raised and internal posts removed in billiards room. Gardens landscaped. Demolition of existing pool house structure and two sheds (APPROVED)
- 1400579LBC - Original floor levels re introduced on ground floor of main house. Demolition of shed at rear of the property. Construction of a glazed link to run between the kitchen of the main house to a newly constructed, submerged pool house with sliding glass roof. Pool house will consist of two storeys with swimming pool and associated spa facilities. Ceiling raised and internal posts removed in billiards room. Gardens landscaped. Demolition of existing pool house structure and two sheds (APPROVED)
- 1408234COND - Condition information for 1400578FUL & 1400579LBC (C2 CONDITION REPLY)
- 1408293COND - Condition information for 1400578FUL & 1400579LBC (C2 CONDITION REPLY)

- 15/80183/COND - Condition information for 1400578FUL & 1400579LBC (DISPOSED)
- 18/02612/FUL (Extension of Existing Barn for Cattle and Hay Feed Store) (APPROVED)
- 21/01768/FUL - Change of use to allow for a mixed use as private residence (Class C3a), a wedding and corporate events venue (sui generis use) with ancillary guest accommodation and parking (APPEALED AGAINST NON-DETERMINATION, APPEAL WITHDRAWN)
- 22/02454/NMA - Non material amendment for 1400578FUL to vary the floor plans and elevations in respect of the pool house. (REFUSED)
- 22/02452/LBC - Construction of a two storey pool house and spa with basement parking (Retrospective) (WITHDRAWN)
- 23/01739/HHFUL & 23/01749/LBC - Retention of pool building, basement car park, lift and enclosure, external courtyards, pond and associated hard and soft landscaping (revised siting) phased alterations to pool building (reduction in height), removal of staircase, removal of glazed balustrade to pond and alterations to fenestration of main façade. (APPEALED AGAINST NON-DETERMINATION, APPEAL WITHDRAWN)
- 23/01770/LBC & 23/01764/FUL - Change of use of pool building and garden area to use for events and a commercial spa and change of use to agricultural track and hard standing for agricultural and commercial use associated with use of the pool house. (WITHDRAWN)
- 24/01218/P3MPA - Change of use of an agricultural building to hotel use (C1). (APPROVED)
- 24/02342/HHFUL & 24/02343/LBC - Retention of pool building, basement car park, lift and enclosure, external courtyards, pond and associated hard and soft landscaping (revised siting), phased alterations to pool building (reduction in height), removal of staircase, removal of glazed balustrade to pond and alterations to fenestration of main façade (APPROVED)
- 25/00767/HHFUL & 25/00775/LBC - Proposed replacement greenhouse (retrospective) (APPROVED)
- 25/01451/CLED - Certificate of existing lawful use for tracks. (CERTIFICATE GRANTED)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Hemingford Abbots Parish Council – Object on the following grounds:
- No details of what other events may take place
 - Traffic/highway safety – concern over the information submitted in light of resident's own traffic report.
 - Inadequate parking proposed
 - Noise and disturbance (people leaving at the end of the event). Concern over the information submitted.

- The track running in front of Hemingford Park Hall and the impact upon the heritage assets as well as the ridge and furrow
 - Impact upon heritage assets
- 5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Authority – No objection subject to conditions.
- 5.3 Huntingdonshire District Council Environmental Health Officer – No objection subject to condition
- 5.4 Huntingdonshire District Council Conservation Officer – No comment.
- 5.5 Historic England – No comment.
- 5.6 Lead Local Flood Authority – No objection.
- 5.7 Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service – Requests a condition for the provision of fire hydrants
- 5.8 Ecology Officer – No objection subject to conditions.

(Full responses are available on the website).

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 Letters of objection were received from 52 local residents/neighbouring properties during the course of the application. The concerns raised have been summarised below:
- The proposal would harm the historic setting through increased traffic, noise, lighting, and commercial activity
 - Impact of the track upon the ridge and furrow, setting of the Listed Building and Conservation Area
 - Weddings will be late spring to early autumn resulting in most events taking place within a few months of the year
 - Noise and disturbance (people leaving at the end of the event, music, amplified speech, and fireworks) to the residents of Hemingford Abbots, in particular Common Lane and Rideaway
 - Failure to provide robust acoustic assessment
 - Disturbance to the tranquil setting of the countryside, Conservation Area and village
 - Additional traffic and congestion
 - Failure to provide robust highways assessment
 - Inadequate parking for events
 - Potential light pollution from the events
 - Potential impact upon local biodiversity
 - Failure to complete biodiversity checklist and failure provide PEA
 - Risk of increase flooding

- Additional load in the already at capacity water and sewerage system
 - Lack of demand for this type of service
 - Approving this application will create a precedent for future expansion
 - economic benefits are overstated as guests chose vendors
 - Inadequate consultation by the Council
- 6.2 Letters of support were received from a total of 61 residents (comprising of local businesses, local residents/neighbouring properties and residents from nearby villages/towns etc). The support raised have been summarised below:
- Long term use of heritage assets
 - New commercial enterprise
 - Economic benefits for the local area in terms of employment and spending

7. ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to Development Plan policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy (national and local) and guidance outline how this should be done.
- 7.2 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with applications for planning permission the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)), the application must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This is reiterated within paragraph 48 of 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 application) 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 the NPPF 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
- Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets
- Residential Amenity
- Highway Safety, Access and parking provision
- Flood Risk and Surface Water
- Biodiversity
- Trees
- Developer Obligations
- Other matters

The Principle of Development

7.6 The application seeks planning permission for Change of use from dwelling (Use Class C3) & agricultural land to a wellness centre (Class E) and wedding and events venue (Sui Generis) with guest sleeping accommodation and parking.

7.7 As the site falls within the open countryside, a number of policies are considered to be relevant to the proposal.

7.8 Policy LP2 (Strategy for Development) 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.

7.9 Policy LP10 (The Countryside) 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.

Loss of a dwelling

- 7.10 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 does not contain any specific policies that prohibit proposals which result in the loss of a residential dwelling.
- 7.11 NPPF paragraph 61 states that the Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes, and 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.
- 7.12 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).
- 7.13 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 5,501 homes. The current 5YHLS falls short of 5 years' supply.
- 7.14 While the Local Plan does not contain specific policies that prohibit the loss of a dwelling, in light of the Council's current inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the loss of a residential dwelling is contrary to national policy objectives and must be weighed appropriately against the proposal in the overall planning balance (which will be at the end of this report).

Agricultural land

- 7.15 Land within the red line and surrounding the residential curtilage of Hemingford Park Hall is Grade 3 agricultural land. Taking into account this is a change of use application that does not propose any operational development on agricultural land within this application, , the layout and size of the agricultural land, the fact it is within the setting of grade II* building used and currently only used for the grazing of livestock, the change of use of this agricultural land is considered acceptable.

Provision of a wellness centre (Class E) and wedding and events venue (Sui Generis)

- 7.16 As the site is located within the countryside, local plan policies such as LP19 (Rural Economy) and LP23 (Tourism and Recreation) are relevant here.
- 7.17 The aim of Policy LP19 is to promote a vibrant rural economy within the district's extensive countryside to support businesses with a genuine need to be located in the countryside. Whilst the proposal does not meet any of the qualifying criteria for new business development, the Planning Statement sets out the argument that the proposal enhances the long-term viability of the Grade II* Listed Building, without causing unacceptable harm to the built or natural environment. This will be discussed in the below relevant section 'Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets' and will be weighed appropriately in the overall planning balance (which will be at the end of this report).
- 7.18 Policy LP23 states A proposal for a new or expanded tourism, sport or leisure use in the countryside will be supported where it can be demonstrated that:
- a. it is well-related to a defined settlement unless there are robust operational or sustainability reasons why it needs to be located elsewhere;
 - b. it does not cause harm to, and where appropriate, enhances the ecological, landscape and heritage significance of the proposed location;
 - c. the impact of the scale, character and location of the development on both its immediate surroundings and the wider landscape are minimised as far as possible;
 - d. adequate servicing can be provided, including water supply, electricity and for sewage and waste disposal; and
 - e. it will not have an adverse impact on any internationally or nationally designated wildlife site through increased visitor pressure.
- 7.19 Policy LP23 lends support for new leisure development in the countryside if a proposal demonstrates compliance with the above criteria. It is considered that the proposal does comply with the criteria set out in the policy.

- 7.20 Overall, the principle of development is considered acceptable. Other material planning considerations are discussed below.

Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on Heritage Assets

- 7.21 The application site relates to the Grade II* Listed Hemingford Park Hall which is also within the Hemingfords Conservation Area. The wider site contains some separate Grade II Listed outbuildings with additional curtilage listed structures.
- 7.22 Section 72 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Section 66 of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 7.23 Para. 212 of the NPPF set out that 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'. Para. 213 states that 'Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification...'
- 7.24 Local Plan policy LP34 aligns with the statutory provisions and NPPF advice.
- 7.25 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. This is also reflected in Policy the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).
- 7.26 Both Historic England and the Council's Conservation Team were consulted as part of the application and offer no comment on the application.
- 7.27 The proposed change of use does not involve any physical alteration or works to the Listed Buildings or any of the curtilage

Listed Buildings or structures as part of the proposed development.

- 7.28 If the change of use is granted, the applicant will need to demonstrate compliance with the necessary building regulations. This is separate from the planning process. However, if any potential alterations to the historic fabric of the Listed Buildings are required to ensure compliance with Building Regulations, a Listed Building Consent will need to be submitted. This will be assessed on its own merits and determined under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and associated heritage policies.
- 7.29 The Planning Statement sets out that the activities associated with the change of use would be confined to a discrete area within the estate, principally the main house and the modern spa and pool building, and that these activities are consistent with a private estate context and would not diminish the significance of the buildings or their immediate or wider settings.
- 7.30 Concerns have been raised by the Parish Council and neighbouring properties in relation to the access tracks, and in particular the track that is in situ in front of Hemingford Park Hall. A certificate has been granted under reference 25/01451/CLED which confirms the lawfulness of the tracks. The potential impact of the creation of the tracks on the setting of the Listed Building, the historic parkland/ridge and furrow or the Conservation Area is therefore not something that can be considered given the lawful status of the tracks.
- 7.31 Concerns have also been raised that the proposal would harm the historic setting through increased traffic, noise, lighting, and commercial activity. However, given that the change of use proposal will utilise these tracks as they will provide connectivity from the Rideaway access to the pool and spa building, the hotel approved under 24/01218/P3MPA and the proposed parking area, the use of the tracks as part of the proposal is within the remit of the consideration.
- 7.32 Taking into account the lawful status of the existing tracks, the restriction and control on not only the frequency but also the amount of events (which is discussed in more detail below), and the fact that the increased visitor activity is consistent with the nature of a historic country estate which will also allow access to the heritage assets to members of the public, it is considered that the proposed use of the existing tracks as well as the wider site in conjunction with the proposed use will not be harmful to the setting of the Listed Buildings or the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, or the countryside.
- 7.33 The proposal also includes holiday accommodation within the Hemingford Park Hall and the various cottages on the site

including the Lodge House. Given that this proposed use is not too dissimilar from the current residential use, it would preserve the significance of the heritage assets and their settings as well as complementing the proposed change of use for the wider site.

- 7.34 In regard to the proposed wellness Centre, the Planning Statement sets out that the wellness centre will be open to the public Monday through Thursday and on non-event weekends, offering individual or small group bookings for spa and wellness experiences. Wedding receptions will take place in the pool house. The swimming pool has been designed and constructed to have a special cover to allow the main pool area to operate as either a private function space or a pool. The proposed mixed use will take place within buildings already constructed and no new buildings are required to facilitate the expanded commercial use thereby making efficient use of existing facilities. The proposed use of the pool/spa building would therefore preserve the significance of the heritage assets and their settings.
- 7.35 The Planning Statement sets out that the proposals present a neutral to beneficial impact in heritage terms. This is consistent with the conclusions of the Heritage Statement submitted in support of the application (Jon Lowe Heritage Ltd, July 2025). Increased public access to the site via its commercial operation would better reveal the significance of the heritage assets, consistent with paragraph 210 (c) of the NPPF (2024). Moreover, the income generated would contribute directly to the future maintenance and conservation of the estate as a whole, providing a sustainable long-term use that aligns with both national policy and the objectives of Policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan.
- 7.36 The benefits will be discussed at the end of the report within the planning balance section.
- 7.37 The proposal includes a larger area to be used for car parking beyond the parking area approved under 24/01218/P3MPA. This is on existing hard standing. Acoustic barriers in the form of 1.8-2m close boarded fences are proposed on the north-eastern and the north-western boundaries of the proposed car parking area in order to mitigate potential noise (which is discussed in more detail in the below residential amenity section). This is within the Conservation Area but is situated a distance away from the Grade II* Listed Building and separated by other built form. Given that the general siting and height of the acoustic barriers is known, full details of the acoustic barriers can also be secured by condition. It is considered the visual impact of the 1.8-2m acoustic barrier can be mitigated by soft landscaping which can also be secured by condition. Hard landscaping should also be conditioned. Subject to the conditions, the proposed acoustic barriers and car parking area would not result in harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets and settings.

- 7.38 The statutory duties under sections 66 and 72 of the Planning, Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Act (1990) require that considerable importance and weight be given to any heritage harm. However, overall, it is considered that the proposed change of use here will preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Listed Buildings. The proposal will not result in any harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets or to the countryside. The proposal therefore complies with Policies LP10, LP11, LP12 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Hemingfords Conservation Area Character assessment (June 2008), the provisions of Section 12 of the NPPF (2024) and part C2 of the National Design Guide (2021).

Residential Amenity

- 7.39 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.
- 7.40 Given that the proposal seeks permission for a change of use, the main consideration on residential amenity is noise and odour.
- 7.41 The nearest residential properties in order of closest are Home Farm to the north-west (immediate neighbour), The Old Pavillion to the east, properties on Common Lane to the north/north-east and properties on Rideaway to the east.
- 7.42 Officers also note the concern raised by neighbouring properties and the Paish Council about the general odour impact, the general potential noise impact of the events, especially the noise associated with the comings/goings through the use of the car parking area and the access tracks.
- 7.43 In terms of odour, an Odour Assessment has been submitted with the application. The Environmental Health Team have been consulted as part of the application and are the technical experts regarding odour.
- 7.44 The submitted Odour Assessment sets out that the activities considered include daytime preparation of hot meals for up to 120 guests, occasional outdoor cooking, and evening use of mobile food vans for informal catering. The nearest receptor, Home Farm, lies 65m away and is screened by a 3m-high wall. Other residential dwellings lie at distances of 205m or more. The assessment finds that the source odour potential is small to medium, with any odours likely to be pleasant or neutral. Local meteorological data and the limited number and duration of event days further reduce risk. To reinforce this conclusion, an Odour Management Plan has been prepared and includes appropriate control measures. These

include carbon filtration within the kitchen extraction system, directional controls for food vans, avoidance of food waste build-up, and regular cleaning and maintenance procedures. Mobile food providers will be sited away from receptors, and collections will follow events without delay. A complaints procedure is also in place to ensure prompt action in the event of any concerns. The assessment concludes that odour does not present a constraint to the development, and that the proposed use is acceptable in planning terms. The Environmental Health Team agree with this.

- 7.45 In terms of noise, the application is supported by a Planning Noise Impact Assessment. The Environmental Health Team have been consulted as part of the application and are the technical experts regarding noise.
- 7.46 The Noise Impact Assessment (NIA), entitled 'Hemingford Park Hall' reference RP02-21458-R0, dated 21st May 2025 notes that the proposal is for up to 26 events per year, with music finishing at 23:00. The NIA considers there may be an adverse impact whilst larger groups utilise the area to the front of the property, and that this may impact on the property to the southeast. The mitigation proposed is to limit any larger gatherings to prior to 20:00, however the plan for wedding and events indicates that larger groups would be moved along earlier than this. The duration, timings and management of this aspect could form part of a Noise Management Plan (NMP) which could be conditioned.
- 7.47 The Noise Impact Assessment was completed with the bifold doors open. The door to the ground floor bar area of the pool building will remain closed (with the exception of ingress and egress) whilst amplified music is playing and the use of the doors will form part of the NMP. The use of the external areas will again be covered by the NMP. The use of a sound limiter is a potential mitigation measure to control the music noise levels at source, however because one of the mitigation measures is to close the bifold doors, this would have implications on the level the sound limiter could be set at, so actual (and appropriate) noise monitoring could be more suitable. This would need to be logged and results made available to the LPA on request.
- 7.48 Members should note that the Planning Officer, the Environmental Health Officer and a Licensing colleague visited the site where a demonstration of music levels took place. Music was played at a high volume, with doors open, and officers were able to observe this from the boundary. However, since this was a one off demonstration, it should be noted this has not been given significant weighting in the Environmental Health assessment and the comments are not based on this alone.
- 7.49 Acoustic barriers in the form of 1.8-2m close boarded fences are also proposed on the north-eastern and the north-western

boundaries of the proposed car parking area in order to mitigate potential noise impact upon. The acoustic barrier on the north-eastern boundary of the car parking area was previously requested by the Parish Council and therefore offered by the applicant. This will help mitigate any potential impact upon the nearest properties on Common Lane to the north-east. The acoustic barrier on the north-western boundary of the car parking area was requested by Environmental Health and will help mitigate any potential impact upon Home Farm to the south-east which is approx. 75m away. The existing building which is the subject of the 24/01218/P3MPA approval will also help mitigate any potential impact.

- 7.50 It has also been agreed that the hard standing immediately west to the existing building which is the subject of the 24/01218/P3MPA approval shall not be used for any event parking. Environmental Health have considered whether a further acoustic barrier will be required on the south-east boundary of the car park, but this is not considered necessary.
- 7.51 The concerns raised by neighbouring properties and the Parish Council regarding the potential noise impact are understood and noted. However from the information available, Environmental Health consider noise from events may be above the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL), but will be below the Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL). Therefore, they consider that with robust conditions the impact can be mitigated and reduced to a minimum. The Environmental Health Team have therefore advised there are not grounds to make an objection on noise, subject to appropriate conditions being utilised. Likewise, the Environmental Health Team have advised there are no grounds to make an objection on odour, subject to appropriate conditions being utilised.
- 7.52 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states: *Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations. Planning obligations should only be used where it is not possible to address unacceptable impacts through a planning condition.* Therefore, Officers must consider whether a proposal can be made acceptable through the imposition of appropriately worded planning conditions.
- 7.53 The Environmental Health Team have advised that: (1) the imposition of conditions regarding a Noise Management Plan (covering general management of the site and events including bifold doors and when they will be closed, Management of Waste, Management of people, Management of vehicles – speed etc, complaint procedure, Monitoring procedure, management of large groups to the front of the property, leaving procedure and timings, etc); and (2) a noise condition in line with the NIA, Odour Management Plan, limit number of events per calendar year, no

events on consecutive weekends, limit times of amplified music, no external amplification, delivery and collection times limited and no fireworks, will address any noise and odour issues.

- 7.54 It is therefore considered that subject to the imposition of the above conditions, the proposal would not result in an unacceptable impact on the neighbouring properties' amenities and therefore the proposal would be in accordance with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

Highway Safety, access and Parking Provision

- 7.55 Local Plan Policy LP16 sets out that a proposal will be supported where it's likely transport impacts have been assessed and safe physical access from the public highway can be achieved. Local Plan LP17 seeks 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.
- 7.56 The application is supported by a Transport Technical Note (Paul Basham Associates, May 2025) that builds upon the access and trip generation assessments which were assessed and accepted by the Highway Authority under prior approval ref. 24/01218/P3MPA (conversion of an agricultural building to a hotel). That approval confirmed the suitability of the Rideaway access. Those access arrangements remain unchanged as part of this proposal. To be clear, the proposal does not include use of Common Lane access by the main contractors or guests.
- 7.57 The Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Authority have been consulted as part of the application and are the technical experts regarding transport and highway safety.
- 7.58 Officers also note the concern raised by neighbouring properties and the Paish Council about the potential transport impact of the proposal, highway safety concerns about the access onto Rideaway and the inconsistencies within and between the submitted documents.
- 7.59 The Planning Statement and associated document sets out the following:

'All guest and commercial vehicles associated with the wedding and events venue, wellness centre, and overnight accommodation will be routed via the Rideaway entrance. The Rideaway access measures over 5m in width for a distance of 8m from the public highway and benefits from gates set back 31m, preventing any queuing on the carriageway. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 120m are shown to be achievable in both directions, in line with national

guidance and exceeding the requirements based on actual recorded 85th percentile speeds of 33.3mph. The access can safely accommodate vehicles entering and exiting simultaneously, and tracking diagrams confirm that it can be used by a 7.5t box van alongside a standard car, as well as by a fire appliance. There are no proposals for HGV access.

Trip generation is modest and seasonal. The spa facility, operating throughout the week with a maximum of 14 guests at any one time, is forecast to generate no more than 28 daily two-way trips. Weddings are confined to Saturdays and are expected to generate between 60 and 80 car movements, supplemented by taxis and minibuses. Larger events may charter shuttle buses. These volumes remain within levels previously accepted by the Highway Authority and are comparable to those associated with a small residential development of 10 dwellings. Furthermore, wedding-related traffic occurs outside of weekday peak hours and will not impact the strategic highway network.

Parking provision across the site exceeds 50 formal spaces with ample overspill areas available on existing hardstanding. For a 180-guest event, the majority of guests are expected to arrive via shared transport, with 30 to 40 private vehicles anticipated on site at peak.'

7.60 The Highway Authority provided an initial response and then a further response in light of comments received from neighbouring properties and the Parish Council. The Highway Authority has confirmed that whilst there are inconsistencies within and between documents, the Highway Authority has assessed the highway impact based on the information provided and also factoring in additional vehicle trips for staff, deliveries and servicing, and the occasional larger vehicle.

7.61 The Highway Authority has advised:

- The previous application confirmed that the access is 5m wide for 8m from the carriageway edge which is acceptable.
- Rideaway is a 'C' Class road so acceptable for the additional vehicle movements.
- The additional traffic flow will be insignificant with the exception of on a Saturday when, although it will be greater, it will be tidal with minimal two way movements at the access and will not be at peak times.
- The highway element of the access is adequate for a competent coach driver to use and any issue with over-running or damage will be within the site so a consideration for the applicant, not the LHA.
- Should a large box-type van etc be exiting the access whilst a car is approaching, or vice versa, there is adequate visibility onto the access such that the vehicle will not start to turn into the access and then have to reverse back onto the

carriageway. Also, we do not consider it un-safe for a vehicle to wait in the carriageway in this location as there is adequate forward visibility.

- Although the visibility splay to the south is detailed a 2.4m x 120 which is commensurate with a 40mph speed limit, the access is located only approximately 25m north of the start of the speed limit. However, our indicative highway records indicate that a visibility splay of 2.4m x 215m, commensurate with the National Speed Limit, appears to be achievable.

7.62 The Highway Authority has concluded that there would not be an unacceptable impact on highway safety and there is no reason to refuse the application or to request improvements to the access. A condition is recommended to ensure compliance with the submitted Technical note to ensure that delivery/servicing vehicles, wedding guests, and wellness centre users do not access the development via Common Lane. Officers consider that it is appropriate to exclude staff arriving by foot or cycle from this as access to the site from Common Lane would provides a better option for those residing in the village.

7.63 In regard to the amount of parking proposed, officers note the argument put forward by the applicant that 50 formal spaces (with overspill areas available) would be appropriate given that the majority of guests are expected to arrive via shared transport, with 30 to 40 private vehicles anticipated on site at peak. This approach is agreed.

7.64 As such, subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and therefore accords with Policies LP16 and LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. The proposals do not conflict with Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

Flood Risk and Surface Water

7.65 The site is at the lowest risk of flooding according to the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2024 and Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Flood Zone 1) and the proposal is for minor development. A small area of Flood Zone 2 exists at the far eastern edge of the wider landholding but does not affect any operational part of the site. Accordingly the sequential and exceptions tests for flooding not engaged and the submission of a flood risk assessment is not considered necessary in this instance in accordance with the NPPF and NPPG.

7.66 The proposed development involves no new buildings and no changes to ground levels or drainage infrastructure. All access roads, parking areas, and buildings are already in place, and no external alterations are proposed. The site is not connected to the mains sewage/drainage network and therefore the proposed

change of use will have no effect on the public system. The Lead Local Flood Authority has raised no objection to the proposal. As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on both flood risk and surface water and therefore accords with Policies LP5, LP6 and LP15 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

Biodiversity

- 7.67 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment in a number of ways. 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.
- 7.68 Concerns have been raised by neighbouring parties that the application has failed to complete the biodiversity checklist and has subsequently failed provide a Preliminary Ecological Assessment to assess the impact of the development on surrounding wildlife.
- 7.69 Given that the proposal did not include the creation of any new floorspace, it was a matter of planning judgement for officers at validation, who considered that the biodiversity checklist was not required. Nor was a PEA required in order to validate the application.
- 7.70 The Ecology Officer has been consulted as part of the application. The application seeks permission for a change of use only, making use of the existing access, tracks, and buildings. The site currently accommodates both residential use (including short-term visitor accommodation) and agricultural activities. The proposed change will result in an intensification of use, particularly in terms of visitor numbers, traffic, and associated noise. However, this will be limited to a maximum of 26 events per year, with activities concentrated around the main buildings. The Ecology Officer notes that the Environmental Health Team have recommended conditions to ensure noise is appropriately managed. In addition to those conditions, the Ecology Officer recommends a condition of no lighting without prior consent and no overnight stays outside of the built form. The Ecology Officer has advised that based on the information submitted, they raise no objections to the application. Officers accept the advice and these conditions are therefore recommended.
- 7.71 It is therefore considered that sufficient information has been submitted with the application to form an assessment on the

impact of wildlife, and that the imposition of conditions will address any potential impact upon wildlife, especially in terms of noise and disturbance.

- 7.72 The proposed development involves no new buildings and no changes to ground levels or drainage infrastructure. All access roads, parking areas, and buildings are already in place, and no external alterations are proposed. The application is therefore not required to demonstrate Biodiversity Net Gain pursuant to the Environment Act 2021. Given the information submitted with the application, it is considered the proposal would not result in an adverse impact upon local wildlife. It is also noted that no lighting is proposed as part of the application but a condition ensuring no additional lighting is installed without prior consent is recommended. Overall, the proposal accords with Local Plan Policy LP30 and Section 15 of the NPPF (2024).

Trees

- 7.73 Policy LP31 of the Local Plan states a proposal will be required to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated. 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. Where loss, threat or damage cannot be fully addressed through minimisation and/ or mitigation measures the proposal may be supported if alternative measures such as reinstatement of features, additional landscaping, habitat creation or tree planting will compensate for the harm and can be implemented and established before development starts.
- 7.74 There are some trees subject to Preservation Orders to the north-eastern access to the site (from Common Lane) and, given the location within the CA, any trees within the site are afforded formal protection. The proposal does not include any works that will affect the trees within the site. The proposal therefore complies with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan.

Development Obligations

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 7.75 The development may be CIL liable in accordance with the Council's adopted charging schedule; CIL payments will cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning and education.

Other Matters

Fire Hydrants

- 7.76 The comments from the Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service requesting a condition for the provision of fire hydrants are noted. Officers are seeking further justification and information from the Fire Service which will be reported on the late representations report. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that the principle of a fire hydrant on the site is acceptable in terms of heritage and therefore can be conditioned. This is because the red line for the application is big enough to ensure the fire hydrant is capable of being sited in a less sensitive area within the site. It is also noted that a fire hydrant is low-level feature, and therefore could also be potentially mitigated in terms of visual impact.

Neighbour concern: Approving this application will create a precedent for future expansion

- 7.77 Officers and members can only assess what is in front of them. Any future application will be assessed on its own merits and against relevant local and national policy.

Conclusion

- 7.78 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.79 The proposed change of use does not involve any physical alteration or works to the Listed Buildings or any of the curtilage Listed Buildings or structures as part of the proposed development. It is considered that the proposed development will preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and will preserve the setting of the Listed Buildings. There will be no harm to the significance of any heritage assets.
- 7.80 It is also considered that the proposal is acceptable in regard to the transport, highways (including highway safety), odour, noise, flood risk, biodiversity and trees.
- 7.81 While the Local Plan does not contain specific policies that prohibit the loss of a dwelling, in light of the Council's current inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the loss of a residential dwelling is a material consideration and must be weighed appropriately against the proposal in the overall planning balance.
- 7.82 Hemingford Park Hall is a country manor house situated in the countryside and is not reflective of the average housing stock. Notwithstanding this, the loss of a dwelling in light of the Council not being able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply weighs negatively in the balance but carries only limited weight given the loss is of one dwelling which is not average housing stock.

- 7.83 Against that, there are several benefits to consider. Regarding the heritage benefits, the site is currently within private ownership (residential and agricultural) and the proposed change of use would increase public access to site due to its commercial operation which would better reveal the significance of the heritage assets for the enjoyment of the public. In comparison to the existing residential use, the income generated from the proposed use would contribute directly to the future maintenance and conservation of the estate, providing a sustainable long-term use. Significant positive weight is afforded to both heritage benefits.
- 7.84 The Planning Statement sets out the following additional benefits:
- (a) The applicant will be looking to preferentially employ local retired people to be traffic and noise marshals during events.
 - (b) Discounts to access the wellness centre, to hire the event facility (and to hire hotel rooms in the future) will be made available to local residents.
 - (c) Local charities will be given free hire of the event venue for one or two events per year.
 - (d) Events will not be held at the same time as the Hemingford Abbots Flower Festival but instead coaches will be able to park on the hardstanding next to the barn (future hotel) during the festival, discounts at the upcoming hotel will be made available to flower festival attendees and the parkland itself will be opened to festival attendees.
 - (e) As well as providing a sustainable economic future for the heritage assets contained on the site and generating jobs in the process, the business plan demonstrates significant economic benefits for local businesses; supporting worthwhile employment especially within small companies and sole traders. The business described in this application will increase trade at the only local pub in Hemingford Abbots and the only local shop in the whole of the Hemingfords (Hemingford Grey), helping to secure the future viability of both, and to pubs and tourist destinations slightly further afield in villages like Houghton.
- 7.85 The benefits that relate to discounts, free hire and not clashing with other events cannot be taken into account as these cannot be secured through planning conditions. Limited positive weight is also afforded to the potential employment of local retired people to be traffic and noise marshals during events on the basis that the development will generate local employment. However, moderate positive weight is afforded to the economic benefits of the proposal.
- 7.86 It should be noted that not all proposed developments are entirely without harm or entirely without benefit. Therefore, in reaching a recommendation on the application, Officers have considered the potential harm of the development against the potential benefits of the development. Officers have considered what weight should be

given to each material consideration. This forms the overall planning balance.

7.87 It is considered that the above identified benefits outweigh the loss of a dwelling in this instance. The development is policy compliant in all other regards. The proposal is in overall accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused.

7.88 For the above reasons, it is recommended that planning permission be granted in this instance.

8. RECOMMENDATION - Approval subject to the following conditions;

- Time
- Drawings
- Use class control
- Compliance with Transport Technical Note
- A Noise Management Plan
- Noise condition in line with the NIA.
- Odour Management Plan
- Limit number of events per calendar year
- No events on consecutive weekends
- Limit times of amplified music
- No external amplification
- Delivery and collection times limited
- No fireworks
- No lighting
- No overnight stays outside built form
- Full details of the acoustic barriers
- Hard and soft landscaping plan
- Fire hydrants

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:

Enquires about this report to **Lewis Tomlinson, Senior Planning Officer** lewis.tomlinson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk



22nd August 2025

Lewis Tomlinson Planning Officer

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

Dear Lewis

Ref: Planning Application: 25/01248/FUL|Change of use from dwelling (Use Class C3) & agricultural land to a wellness centre (Class E) and wedding and events venue (Sui Generis) with guest sleeping accommodation and parking

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council has voted unanimously to recommend refusal for this planning application for the following reasons:

1. Nature of the Planning Application (Descriptor)

The application states “wedding and events venue”. This title is repeated in the accompanying ‘Design and Access Statement’. No details of any events other than weddings are included in the application.

A very similar application was previously submitted in 2021, namely:
(21/01768/FUL|Change of use to allow for a mixed use as private residence (Class C3a), a wedding and corporate events venue (sui generis use) with ancillary guest accommodation and parking)”

There is therefore a reasonable assumption or presumption that there is an intention for events other than weddings to take place on the site, but again no details are provided.

The applicant’s representative has verbally stated that the wording used for the planning application is not correct, but the Parish Council is bound to make its decision on what is formally submitted and as stated in the bundle.

On this basis, the Parish Council cannot make a clear determination until there is proper clarification regarding the nature and intent of the application.

2. Traffic / Highway Safety

Parishioners have commissioned their own traffic report which highlights that there are no passing places for traffic between the Lodge gates (at Rideaway) and the Wellness Centre.

In the UK, for commercial use (with regard to single-track rural roads carrying commercial vehicles) the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) provides guidance on layout, including spacing between passing places.

According to DMRB guidance (Volume 2, Clause 3.11.9.1): ‘Where forward visibility is unrestricted, passing places should be provided at intervals of approximately 60 m (measured from the end of one to the start of the next), subject to terrain and land tenure considerations.’

Given that coaches and minibuses will be delivering patrons to events via the Lodge entrance, and also 7.5 tonne box vans making deliveries (acknowledged in the application), we are concerned about how road safety will be maintained, also mindful that pedestrians may also be walking on or beside the new track.

The passing location is restricted to a relatively short section of the track, located in front of the gates by the Lodge gates and adjacent to the highway at Rideaway – this section is estimated at only 15 metres in length, and is part of the direct approach to the splay at the junction with the road. If traffic builds up (patrons’ arrivals can be expected to peak just before and after the event), we believe that queueing on Rideaway is inevitable, including late at night. This is a road with no footpaths, and frequent foot and equestrian traffic.

Traffic approaching the entrance from the south will be exiting a national speed limit (60mph), with limited visibility due to trees and a significant bend close to the junction with New Road. It is also highly likely that event traffic will approach this entrance from both directions, so it is also possible that the road is blocked both ways for periods of time.

It is believed that the speed measurement quoted in the application “85% decile - 33.3mph” (ref: 2024 change of use application Transport Statement pg7) was taken “in the vicinity of the 20mph speed limit” – this is not the relevant location! The survey was almost certainly conducted close to the splash, which is approximately 200m to the north of the Rideaway entrance where the average speeds will be much higher.

The application states that 45 car parking spaces are available. Given that up to 180 patrons plus staff may be attending at any time, we believe that this will be insufficient and would like to understand where excess vehicles will park. Any event parking on Rideaway would clearly be very dangerous, and any parking in the village would bring disturbance late at night as patrons leave the event(s).

3. Noise

The application states that events have been held with no apparent disturbance measured / recorded at the receptor points.

We are concerned that during events, windows and doors will inevitably be opened, which will significantly increase the sound levels.

The application states that patrons can use the walled garden up to 11pm in the evening, with no active mitigation measures. This, to our knowledge, has not been tested for potential effects on parishioners' amenity. Up to 150 people outdoors in the evening, with alcohol often being consumed, pose a significant potential for disturbance.

The applicant has suggested that locally retired people may be employed using hand-held devices to monitor the sound levels: this is wholly inadequate and unacceptable. The nearby Parish Village Hall uses an automatic sound measurement and suppression system where any amplification is immediately turned off if maximum sound levels are exceeded – which would be a much more effective remedy.

We are also concerned about large numbers of vehicles leaving late at night. The designated car parking areas are only 75 metres from the closest residents' properties, so there will inevitably be repeated light and noise disturbance throughout the year.

4. The New Road

Hemingford Abbots Parish Council and its parishioners have for more than three years repeatedly written to Huntingdonshire District Council regarding the lack of a planning application for this construction, but no reply has ever been received. It is now the subject of a retrospective CLEUD application. To date, the construction has been described as an 'agricultural track', or a 'track agricultural in form'.

This is the Parish Council's first opportunity to query this build, as it has previously been excluded from previous planning applications for the site.

The applicant's pack for the CLEUD acknowledges that a planning application should have been submitted in 2021 after it was largely constructed. We would like to know why Huntingdonshire District Council did not request a suitable application, especially given the repeated prompts from the parish - including an independent report supplied by a Heritage specialist (Pegasus) at the 2024 planning appeal hearing.

Our contention is that the road was built without planning permission, has damaged an important heritage asset (see below), and that Huntingdonshire District Council has failed to act appropriately in acknowledging these concerns in its decision-making (for example, not undertaking any enforcement investigations). We therefore believe that Huntingdonshire District Council should not and cannot grant a CLEUD under 'building for agricultural use', and

then immediately grant extended permission for commercial use as part of this application without addressing the repeated calls for an investigation into potential planning and heritage infringements.

5. Heritage

It is agreed by all parties that the site contains ridge and furrow (various statements made by the applicant and other interested parties in previous planning applications) - this has been built over without any consultation or approval from Historic England or the parish. No planning application was ever submitted for this road / track construction.

The applicant's advisors stated in its Heritage Plan in Sept 2023 (part of the appeal against non-determination of application 23/01749/LBC) that 'the track is of agricultural form' (para 98), and that '..it crosses land in which R&F is evident in aerial photography' (Para 100).

The NPPF requires harm to a heritage asset to be weighed against the public benefits under the provisions of paras 207 to 209.

Hemingford Abbots and Hemingford Park in particular is sited in an important Conservation Area. Any proposal should preserve and wherever possible, enhance features that contribute positively to the area's character, appearance and setting as set out in character statements.

The Conservation area Character Appraisal (2008) notes that where R&F survive it should be valued and preserved. (Ref: Applicant's 2023 Heritage Statement Plan Para 100).

Ridge and Furrow at this site has potentially medieval origins (ref: 2024 Pegasus Report), and is (some of) the best preserved in the district / county.

To repeat again, previous planning applications for this development have excluded the new road / agricultural track, as they have been confined to the red line around the property: e.g., the road /track in question was specifically ruled as being outside the scope of the planning appeal. Therefore, we do not know Historic England's opinions on this, but Hemingford Abbots Parish Council has consistently expressed concerns over damage to ridge and furrow and the importance of its preservation.

In 2024, Huntingdonshire District Council itself recognised the importance of the heritage value of ridge and furrow in the parish in its consideration of an application submitted by 43 Common Lane ('change of use from arable grazing land to residential garden'), where the Conservation Officer stressed the importance of protecting the ridge and furrow that was present. The planning application was subsequently withdrawn.

LP34 refers to "...no alteration of any feature of historic or architectural value.." and again "...cause no harm to the area's special character or appearance..." (ref: the applicant's Design & Access Statement, pages 38-42) - but ridge and furrow we believe has been damaged, and this

damage will inevitably be made worse by the additional traffic and footfall that would result from the approval of this application.

This construction has also altered the original approach to the house and resulted in negative impacts upon its landscape (Pegasus Group report 2024).

Under the NPPF framework, we would like Huntingdonshire District Council to answer the following questions:

- Why was a planning application not sought, as required by concurrent planning regulations, at the time for this build?
- Why have the repeated, written concerns of the Parish Council and its residents not been responded to?
- What public benefits result from the creation of this new road to weigh against the harm identified?

A freedom of information request will be submitted imminently (for the avoidance of doubt, before Monday, 25th August 2025) to seek more information from Huntingdonshire District Council regarding how this potentially unlawful development was managed. Hemingford Abbots Parish Council respectfully suggests that a decision cannot be made on this planning application until this investigation has been completed, as the use of the new road for access to and for servicing the venue(s) is a critical part of the application.

6. Conditions:

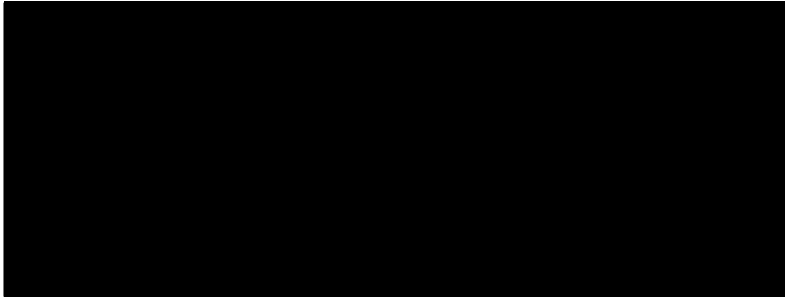
Whilst Hemingford Abbots Parish Council strongly opposes this application, if Huntingdonshire District Council were minded to pass it, we ask that the following conditions be introduced:

- a. Installation of an automatic noise measurement and suppression system which will remove power to any amplified music in the event of a breach of noise control
- b. Physical marshalling to take place to control traffic entering the site from Rideaway at peak times (for any event hosting more than 40 patrons).
- c. Appropriate information and signposting to all guests and contractors so as to avoid any traffic unnecessarily entering the residential area of the village.
- d. A clear, published plan for how parking 'overspill' will be managed.
- e. The grant of a temporary licence for 24 months during which the commercial use of the site can be monitored for any loss of resident amenity and traffic issues, and corrective actions taken.
- f. That large events (defined here as over 50 patrons) can only be held on alternate weekends (which would still allow the target number of 26 events a year to be achieved).

I would be grateful to receive confirmation from you that our recommendation for refusal and the reasons given have been uploaded to the Planning Portal.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely



General Notes


- Do not scale from this drawing
- All dimensions to be verified on site
- To be read in conjunction with all relevant documents
- In the event of discrepancy notify the Architect immediately
- All steel structural elements to be finished with intumescent coating, 30 minutes fire resistance. For all structural elements and connection see SE drawings.
- This document is copyright of Hugh Cullum Architects Ltd

Issue Status

- SK Sketch	- T Tender	- P Permissions
- D Design	- E Existing Condition	- C Contract

rev	note	date	(drawn by/checked by)
()	: Issued for PL	13/07/23	(FA/HC)
(A)	: updated survey information for PL	18/06/25	(GW/HC)

Page 41

 Boundary of application site

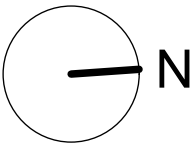
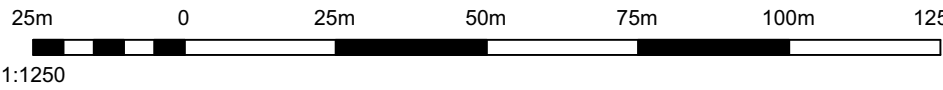
HUGHCULLUM
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61b Judd Street
London WC1H 9QT
t 020 7383 7647
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mail@hughcullum.com

Hemingford Park

Proposed Build Drawings
Site Location Plan

1:1250@A1
July 2023

HP004 - PB001 (A)



General Notes

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Issue Status

- SK Sketch

- D Design

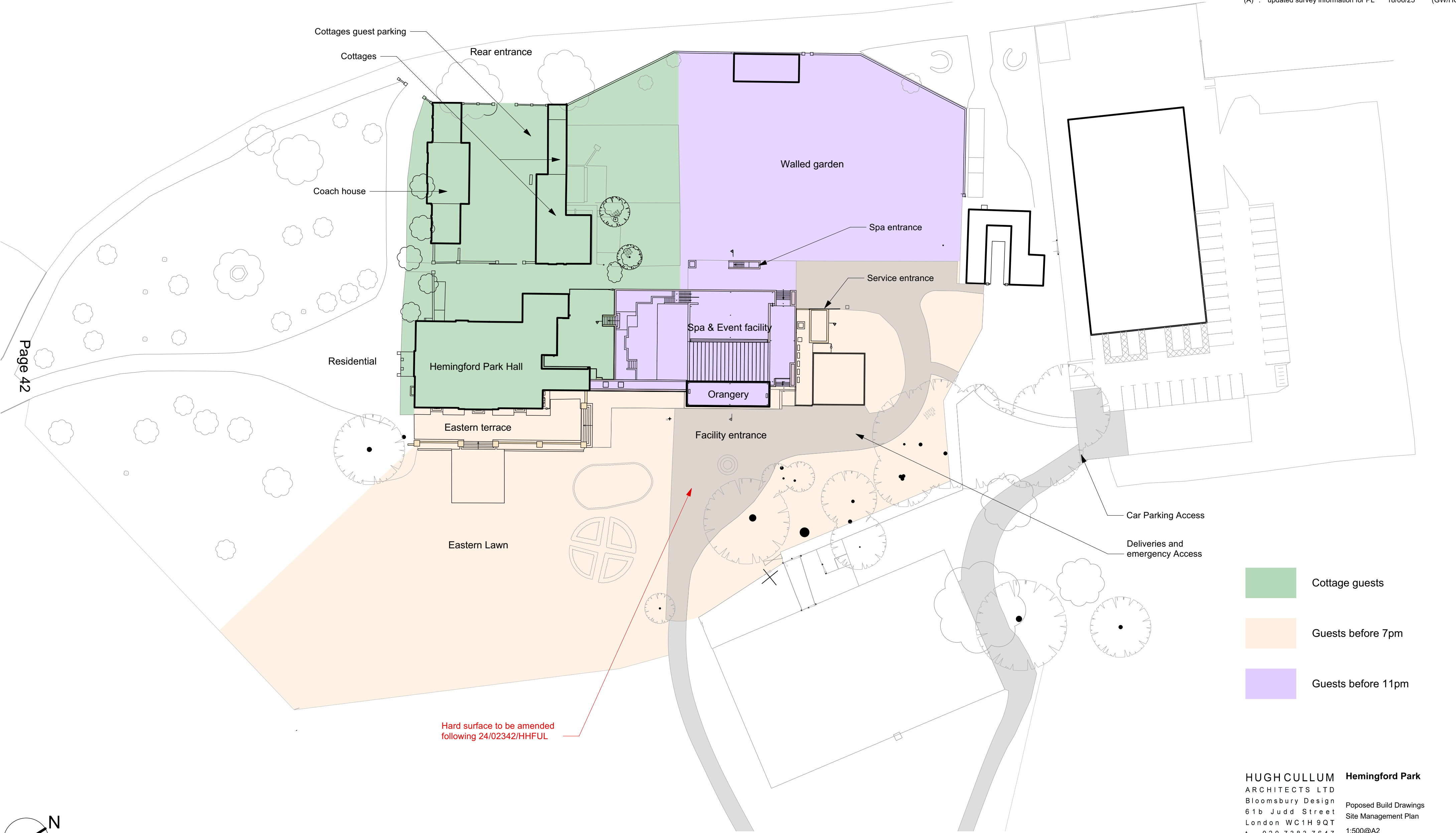
- T Tender

- E Existing Condition

- P Permissions

- C Contract

rev	note	date	(drawn by/checked by)
()	: Issued for PL	13/07/23	(FA/HC)
(A)	: updated survey information for PL	18/06/25	(GW/HC)



- Cottage guests
- Guests before 7pm
- Guests before 11pm

General Notes

- Do not scale from this drawing
- All dimensions to be verified on site
- To be read in conjunction with all relevant documents
- In the event of discrepancy notify the Architect immediately
- All steel structural elements to be finished with intumescent coating, 30 minutes fire resistance. For all structural elements and connection see SE drawings.
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Issue Status

- SK Sketch	- T Tender	- P Permissions
- D Design	- E Existing Condition	- C Contract

rev	note	date	(drawn by/checked by)
1	Issued for PL	13/07/23	(FA/HC)
(A)	updated survey information for PL	18/06/25	(GW/HC)

- All vehicles access
- Deliveries and emergency access
- Car parking access
- Boundary of application site

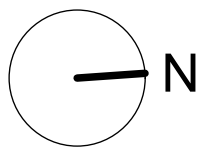
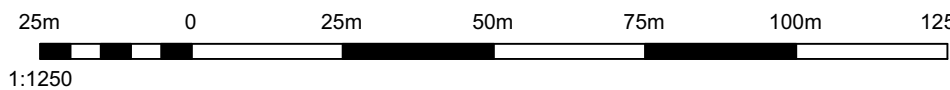
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Hemingford Park

Proposed Build Drawings
Vehicle Access Plan

1:1250@A1
July 2023

HP004 - PB003 (A)



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DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 15th SEPTEMBER 2025

Case No: 25/00972/S73

Proposal: VARIATION OF CONDITIONS 1 (PERMITTED USE), 6 (ACCESS TIME FRAME) AND REMOVAL OF CONDITION 2 (5 YEAR LIMIT) OF 18/00840/FUL.

Location: LEGACY PARK, CHATTERIS ROAD, SOMERSHAM

Applicant: MR F ADAMS

Grid Ref: 538044 279276

Date of Registration: 29th May 2025

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 is located in the countryside to the north-east of Somersham approximately 2.9km travelling distance from the centre of the village.
- 1.2 The site is primarily in Flood Zone 3a with small sections of Flood Zone 2 and is therefore considered to be at a high risk of flooding from river sources. The SFRA 2017 also shows the north-western corner of the site is also shown as being susceptible to surface water flooding and the western portion of the site at high risk of groundwater flooding.
- 1.3 The site has come forward in 3 elements.
- 1.4 The eastern element of the site benefits from permanent planning permission for 4 pitches.
- 1.5 The western element of the site benefits from a 5 year temporary planning permission for 7 pitches granted under 23/02358/FUL on 18.07.2024. Members should note that a similar S73 application

has been received for this part of the site under reference 25/00973/S73.

- 1.6 This application relates to the central element of the site which benefits from a 5 year temporary planning permission for 4 pitches, allowed at appeal (APP/H0520/W/23/3334636) 30th May 2024.

Proposal

- 1.7 Temporary planning permission for a period of 5 years was allowed on appeal on 30th May 2024 under planning permission reference 18/00840/FUL for Change of use of land to provide four additional gypsy/traveller pitches with day rooms and gym room/store
- 1.8 This section 73 application was submitted on 29th May 2025 and seeks the Variation of Conditions 1 (Permitted Use), 6 (Access Time Frame) and Removal of Condition 2 (5 Year Limit) of 18/00840/FUL.
- 1.9 This application has been accompanied by the following:
- Supporting statement
 - Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.10 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 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.

•

- 2.4 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
- LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP5: Flood Risk
- LP6: Waste Water Management
- LP9: Small Settlements
- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP20: Homes for Rural Workers
- LP25: Housing Mix
- 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 (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.
- 3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)
- 3.5 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 0801685FUL: Temporary change of use of land from agriculture to caravan/mobile home travellers site (two pitches) including new vehicular access, associated roadway and hardstanding. (Refused)
- 4.2 0803522FUL: Permanent change of use of agricultural land to a travellers site with 6 pitches including new vehicular access roadway and hardstanding (Refused)
- 4.3 0803523FUL: Permanent change of use of agricultural land to a travellers site for 2 pitches including new vehicular access, associated roadway and hardstanding (Refused, Appeal Allowed)
- 4.4 0900550FUL: Permanent change of use of land from agriculture to caravan/mobile home travellers site (6 pitches) including vehicular access roadway and hardstanding (Refused, Appeal Dismissed)
- 4.5 1401501FUL: Change of use of land to provide two additional pitches for gypsy/travellers (Approved)
- 4.6 18/00840/FUL: Change of use of land to provide four additional gypsy/traveller pitches with day rooms and gym room/ store (Refused, Appeal Allowed)
- 4.7 22/02501/FUL: Change of use of agricultural land to caravan holiday park comprising 18 pitches and toilet block (retrospective) (Approved temp 5 year)
- 4.8 23/02358/FUL: Use of Land for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Use creating 7 pitches comprising the siting of 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan, a Day Room and associated parking and a new Children's Play Area. (Temp 5 year approval)

- 4.9 25/00973/S73: Removal of Conditions 1 (5 Year Time Limit), 5 (Permanent Pitches), 6 (90 Days), 7 (Transient Pitches) and Variation of Condition 10 (Access) of 23/02358/FUL (pending consideration)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Somersham Parish Council – Object.

Permitted use was passed for family members only. The applicant has now applied for the 5 year limit to be removed, and for access to the site to be upgraded. Somersham Parish Council agreed that if these are going to be permanent sites, they are therefore not operating as per the site requirements under planning policy. It is also dangerous for pedestrians walking into the village from the site.

- 5.2 Environment Agency - The removal of condition 2 would allow the siting of four mobile homes intended for residential use on a permanent basis within Flood Zone 3. The development is classed as 'highly vulnerable' in accordance with Annex 3 of the NPPF. Table 2 of the PPG makes it clear that this type of development is not compatible with Flood Zone 3 and therefore should not be permitted. The appeal decision concluded that no evidence had been provided to demonstrate that the Sequential Test has been passed. No further evidence has been submitted with this application. We would only be able to withdraw our objection to this application if confirmation is provided that your Authority considers the Sequential Test has been passed. As previously advised, the site is located outside the extent of our Fenland breach mapping and we therefore consider that the main source of flood risk at this site is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB). However, please note that our Fenland breach mapping does not include an allowance for climate change in this location.

- 5.3 Middle Level Commissioner (Warboys, Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board ("the Board")) – No objection.

As previously discussed, the comments forwarded to HDC in June 2023 on behalf of the Board, were perhaps too 'in-depth' to be understood by those without technical expertise. I have considered the various documents on the HDC planning portal, and hope that the simple response below is easier for a non-professional person to comprehend. The Board's Standard of Protection (SoP) provided is 2.00 – 3.33% AEP, which means that the whole district would be at risk from a 1-in-30 to 1-in-50-year storm. However, it is considered that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood Flood Risk Management Authority's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. No evidence

has been discovered of the site or immediate area being flooded in recent years. Appropriate design can ensure that the proposals are resistant and resilient to flooding with any residual risk managed safely. Neither the Commissioners nor the Board have objected to the previous planning applications relating to the above site. It is hoped that the above information will help enable the planning permission to be changed from a temporary approval to a permanent one.

- 5.4 Highway Authority - Following a review of the documents provided to the Highway Authority as part of the above planning application it was noted that the applicant has requested to vary Condition 6 (Access Time Frame) to carry out the access improvement works within 18 months of this decision. However, 18 months is an excessive time frame for the works of this nature and I have noted that we have already received a Short Form 278 application to carry out the works. I would therefore suggest that six months from the date of the decision is adequate.
- 5.5 Environmental Health – No objections.
- 5.6 Lead Local Flood Authority – No comment.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations 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 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that the Section 73 application process can be used to vary a condition on a planning permission which, if approved, will result in a completely new standalone planning permission:

"Permission granted under Section 73 takes effect as a new, independent permission to carry out the same development as previously permitted subject to new or amended conditions. The new permission sits alongside the original permission, which remains intact and unamended. It is open to the applicant to decide whether to implement the new permission or the one originally granted. A decision notice describing the new permission should clearly express that it is made under Section 73. It should set out all of the conditions imposed on the new permission, and, for the purpose of clarity restate the conditions imposed on earlier permissions that continue to have effect."

- 7.6 Temporary planning permission for a period of 5 years was allowed on appeal on 30th May 2024 under planning permission reference 18/00840/FUL for Change of use of land to provide four additional gypsy/traveller pitches with day rooms and gym room/store.

- 7.7 This section 73 application was submitted on 29th May 2025 and seeks the Variation of Conditions 1 (Permitted Use), 6 (Access Time Frame) and Removal of Condition 2 (5 Year Limit) of 18/00840/FUL.

- 7.8 Condition 1 stated:

*'The use hereby permitted shall be carried on only by the following:
Household 1: Mr D & Mrs F Fossey
Household 2: Mr Nathan Russell
Household 3: Mr Jonny Russell
Household 4: Mr David Smith
and shall be for a limited period being the period of 5 years from the date of this decision, or the period during which the premises are occupied by them, whichever is the shorter.'*

- 7.9 The application seeks to vary condition 1 so it reads:

'The site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers, defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, December 2024, namely "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', or as amended in any subsequent wording of the definition'.

7.10 Condition 2 stated:

'When the premises cease to be occupied those named in condition 1 above, or at the end of 5 years, whichever shall first occur, the use hereby permitted shall cease and all caravans, buildings, structures, materials and equipment brought on to the land, or works undertaken to it in connection with the use, shall be removed and the land restored to its condition before the development took place.'

7.11 The application seeks to remove condition 2 as it will no longer be necessary if condition 1 is varied.

7.12 Condition 6 stated:

'Within 6 months of the date of this decision, the access shall be widened to a minimum width of 6m, for a minimum distance of 15m measured from the near edge of the highway carriageway and laid out with 7.5 radius kerbs. The access shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification, including adequate drainage measures to prevent surface water run-off onto the adjacent public highway and thereafter retained.'

7.13 The application seeks to vary condition 6 so it reads:

'Within 18 months of the date of this decision, the access shall be widened to a minimum width of 6m, for a minimum distance of 15m measured from the near edge of the highway carriageway and laid out with 7.5 radius kerbs. The access shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification, including adequate drainage measures to prevent surface water run-off onto the adjacent public highway and thereafter retained.'

7.14 Looking at the appeal decision and reasons for the three conditions, the main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Flood Risk
- Highway Safety

Flood Risk

- 7.15 The great channel of the Ouse Washes is approximately 3.25km from the appeal site and together with the Ouse Washes Barrier banks, the Ouse Washes protect the area from fluvial flooding from the Delph and New Bedford rivers. The Delph and New Bedford Rivers are artificial channels into which water from the Great Ouse is channelled at Earith. The site is protected from these potential sources of flooding because, if the river banks are at risk of being over topped, the Environment Agency opens the Earith Sluices to allow water into the Ouse Washes from the Great Ouse.
- 7.16 Sited within the Middle Level of the Fens, the site lies within Flood Zone 3a but the Environment Agency have confirmed that it is located outside of the extent of the Fenland Breach mapping and is therefore not considered to be at a risk of flooding in the event of a breach of the Ouse Washes flood defences. The main source of flood risk at this site is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board (IDB).
- 7.17 The following paragraphs summarise the Planning Inspector's key findings for the current application to vary and remove conditions:
- Para 9: The site lies within Flood Zone 3a but the Environment Agency have confirmed it is outside the extent of the Fenland Breach mapping and not at risk of flooding in the event of a breach of the Ouse Washes flood defences. The main source of flood risk is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board (IDB). The Middle Level Commissioners, on behalf of the IDB, have set out that there are a range of defences to minimise the risks of flooding and that these have been designed to give adequate protection between the 1 in 60 and 1 in 100 years events, inclusive of climate change;
 - Paras 11 – 13: Whilst, based on the 2010 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), the appellant's Flood Risk assessment refers to the site being within Flood Zone 1, which took account of defences, the Council relied on the 2017 SFRA, which did not, and consequently most of the site is within Flood Zone 3a;
 - Paras 16 -19: Given its location in Flood Zone 3a, irrespective of whether the Environment Agency or IDB consider the site to be at a low risk of flooding, it is necessary to carry out a sequential test. It has not been demonstrated the sequential test has been passed as it has not been shown that sites at a lower risk of flooding are not reasonably available.
 - Paras 22- 23: In terms of the wider sustainability benefits that outweigh the flood risk limb of the exceptions test, the proposal would provide limited economic and social benefits for the wider community through the spending of future occupiers in the local economy. In terms of environmental benefits, the proposal would

provide a settled base that reduces the need for long distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment.

- Paras 24 – 28: In terms of the safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere limb of the exceptions test, the investments in flood defences will ensure the development will be safe for its lifetime and drainage of the site will not increase flood risk elsewhere. However, the access is within Flood Zone 3 and would be impassable during a flood event, and on that basis would not be safe throughout its lifetime;
- Para 29: The Inspector concluded that the development significantly harms the living conditions of future occupiers due to the risk of flooding and so undermines wider consideration of public safety contrary to the requirements of Local Plan policy LP5, and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document.
- Para 59: Two appeal decisions where Traveller sites were allowed in Flood Risk Zone 3 at Wisbech St Mary (Appeal 3196061) and Ramsey Heights (Appeal 3196305) are not comparable because in those cases the sequential test was passed;
- Para 68: In the overall planning balance, the benefits of the proposal, including that the development would provide a settled base for four households, are not sufficient to outweigh the harm arising from the risks from flooding;
- Paras 69 – 76: On the basis that the risks of flooding are low and would be incurred for a limited period, of the difficulties for the occupiers of finding alternative, authorised accommodation, of the benefits for them from continued access to specialist medical treatment locally, and that the Council is updating the Local Plan, which will identify future sites, a 5 year temporary permission is justified, and would be a proportionate response that balances the Article 8 Human Rights of the occupants.
- At para 73 the Inspector indicated that a temporary permission would allow the appellants and the Council to work together to find a long term solution.

7.18 Local Plan Policy LP5 states a proposal will only be supported where all forms of flood risk, including breaches of flood defences or other defence failures have been addressed and with reference to the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This includes that the sequential approach and sequential test are applied and passed and if necessary the exception test is applied and passed. The majority of the site has been identified as being within Flood Zone 3a.

7.19 Whilst the applicants Flood Risk Assessment makes reference to the site being within Flood Zone 1 within the 2010 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), Officers are relying on the 2017 SFRA as its evidence base, rather than the 2010 SFRA which took into account existing defences and concluded that the site was therefore in Flood Zone 1.

7.20 PPG Paragraph: 024 Reference ID: 7-024-20220825 Revision date: 25 08 2022:

“How can the Sequential Test be applied to the location of development?”

The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account. Where it is not possible to locate development in low-risk areas, the Sequential Test should go on to compare reasonably available sites:

- Within medium risk areas; and*
- Then, only where there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high-risk areas.*

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. Climate change will also impact upon the level of protection infrastructure will offer throughout the lifetime of development. The Sequential Test should then consider the spatial variation of risk within medium and then high flood risk areas to identify the lowest risk sites in these areas, ignoring the presence of flood risk management infrastructure.

It may then be appropriate to consider the role of flood risk management infrastructure in the variation of risk within high and medium flood risk areas. In doing so, information such as flood depth, velocity, hazard and speed-of-onset in the event of flood risk management infrastructure exceedance and/or failure, should be considered as appropriate. Information on the probability of flood defence failure is unsuitable for planning purposes given the substantial uncertainties involved in such long-term predictions.”

7.21 The 2017 SFRA follows the recommended approach in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in relation to existing defences and is the most up to date in relation to flood risk.

7.22 The Framework and the PPG indicate that residential development should be directed to areas of lowest flood risk. Paragraph 168 of the Framework states that development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and this is on the basis of a sequential, risk based approach to the location of development.

7.23 Paragraph 173 of the Framework sets out that when determining any planning application, development should only be approved in areas at risk of flooding where it can be demonstrated that the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk. In addition, the PPG requires the appellant to carry out a

sequential test first, which steers new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source.

- 7.24 Given its location in Flood Zone 3a, irrespective of whether the Environment Agency or IDB consider the site to be at a low risk of flooding, it is necessary to carry out a sequential test, as set out in the LP policy, SPD and PPG. In particular the PPG confirms that the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as long term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain. Climate change could also impact on the level of protection infrastructure will offer throughout the lifetime of the development.
- 7.25 The SPD sets out how a sequential test should be undertaken, including agreeing the geographical search for the sequential test, which is generally the entire Local Planning Authority area.
- 7.26 The applicant has submitted a sequential test on the basis of the guidance at Section 4.4 of the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and following discussions with the planning officer.
- 7.27 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.
- 7.28 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.

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

- 7.30 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.
- 7.31 The applicant sets 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.’
- 7.32 In addition to what has been submitted by the applicant, Members should be aware that the Council has recently undertaken a call for sites (originally ran from 29 March to 7 June 2023, with an ongoing call for sites was opened and then closed on 31 Jan 2025) as part of the preparation of the new Local Plan. A consultation was held on the additional sites submitted which ran from 23 April 2025 and closed on 4 June 2025. The next step will be for the Council to formulate a list of preferred sites. The key point for members in consideration of this application is that no gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process.
- 7.33 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/>
- 7.34 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.
- 7.35 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.
- 7.36 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.

- 7.37 Officers therefore agree that the sequential test for this site is passed on this basis.
- 7.38 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.'
- 7.39 The applicant has provided an updated site specific flood risk assessment and has also undertaken the exception test which will be discussed in turn.
- 7.40 The Middle Level Commissioners has provided updated comments on this application that clarifies the position of Middle Level Commissioners and the IDB. The comments set out that it is considered that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. No evidence has been discovered of the site or immediate area being flooded in recent years. Appropriate design can ensure that the proposals are resistant and resilient to flooding with any residual risk managed safely. Neither the Commissioners nor the Board have objected to the previous planning applications relating to the above site. It is hoped that the above information will help enable the planning permission to be changed from a temporary approval to a permanent one.
- 7.41 The site specific flood risk assessment sets out that Legacy Park is at the highest point within the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley IDB area. The IDB main drainage system is designed to provide minimum 900mm. freeboard for rainfall equivalent to the 1 in 50 year event. But that is for the lowest land within the IDB area. During recent years Pidley Pumping Station has had a winter pumping range of between – 2.80m. and – 2.2m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and during summer of between – 2.60m and – 1.60m (due to higher summer retention in the drains for crop irrigation purposes). The topographic survey, Annex 5 shows that ground levels in the appeal site range from between 0.92 and 1.22 m. AOD. This means, that the lowest point within the appeal site sits at least $2.2 + 0.92 = 3.12$ m above the winter range and at least $1.6 + 0.92 = 2.52$ m above the summer range, that is above any conceivable flood within the IDB area. As para 5.2 of the FRA states: 'There are many hectares of agricultural land that would

flood in such circumstances before the development site was put at risk’.

7.42 If Pidley Pumping Station failed during an extreme rainfall event there would come a point when local flooding would occur, but the water which could not be pumped up into Fenton Lode would only originate from that part of the IDB area that drains to Pidley Pumping Station and because the land is flat and low-lying, the water would spread as a thin film over the surface of a wide area. To protect the farmland the Commissioners would take action to repair the pumping station or bring in temporary pumping equipment long before the site was affected. And the fact that much of the area surrounding the site is underlain by gravels will contribute to drainage of the land and to minimising any flooding that might occur.

7.43 In regard to the Exception Test, the applicant argues that the following:

Based on the evidence of the Environment Agency and the Middle Level Commissioners, the site and Chatteris Road are protected by three layers of flood defences by the Environment Agency, the Middle Level Commissioners, and the IDB. The economic importance of the area for agriculture and to keep existing homes and businesses safe, means that those agencies, supported by Government funding, are continuing to invest in flood defences and land drainage, including to take account of the impact of climate change.

The Ouse Washes barrier banks protect the area west of the Ouse Washes from flooding from the Delph and New Bedford rivers. The site is protected from these potential sources of flooding because, if the river banks are at risk of being over-topped, the Environment Agency opens the Earith Sluices to allow water into the Ouse Washes (which have the capacity to store a huge amount of water) from the Great Ouse. The works to the Middle Level barrier bank, raising it to a height of 5.5m. AOD, were completed in 2022 and meet the standards of the Reservoirs Act 1975, that is they are adequate for the 1 in 1,000 year event, taking account of climate change.

The computer generated maps of Maximum Flood Depth, Flood Velocity and Hazard Level in the event of a breach of the Ouse Washes flood defences at fig 6 of the Flood Risk Assessment show that the line of Chatteris Road provides a boundary between land to the east which would be impacted by a breach of the defences, and the land to the west, including the application site, which would not. This is a consequence of the road standing on land which is higher than that on either side of it.

The advice of the Middle Level Commissioners is that based on their maintenance of their own land drainage and flood

management infrastructure and that of the IDB that there is no significant risk of flooding of the application site within its lifetime, nor of any escape route by Chatteris Road. 5.7 Not only is there no significant risk of flooding of the site, if there was a possibility of such flooding, which the evidence of the Environment Agency and Middle Level Commissioners is that it will not occur, the Environment Agency's flood warning system and related mechanisms mean that people would be able to leave the site long before it could be impacted by any flooding.

On that basis, we would invite the Council to conclude that any escape route along Chatteris Road would not be impassible and that the Exception Test is passed.

- 7.44 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.
- 7.45 However, given the advice received from the Middle Level Commissioners that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development, officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.
- 7.46 It is therefore considered that the applicant have demonstrated that the Sequential and Exceptions tests are both passed. This will be weighed in the planning balance.

Highway Safety

- 7.47 Condition 6 stated:

'Within 6 months of the date of this decision, the access shall be widened to a minimum width of 6m, for a minimum distance of 15m measured from the near edge of the highway carriageway and laid out with 7.5 radius kerbs. The access shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification, including adequate drainage measures to prevent surface water run-off onto the adjacent public highway and thereafter retained.

- 7.48 The applicant has sought to vary the condition to 18 months from the date of the decision.
- 7.49 The Highway Authority has been consulted Highway Authority and consider 18 months is an excessive time frame for the works of this nature, and have noted that they have already received a Short Form 278 application to carry out the works. They suggest

that six months from the date of the decision would be more appropriate. Officers accept this advice, and a further 6 months time period for implementation of works is considered acceptable from the point of this decision.

- 7.50 It is therefore considered that condition 6 will be re-imposed, requiring the works to be carried within 6 months of the date of this S73 decision, not the original decision.

Other Matters

- 7.51 The Parish Council has raised concern that it is also dangerous for pedestrians walking into the village from the site. This was considered and addressed within the original consents which set out that it is recognised that there is some conflict with part a of Policy LP27 given the poor quality of the route for pedestrians to access the village of Somersham. However, it is considered 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.

Conclusion

- 7.52 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.53 It is clear from the appeal decision, that the Inspector left direction for the applicant to undertake further work regarding the sequential test and exception test. At the point of the appeal decision, the Council was still in the process of updating its GTAA and was also in the call for sites process.
- 7.54 The applicant has demonstrated that the sequential test and exceptions test are passed. The Middle Level Commissioners have provided additional information which states that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development.
- 7.55 Since the granting of the temporary permission, the Council has completed and published the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment (GTAA) to inform the Local Plan Review. This demonstrates an unmet need for gypsy and traveller pitches. 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. It is considered that the

application has demonstrated that flood mitigation is in place which aligns with the above.

- 7.56 Since the granting of the temporary permission, Members should be aware that the Council has recently undertaken a call for sites (originally ran from 29 March to 7 June 2023, with an ongoing call for sites was opened and then closed on 31 Jan 2025) as part of the preparation of the new Local Plan. A consultation was held on the additional sites submitted which ran from 23 April 2025 and closed on 4 June 2025. The next step will be for the Council to formulate a list of preferred sites. The key point for members in consideration of this application is that no gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites.
- 7.57 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.
- 7.58 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.
- 7.59 Legacy Park is a well-contained and well-looked after site that is appropriately managed. The location and scale of the site does not dominate the nearest settled community, when considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites.
- 7.60 Taken into account all of the above, it is considered that the application has demonstrated that the site should benefit from permanent planning permission.
- 7.61 It is therefore recommended that condition 1 is varied to:
- ‘The site shall not be occupied by any persons other than gypsies and travellers, defined in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, December 2024, namely “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', or as amended in any subsequent wording of the definition'.

- 7.62 This will ensure the site can only be occupied by those meeting the formal definition of a gypsy or traveller as set out in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, December 2024.
- 7.63 Given that the Officer recommendation is to grant permanent permission for the site as the application has satisfied the flood risk issue, and in doing so would help meet the need of gypsy and traveller pitches in the district, it is considered that the removal of the personal consent is also supported in this instance. Condition 2 is therefore recommended to be removed.
- 7.64 A further condition is recommended to ensure an evacuation plan is submitted for consideration.
- 7.65 The section 73 application also sought to vary condition 6. Following advice from the highway authority, a further 6 months is considered acceptable from the point of this decision and is therefore recommended.
- 7.66 All other relevant conditions on 18/00840/FUL will be reapplied.
- 7.67 The proposal is in overall accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused.
- 7.68 For the above reasons, it is recommended that planning permission be granted in this instance.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- G&T definition
- Number of pitches
- Layout
- No commercial activities
- Access works 6 months
- Drawings
- Submission of an updated Flood evacuation plan

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 <developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 June 2025 12:18:26 UTC+01:00
To: "DevelopmentControl" <DevelopmentControl@huntingdonshire.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 25/00972/S73

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 11/06/2025 12:18 PM from Mrs Irene Healiss.

Application Summary

Address:	Legacy Park Chatteris Road Somersham
Proposal:	Variation of Conditions 1 (Permitted Use), 6 (Access Time Frame and Removal of Condition 2 (5 Year Limit) of 18/00840/FUL
Case Officer:	Lewis Tomlinson

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name:	[REDACTED]
Email:	executiveofficer@somersham-pc.gov.uk
Address:	The Norwood Building Parkhall Road Somersham Huntingdon

Comments Details

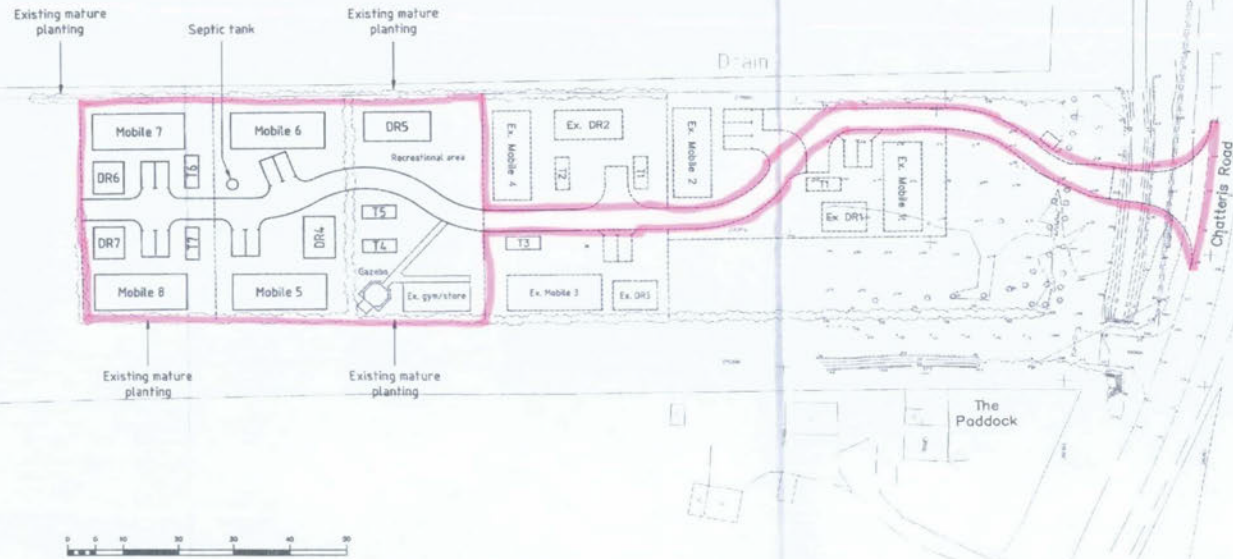
Commenter Type:	Town or Parish Council
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application
Reasons for comment:	
Comments:	<p>Further to the meeting held on the 9th June, Somersham Parish Council agreed to object to this proposal (which was approved at the end of last May on appeal.)</p> <p>Permitted use was passed for family members only. The applicant has now applied for the 5 year limited to be removed, and for access to the site to be upgraded.</p> <p>Somersham Parish Council agreed that if these are going to be permanent sites, they are therefore not operating as per the site</p>

requirements under planning policy.
It is also dangerous for pedestrians walking into the village from
the site.

Kind regards

NOTES

1. All dimensions are in millimetres unless stated otherwise.
2. The survey information is taken from topographical survey information prepared by MSurv Ltd.



LOCATION PLAN

Ref.	Accession	Dr/Id	Date
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STIRLINGMAYNARD
Construction Consultants

Stirling House, Bightwell, Breffon, Peterborough, PE3 8DJ
Tel: 01733 262310 Fax: 01733 335527
Email: enquiries@stirlingmaynard.com www.stirlingmaynard.com

Client

MR FRED ADAMS

Scheme Title

LAND OFF CHATTERIS ROAD,
SOMERSHAM

Drawing Title

BLOCK PLAN GENERAL LAYOUT

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Project Manager	P S SWALLOW	Drawing Status	PRELIMINARY
Drawn	PSS	Scale	1:500
Checked	PSS	Drawn By	4805/01/05
Date	Mar 2018	@ A1	

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 15th SEPTEMBER 2025

Case No: 25/00973/S73

Proposal: REMOVAL OF CONDITIONS 1 (5 YEAR TIME LIMIT), 5 (PERMANENT PITCHES), 6 (90 DAYS), 7 (TRANSIENT PITCHES) AND VARIATION OF CONDITION 10 (ACCESS) OF 23/02358/FUL

Location: LEGACY PARK, CHATTERIS ROAD, SOMERSHAM

Applicant: MR F ADAMS

Grid Ref: 538044 279276

Date of Registration: 29th May 2025

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 is located in the countryside to the north-east of Somersham approximately 2.9km travelling distance from the centre of the village.
- 1.2 The site is primarily in Flood Zone 3a with small sections of Flood Zone 2 and is therefore considered to be at a high risk of flooding from river sources. The SFRA 2017 also shows the north-western corner of the site is also shown as being susceptible to surface water flooding and the western portion of the site at high risk of groundwater flooding.
- 1.3 The site has come forward in 3 elements.
- 1.4 The eastern element of the site benefits from permanent planning permission for 4 pitches.
- 1.5 The central element of the site benefits from a 5 year temporary planning permission reference 18/00840/FUL for Change of use of land to provide four additional gypsy/traveller pitches with day

rooms and gym room/ store allowed at appeal (APP/H0520/W/23/3334636) 30th May 2024. Members should note that a similar S73 application has been received for this part of the site under reference 25/00972/S73.

- 1.6 This application relates to the western element of the site which benefits from a 5 year temporary planning permission for 7 pitches granted under 23/02358/FUL on 18.07.2024

Proposal

- 1.7 Temporary planning permission for a period of 5 years was granted on 18.07.2024 under planning permission reference 23/02358/FUL for Use of Land for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Use creating 7 pitches comprising the siting of 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan, a Day Room and associated parking and a new Children's Play Area.. This followed the appeal decision on the central part of the site.
- 1.8 This section 73 application was submitted on 29th May 2025 and seeks the Removal of Conditions 1 (5 Year Time Limit), 5 (Permanent Pitches), 6 (90 Days), 7 (Transient Pitches) and Variation of Condition 10 (Access) of 23/02358/FUL.
- 1.9 This application has been accompanied by the following:
- Supporting statement
 - Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.10 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 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.

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

PLANNING POLICIES

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

- LP1: Amount of Development
- LP2: Strategy for Development
- LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP5: Flood Risk
- LP6: Waste Water Management
- LP9: Small Settlements
- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP15: Surface Water
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP20: Homes for Rural Workers
- LP25: Housing Mix
- 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 (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.

3.4 National Planning Policy for Traveller sites (Dec 2024)

3.5 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

For full details visit the government website

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 0801685FUL: Temporary change of use of land from agriculture to caravan/mobile home travellers site (two pitches) including new vehicular access, associated roadway and hardstanding. (Refused)
- 4.2 0803522FUL: Permanent change of use of agricultural land to a travellers site with 6 pitches including new vehicular access roadway and hardstanding (Refused)
- 4.3 0803523FUL: Permanent change of use of agricultural land to a travellers site for 2 pitches including new vehicular access, associated roadway and hardstanding (Refused, Appeal Allowed)
- 4.4 0900550FUL: Permanent change of use of land from agriculture to caravan/mobile home travellers site (6 pitches) including vehicular access roadway and hardstanding (Refused, Appeal Dismissed)
- 4.5 1401501FUL: Change of use of land to provide two additional pitches for gypsy/travellers (Approved)
- 4.6 18/00840/FUL: Change of use of land to provide four additional gypsy/traveller pitches with day rooms and gym room/ store (Refused, Appeal Allowed)
- 4.7 22/02501/FUL: Change of use of agricultural land to caravan holiday park comprising 18 pitches and toilet block (retrospective) (Withdrawn)
- 4.8 23/02358/FUL: Use of Land for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Use creating 7 pitches comprising the siting of 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan, a Day Room and associated parking and a new Children's Play Area. (Temp 5 year approval)

- 4.9 25/00972/S73: Variation of Conditions 1 (Permitted Use), 6 (Access Time Frame and Removal of Condition 2 (5 Year Limit) of 18/00840/FUL (pending consideration)

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Somersham Parish Council – Object.

Permitted use was passed for family members only. The applicant has now applied for the 5 year limit to be removed, and for access to the site to be upgraded. Somersham Parish Council agreed that if these are going to be permanent sites, they are therefore not operating as per the site requirements under planning policy. It is also dangerous for pedestrians walking into the village from the site.

- 5.2 Environment Agency - The removal of condition 2 would allow the siting of four mobile homes intended for residential use on a permanent basis within Flood Zone 3. The development is classed as 'highly vulnerable' in accordance with Annex 3 of the NPPF. Table 2 of the PPG makes it clear that this type of development is not compatible with Flood Zone 3 and therefore should not be permitted. The appeal decision concluded that no evidence had been provided to demonstrate that the Sequential Test has been passed. No further evidence has been submitted with this application. We would only be able to withdraw our objection to this application if confirmation is provided that your Authority considers the Sequential Test has been passed. As previously advised, the site is located outside the extent of our Fenland breach mapping and we therefore consider that the main source of flood risk at this site is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Internal Drainage Board (IDB). However, please note that our Fenland breach mapping does not include an allowance for climate change in this location. (These comments were provided on 25/00972/S73)

- 5.3 Middle Level Commissioner (Warboys, Somersham & Pidley Internal Drainage Board ("the Board") – No objection.

As previously discussed, the comments forwarded to HDC in June 2023 on behalf of the Board, were perhaps too 'in-depth' to be understood by those without technical expertise. I have considered the various documents on the HDC planning portal, and hope that the simple response below is easier for a non-professional person to comprehend. The Board's Standard of Protection (SoP) provided is 2.00 – 3.33% AEP, which means that the whole district would be at risk from a 1-in-30 to 1-in-50-year storm. However, it is considered that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and Flood Risk Management Authority's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. No evidence

has been discovered of the site or immediate area being flooded in recent years. Appropriate design can ensure that the proposals are resistant and resilient to flooding with any residual risk managed safely. Neither the Commissioners nor the Board have objected to the previous planning applications relating to the above site. It is hoped that the above information will help enable the planning permission to be changed from a temporary approval to a permanent one.

- 5.4 Highway Authority - Following a review of the documents provided to the Highway Authority as part of the above planning application it was noted that the applicant has requested to vary Condition 10 (Access Time Frame) to carry out the access improvement works within 18 months of this decision. However, 18 months is an excessive time frame for the works of this nature and I have noted that we have already received a Short Form 278 application to carry out the works. I would therefore suggest that six months from the date of the decision is adequate.
- 5.5 Environmental Health – No objections.
- 5.6 Lead Local Flood Authority – No comment. (These comments were provided on 25/00972/S73)

6. REPRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 No representations 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 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that the Section 73 application process can be used to vary a condition on a planning permission which, if approved, will result in a completely new standalone planning permission:

"Permission granted under Section 73 takes effect as a new, independent permission to carry out the same development as previously permitted subject to new or amended conditions. The new permission sits alongside the original permission, which remains intact and unamended. It is open to the applicant to decide whether to implement the new permission or the one originally granted. A decision notice describing the new permission should clearly express that it is made under Section 73. It should set out all of the conditions imposed on the new permission, and, for the purpose of clarity restate the conditions imposed on earlier permissions that continue to have effect."

7.6 Temporary planning permission for a period of 5 years was granted on 18.07.2024 under planning permission reference 23/02358/FUL for Use of Land for Gypsy and Traveller Residential Use creating 7 pitches comprising the siting of 1 mobile home, 1 touring caravan, a Day Room and associated parking and a new Children's Play Area. This followed the appeal decision on the central part of the site.

7.7 This section 73 application was submitted on 29th May 2025 and seeks the Removal of Conditions 1 (5 Year Time Limit), 5 (Permanent Pitches), 6 (90 Days), 7 (Transient Pitches) and Variation of Condition 10 (Access) of 23/02358/FUL.

7.8 Condition 1 stated:

'The use hereby permitted shall be for a limited period being the period of 5 years from the date of this decision, or the period during which the premises are occupied by them, whichever is the shorter. When the premises cease to be occupied those named in condition 5, or at the end of 5 years, whichever shall first occur, the use hereby permitted shall cease and all caravans, buildings, structures, materials and equipment brought on to the land, or works undertaken to it in connection with the use, shall be removed and the land restored to its condition before the development took place.'

7.9 The application seeks to remove condition 1.

7.10 Condition 5 stated:

*'The permanent 5 pitches as detailed on the layout drawing to be approved in writing by the local planning authority as required by condition 4 shall be occupied by the following parties only:
Household 1: Mr Oscar Addis and partner
Household 2: Mr James Fossey and children
Household 3: Mr Alan Addis and partner
Household 4: Mr William Boswell, Mrs Gabriella and children
Household 5: Mr David Carbury, Mrs Laura Carbury and children'*

7.11 The application seeks to remove condition 5 as it will no longer be necessary if condition 1 is removed.

7.12 Condition 6 stated:

'The 2 transient pitches identified on the layout drawing to be approved in writing by the local planning authority as required by condition 4 shall be used as transient pitches only and shall at no time be used for permanent occupation. The occupation of the transient pitches shall be limited to no more than 90 days in any calendar year by any individual.'

7.13 The application seeks to remove condition 6 as it will no longer be necessary if condition 1 is removed.

7.14 Condition 7 stated:

'The site owners or, if different, the site operators shall maintain an up-to-date register of the names of all occupiers of the two transient pitches hereby approved as detailed on the layout drawing to be approved in writing by the local planning authority as required by condition 4, which shall include the length of stay of all occupiers of these pitches. The register shall be made available for inspection to the local planning authority upon request.'

7.15 The application seeks to remove condition 7 as the applicant argues it will no longer be necessary if condition 6 is removed.

7.16 Condition 10 stated:

'Within 6 months of the date of this decision, the access shall be widened to a minimum width of 6m, for a minimum distance of 15m measured from the near edge of the highway carriageway and laid out with 7.5 radius kerbs. The access shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification, including adequate drainage

measures to prevent surface water run-off onto the adjacent public highway and thereafter retained.

7.17 The application seeks to vary condition 10 so it reads:

'Within 18 months of the date of this decision, the access shall be widened to a minimum width of 6m, for a minimum distance of 15m measured from the near edge of the highway carriageway and laid out with 7.5 radius kerbs. The access shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification, including adequate drainage measures to prevent surface water run-off onto the adjacent public highway and thereafter retained.'

7.18 The application seeks to remove conditions 1, 5, 6 & 7 and vary condition 10.

7.19 Looking at the appeal decision and reasons for the three conditions, the main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Flood Risk
- Highway Safety

Flood Risk

7.20 The great channel of the Ouse Washes is approximately 3.25km from the appeal site and together with the Ouse Washes Barrier banks, the Ouse Washes protect the area from fluvial flooding from the Delph and New Bedford rivers. The Delph and New Bedford Rivers are artificial channels into which water from the Great Ouse is channelled at Earith. The site is protected from these potential sources of flooding because, if the river banks are at risk of being over topped, the Environment Agency opens the Earith Sluices to allow water into the Ouse Washes from the Great Ouse.

7.21 Sited within the Middle Level of the Fens, the site lies within Flood Zone 3a but the Environment Agency have confirmed that it is located outside of the extent of the Fenland Breach mapping and is therefore not considered to be at a risk of flooding in the event of a breach of the Ouse Washes flood defences. The main source of flood risk at this site is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board (IDB).

7.22 Planning permission 23/02358/FUL was granted on the basis of findings of the Inspector on 18/00840/FUL. The following paragraphs summarise the Planning Inspector's key findings for the current application to vary and remove conditions:

- Para 9: The site lies within Flood Zone 3a but the Environment Agency have confirmed it is outside the extent of the Fenland

Breach mapping and not at risk of flooding in the event of a breach of the Ouse Washes flood defences. The main source of flood risk is associated with watercourses under the jurisdiction of the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley Internal Drainage Board (IDB). The Middle Level Commissioners, on behalf of the IDB, have set out that there are a range of defences to minimise the risks of flooding and that these have been designed to give adequate protection between the 1 in 60 and 1 in 100 years events, inclusive of climate change;

- Paras 11 – 13: Whilst, based on the 2010 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), the appellant's Flood Risk assessment refers to the site being within Flood Zone 1, which took account of defences, the Council relied on the 2017 SFRA, which did not, and consequently most of the site is within Flood Zone 3a;
- Paras 16 -19: Given its location in Flood Zone 3a, irrespective of whether the Environment Agency or IDB consider the site to be at a low risk of flooding, it is necessary to carry out a sequential test. It has not been demonstrated the sequential test has been passed as it has not been shown that sites at a lower risk of flooding are not reasonably available.
- Paras 22- 23: In terms of the wider sustainability benefits that outweigh the flood risk limb of the exceptions test, the proposal would provide limited economic and social benefits for the wider community through the spending of future occupiers in the local economy. In terms of environmental benefits, the proposal would provide a settled base that reduces the need for long distance travelling and possible environmental damage caused by unauthorised encampment.
- Paras 24 – 28: In terms of the safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere limb of the exceptions test, the investments in flood defences will ensure the development will be safe for its lifetime and drainage of the site will not increase flood risk elsewhere. However, the access is within Flood Zone 3 and would be impassable during a flood event, and on that basis would not be safe throughout its lifetime;
- Para 29: The Inspector concluded that the development significantly harms the living conditions of future occupiers due to the risk of flooding and so undermines wider consideration of public safety contrary to the requirements of Local Plan policy LP5, and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document.
- Para 59: Two appeal decisions where Traveller sites were allowed in Flood Risk Zone 3 at Wisbech St Mary (Appeal 3196061) and Ramsey Heights (Appeal 3196305) are not comparable because in those cases the sequential test was passed;
- Para 68: In the overall planning balance, the benefits of the proposal, including that the development would provide a settled base for four households, are not sufficient to outweigh the harm arising from the risks from flooding;
- Paras 69 – 76: On the basis that the risks of flooding are low and would be incurred for a limited period, of the difficulties for the occupiers of finding alternative, authorised accommodation, of the

benefits for them from continued access to specialist medical treatment locally, and that the Council is updating the Local Plan, which will identify future sites, a 5 year temporary permission is justified, and would be a proportionate response that balances the Article 8 Human Rights of the occupants.

- At para 73 the Inspector indicated that a temporary permission would allow the appellants and the Council to work together to find a long term solution.

7.23 Local Plan Policy LP5 states a proposal will only be supported where all forms of flood risk, including breaches of flood defences or other defence failures have been addressed and with reference to the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This includes that the sequential approach and sequential test are applied and passed and if necessary the exception test is applied and passed. The majority of the site has been identified as being within Flood Zone 3a.

7.24 Whilst the applicants Flood Risk Assessment makes reference to the site being within Flood Zone 1 within the 2010 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), Officers are relying on the 2017 SFRA as its evidence base, rather than the 2010 SFRA which took into account existing defences and concluded that the site was therefore in Flood Zone 1.

7.25 PPG Paragraph: 024 Reference ID: 7-024-20220825 Revision date: 25 08 2022:

“How can the Sequential Test be applied to the location of development?”

The Sequential Test ensures that a sequential, risk-based approach is followed to steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding, taking all sources of flood risk and climate change into account. Where it is not possible to locate development in low-risk areas, the Sequential Test should go on to compare reasonably available sites:

- *Within medium risk areas; and*
- *Then, only where there are no reasonably available sites in low and medium risk areas, within high-risk areas.*

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. Climate change will also impact upon the level of protection infrastructure will offer throughout the lifetime of development. The Sequential Test should then consider the spatial variation of risk within medium and then high flood risk areas to identify the lowest risk sites in these areas, ignoring the presence of flood risk management infrastructure.

It may then be appropriate to consider the role of flood risk management infrastructure in the variation of risk within high and medium flood risk areas. In doing so, information such as flood depth, velocity, hazard and speed-of-onset in the event of flood risk management infrastructure exceedance and/or failure, should be considered as appropriate. Information on the probability of flood defence failure is unsuitable for planning purposes given the substantial uncertainties involved in such long-term predictions.”

- 7.26 The 2017 SFRA follows the recommended approach in the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) in relation to existing defences and is the most up to date in relation to flood risk.
- 7.27 The Framework and the PPG indicate that residential development should be directed to areas of lowest flood risk. Paragraph 168 of the Framework states that development should not be permitted if there are reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding and this is on the basis of a sequential, risk based approach to the location of development.
- 7.28 Paragraph 173 of the Framework sets out that when determining any planning application, development should only be approved in areas at risk of flooding where it can be demonstrated that the most vulnerable development is located in areas of lowest flood risk. In addition, the PPG requires the appellant to carry out a sequential test first, which steers new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source.
- 7.29 Given its location in Flood Zone 3a, irrespective of whether the Environment Agency or IDB consider the site to be at a low risk of flooding, it is necessary to carry out a sequential test, as set out in the LP policy, SPD and PPG. In particular the PPG confirms that the presence of existing flood risk management infrastructure should be ignored, as long term funding, maintenance and renewal of this infrastructure is uncertain. Climate change could also impact on the level of protection infrastructure will offer throughout the lifetime of the development.
- 7.30 The SPD sets out how a sequential test should be undertaken, including agreeing the geographical search for the sequential test, which is generally the entire Local Planning Authority area.
- 7.31 The applicant has submitted a sequential test on the basis of the guidance at Section 4.4 of the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), and following discussions with the planning officer.
- 7.32 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.

- 7.33 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.

- 7.34 This satisfied Stage B (identify reasonably available sites) of the sequential test.
- 7.35 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.
- 7.36 The applicant sets 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.'
- 7.37 In addition to what has been submitted by the applicant, Members should be aware that the Council has recently undertaken a call for sites (originally ran from 29 March to 7 June 2023, with an ongoing call for sites was opened and then closed on 31 Jan 2025) as part of the preparation of the new Local Plan. A consultation was held on the additional sites submitted which ran from 23 April 2025 and closed on 4 June 2025. The next step will be for the Council to formulate a list of preferred sites. The key point for members in consideration of this application is that no gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites process.

- 7.38 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, Travelling Showperson, boat dwellers and other caravan dwellers Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) 2024 which can be viewed here: <https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-update/evidence-library-for-local-plan-update/>
- 7.39 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.
- 7.40 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.
- 7.41 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.
- 7.42 Officers therefore agree that the sequential test for this site is passed on this basis.
- 7.43 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.'
- 7.44 The applicant has provided an updated site specific flood risk assessment and has also undertaken the exception test which will be discussed in turn.
- 7.45 The Middle Level Commissioners has provided updated comments on this application that clarifies the position of Middle Level Commissioners and the IDB. The comments set out that it is considered that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development. No evidence has been

discovered of the site or immediate area being flooded in recent years. Appropriate design can ensure that the proposals are resistant and resilient to flooding with any residual risk managed safely. Neither the Commissioners nor the Board have objected to the previous planning applications relating to the above site. It is hoped that the above information will help enable the planning permission to be changed from a temporary approval to a permanent one.

- 7.46 The site specific flood risk assessment sets out that Legacy Park is at the highest point within the Warboys, Somersham and Pidley IDB area. The IDB main drainage system is designed to provide minimum 900mm. freeboard for rainfall equivalent to the 1 in 50 year event. But that is for the lowest land within the IDB area. During recent years Pidley Pumping Station has had a winter pumping range of between – 2.80m. and – 2.2m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) and during summer of between – 2.60m and – 1.60m (due to higher summer retention in the drains for crop irrigation purposes). The topographic survey, Annex 5 shows that ground levels in the appeal site range from between 0.92 and 1.22 m. AOD. This means, that the lowest point within the appeal site sits at least $2.2 + 0.92 = 3.12$ m above the winter range and at least $1.6 + 0.92 = 2.52$ m above the summer range, that is above any conceivable flood within the IDB area. As para 5.2 of the FRA states: ‘There are many hectares of agricultural land that would flood in such circumstances before the development site was put at risk’.
- 7.47 If Pidley Pumping Station failed during an extreme rainfall event there would come a point when local flooding would occur, but the water which could not be pumped up into Fenton Lode would only originate from that part of the IDB area that drains to Pidley Pumping Station and because the land is flat and low-lying, the water would spread as a thin film over the surface of a wide area. To protect the farmland the Commissioners would take action to repair the pumping station or bring in temporary pumping equipment long before the site was affected. And the fact that much of the area surrounding the site is underlain by gravels will contribute to drainage of the land and to minimising any flooding that might occur.
- 7.48 In regard to the Exception Test, the applicant argues that the following:

Based on the evidence of the Environment Agency and the Middle Level Commissioners, the site and Chatteris Road are protected by three layers of flood defences by the Environment Agency, the Middle Level Commissioners, and the IDB. The economic importance of the area for agriculture and to keep existing homes and businesses safe, means that those agencies, supported by Government funding, are continuing to invest in flood defences

and land drainage, including to take account of the impact of climate change.

The Ouse Washes barrier banks protect the area west of the Ouse Washes from flooding from the Delph and New Bedford rivers. The site is protected from these potential sources of flooding because, if the river banks are at risk of being over-topped, the Environment Agency opens the Earith Sluices to allow water into the Ouse Washes (which have the capacity to store a huge amount of water) from the Great Ouse. The works to the Middle Level barrier bank, raising it to a height of 5.5m. AOD, were completed in 2022 and meet the standards of the Reservoirs Act 1975, that is they are adequate for the 1 in 1,000 year event, taking account of climate change.

The computer generated maps of Maximum Flood Depth, Flood Velocity and Hazard Level in the event of a breach of the Ouse Washes flood defences at fig 6 of the Flood Risk Assessment show that the line of Chatteris Road provides a boundary between land to the east which would be impacted by a breach of the defences, and the land to the west, including the application site, which would not. This is a consequence of the road standing on land which is higher than that on either side of it.

The advice of the Middle Level Commissioners is that based on their maintenance of their own land drainage and flood management infrastructure and that of the IDB that there is no significant risk of flooding of the application site within its lifetime, nor of any escape route by Chatteris Road. 5.7 Not only is there no significant risk of flooding of the site, if there was a possibility of such flooding, which the evidence of the Environment Agency and Middle Level Commissioners is that it will not occur, the Environment Agency's flood warning system and related mechanisms mean that people would be able to leave the site long before it could be impacted by any flooding.

On that basis, we would invite the Council to conclude that any escape route along Chatteris Road would not be impassible and that the Exception Test is passed.

- 7.49 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.
- 7.50 However, given the advice received from the Middle Level Commissioners that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the

development, officers consider the exception test is passed for this site.

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

Highway Safety

- 7.52 Condition 10 stated:

‘Within 6 months of the date of this decision, the access shall be widened to a minimum width of 6m, for a minimum distance of 15m measured from the near edge of the highway carriageway and laid out with 7.5 radius kerbs. The access shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification, including adequate drainage measures to prevent surface water run-off onto the adjacent public highway and thereafter retained.

- 7.53 The applicant has sought to vary the condition to 18 months from the date of the decision.

- 7.54 The Highway Authority has been consulted Highway Authority and consider 18 months is an excessive time frame for the works of this nature, and have noted that they have already received a Short Form 278 application to carry out the works. They suggest that six months from the date of the decision would be more appropriate. Officers accept this advice, and a further 6 months time period for implementation of works is considered acceptable from the point of this decision.

- 7.55 It is therefore considered that condition 6 will be re-imposed, requiring the works to be carried within 6 months of the date of this S73 decision not the original decision.

Other Matters

- 7.56 The Parish Council has raised concern that it is also dangerous for pedestrians walking into the village from the site. This was considered and addressed within the original consents which set out that it is recognised that there is some conflict with part a of Policy LP27 given the poor quality of the route for pedestrians to access the village of Somersham. However, it is considered 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.

Conclusion

- 7.57 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.58 It is clear from the appeal decision, that the Inspector left direction for the applicant to undertake further work regarding the sequential test and exception test. At the point of the appeal decision, the Council was still in the process of updating its GTAA and was also in the call for sites process.
- 7.59 The applicant has demonstrated that the sequential test and exceptions test are passed. The Middle Level Commissioners have provided additional information which states that the existing systems, assets, and defences provided by the various water level and flood RMA's (Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and Warboys, Somersham & Pidley IDB) are appropriate for the design life of the development.
- 7.60 Since the granting of the temporary permission, the Council has completed and published the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment (GTAA) to inform the Local Plan Review. This demonstrates an unmet need for gypsy and traveller pitches. 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. It is considered that the application has demonstrated that flood mitigation is in place which aligns with the above.
- 7.61 Since the granting of the temporary permission, Members should be aware that the Council has recently undertaken a call for sites (originally ran from 29 March to 7 June 2023, with an ongoing call for sites was opened and then closed on 31 Jan 2025) as part of the preparation of the new Local Plan. A consultation was held on the additional sites submitted which ran from 23 April 2025 and closed on 4 June 2025. The next step will be for the Council to formulate a list of preferred sites. The key point for members in consideration of this application is that no gypsy or traveller sites were submitted in the call for sites.
- 7.62 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.

- 7.63 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.
- 7.64 Legacy Park is a well-contained and well-looked after site that is appropriately managed. The location and scale of the site does not dominate the nearest settled community, when considered collectively with other nearby traveller sites.
- 7.65 Taken into account all of the above, it is considered that the application has demonstrated that the site should benefit from permanent planning permission.
- 7.66 It is therefore recommended that condition 1 is removed.
- 7.67 Condition 2 will remain which will ensure the site can only be occupied by those meeting the formal definition of a gypsy or traveller as set out in Annex 1 to Planning Policy for Traveller Sites, December 2024.
- 7.68 Given that the Officer recommendation is to grant permanent permission for the site as the application has satisfied the flood risk issue, and in doing so would help meet the need of gypsy and traveller pitches in the district, it is considered that the removal of the personal consent is also supported in this instance. Condition 5 is therefore recommended to be removed.
- 7.69 Given that that the site is recommended to become permanent and will no longer have a personal consent attached to it, it is considered any of the pitches on the site will be able to accommodate permanent gypsy and travellers pitches or those looking for a transient pitch. Conditions 6 and 7 are therefore recommended to be removed.
- 7.70 A further condition is recommended to ensure an evacuation plan is submitted for consideration.
- 7.71 The section 73 application also sought to vary condition 10. Following advice from the highway authority, a further 6 months is considered acceptable from the point of this decision and is therefore recommended.
- 7.72 All other relevant conditions on 23/02358/FUL will be reapplied.
- 7.73 The proposal is in overall accordance with the Development Plan and there are no material considerations which indicate that permission should be refused.

7.74 For the above reasons, it is recommended that planning permission be granted in this instance.

8. RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL subject to the following conditions:

- G&T definition
- Drawings
- Layout
- Number of pitches
- No commercial activities
- Access works 6 months
- Submission of an updated Flood evacuation plan

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 <developmentcontrol@huntingdonshire.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 June 2025 12:20:10 UTC+01:00
To: "DevelopmentControl" <DevelopmentControl@huntingdonshire.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments for Planning Application 25/00973/S73

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 11/06/2025 12:20 PM from Mrs Irene Healiss.

Application Summary

Address:	Legacy Park Chatteris Road Somersham
Proposal:	Removal of Conditions 1 (5 Year Time Limit), 5 (Permanent Pitches), 6 (90 Days), 7 (Transient Pitches) and Variation of Condition 10 (Access) of 23/02358/FUL
Case Officer:	Lewis Tomlinson

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

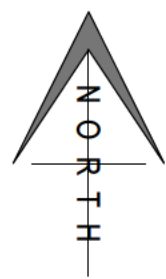
Name:	[REDACTED]
Email:	executiveofficer@somersham-pc.gov.uk
Address:	The Norwood Building Parkhall Road Somersham Huntingdon

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 the 9th June, Somersham Parish Council agreed to object to this proposal (which was approved at the end of last May on appeal.) Permitted use was passed for family members only. The applicant has now applied for the 5 year limited to be removed, and for access to the site to be upgraded. Somersham Parish Council agreed that if these are going to be

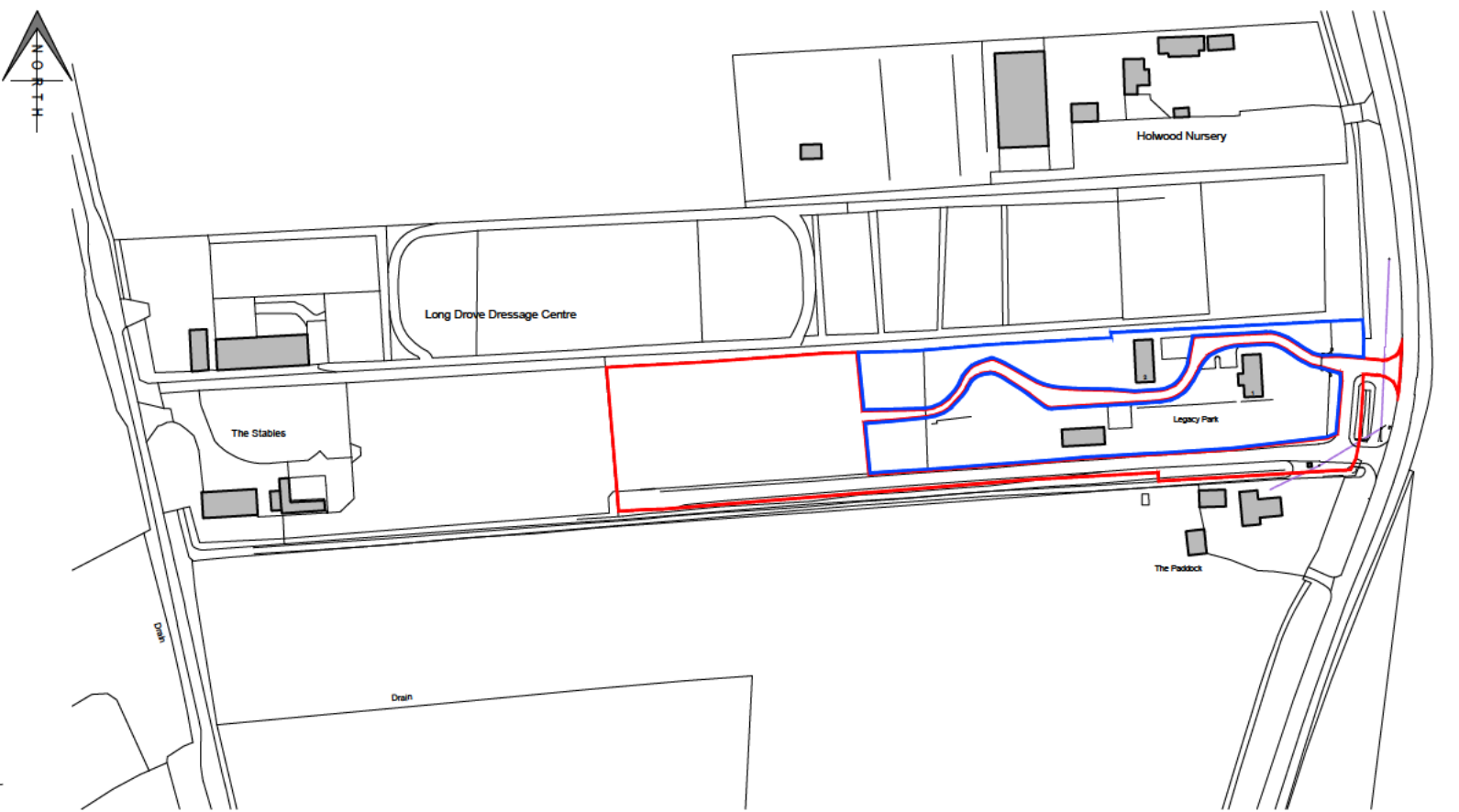
permanent sites, they are therefore not operating as per the site requirements under planning policy.
It is also dangerous for pedestrians walking into the village from the site.

Kind regards



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Site Plan - As Existing
0 5 10 12.5m
scale - 1:250

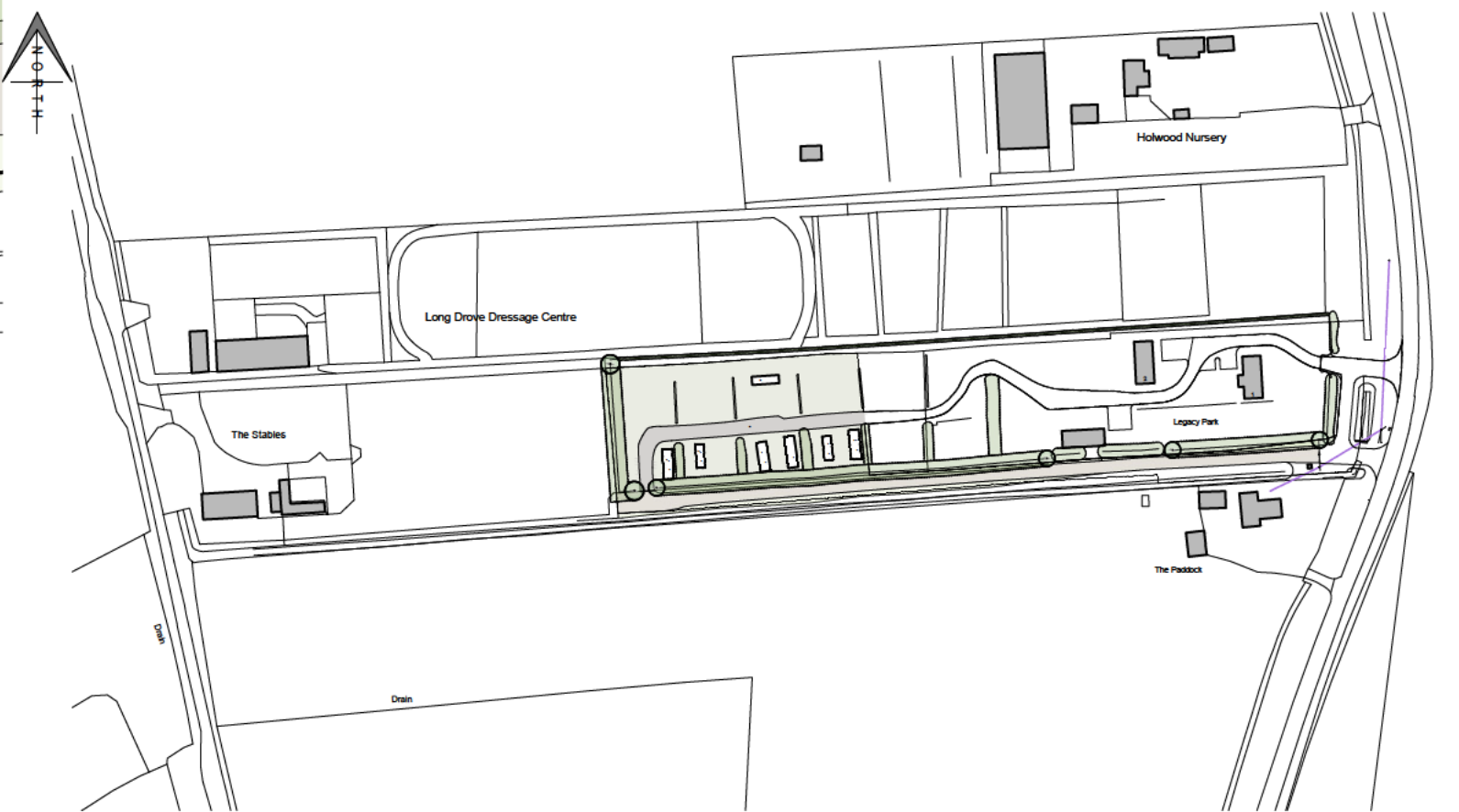


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Location Plan
0 10 20 50 100 125m
scale - 1:2500

Key

- Permeable surface.
- Existing access to be retained.
- Grass.
- Existing tree - indicative size and location.
- Existing hedge - indicative size and location.



Block Plan
0 10 20 50 100 125m
scale - 1:2500

PROJECT :
Proposed Change of Use at Legacy Park, Chatteris Road, Somersham
for Mr F Adams

DRAWING TITLE :
PLANNING SUBMISSION
Existing Site Plan and Location Plan

DATE :
Oct 23

SCALE :
Var @ A1

SHEET :
PC-162-P100

REV :
-

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 15th September 2025

PLANNING SERVICES PEER REVIEW ACTION PLAN

Purpose of document:

To provide Members of the Development Management Committee (DMC) with an update on the Planning Services Peer Review and to present the associated Action Plan for noting.

Summary:

The Action Plan has been developed in response to the findings of the Peer Review of Planning Services. It sets out the key improvement actions currently being progressed across the service.

This report is intended to:

- **Inform Members** of the current RAG (Red-Amber-Green) status of the Peer Review recommendations;
- **Provide feedback** on the progress of actions being implemented;
- **Invite Members to note** the Action Plan and offer any comments or observations.

Next Steps:

The Action Plan will continue to be monitored and updated as actions progress. Further updates will be brought to the Portfolio holder/shadow Portfolio holder and/or DMC at appropriate intervals to ensure transparency and Member oversight.

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Unique ref	Recommendation number	Recommendation	Definition	Action	Owner	Responsibility	Delivery resource	Timeframes	Status	Expected Exit Date
PPR001	R1	Corporately recognise the value of the Local Plan - prioritise, resource and adopt a Local Plan that will help to deliver corporate priorities	Achieve this by raising corporate awareness and support for the Local Plan to deliver corporate priorities (what and how); facilitate better collaborative working with internal and external partners; ensure effective engagement with communities; and consider a review of resources in the team to ensure the right level of experience is available to support the Local Plans Team to support rapid progress (new style plan).	The team is actively drafting new and replacement policies and site allocations. Cross-council engagement is underway to gather input and ensure alignment with wider corporate priorities. Further engagement is planned with other colleagues, including those within Planning. A communications strategy for the next phase of Local Plan preparation has been presented to Overview and Scrutiny on 8 July 2025. Resourcing remains a challenge due to the size of the team. Specialist consultancies are supporting the team with the preparation of technical evidence. A Local Plan update was delivered at the Agents & Developers Forum 21/7/2025	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr Clare Bond	Ongoing/continuous	Light Green	Ongoing
PPR002	R2	Consider Reviewing the role and membership of the Local Plan Advisory Group	To ensure there is effective cross party working and consensus building for a Local Plan which is being prepared across two administration terms.	The composition of the Board has been in place since 2023 and the Members were last agreed in May 2025. It comprises of Seven Councillors split between differing parties. Three Conservative, one Labour, one Liberal Democrat and two independents. LPAG meets on a regular basis.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr Clare Bond	Board Composition Completed May 2025 Attendance being monitored	Light Green	Completed/Ongoing
PPR003	R3	The Planning Service needs to create a clear strategy for delivering the Place Strategy and Corporate Plan	Improve clarity on how planning can deliver corporate goals, it is suggested that the leadership of the planning service translates the strategic vision and corporate priorities into clearly articulated strategy on how Planning can support this and set out what success will look like.	A Planning Services Strategic Alignment document that showcases how the Planning Services is integral to the Corporate Plan has been developed and is in its final draft. The document explains how Planning Services will enable sustainable growth, protect local character, and support inclusive, thriving communities through proactive, responsive, and transparent planning. The document will be circulated to all team leaders for them to discuss with their staff and updates will be referenced at the monthly All Planning Department meeting. Statistics will be shared monthly at the same event to demonstrate how we are delivering and will be part of the PowerBI dashboards (PPR019, R9d)	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson Greg Dewhirst	Underway - A draft document has been created and is being finalised before shared with Team Leaders. This will be announced at the September Planning All Staff meeting. The theme of Planning being an essential part of the Place Strategy & Corporate Plan will continue to be	Amber	Ongoing
PPR004	R4	Training for Councillors and Planning Committee	Support less experienced councillors by securing training for planning/economy/environment portfolio leads such as training provided by the LGA and Planning Advisory Service (Leadership Essentials). Planning Chair mentoring is also recommended for the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee (PAS). Additionally, review the way Planning Committee Councillors are trained and consider PAS 'mock committee' training.	A training session, and subsequent plan, for Councillors is being developed for launch in Winter 2025. A discussion about the delivery of training has taken place. The two options were for delivery by Local Government Association (LGA) and the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) or internally by officers. With elections due May 2026 internal delivery sessions are preferred. As the current DMC is well-established, refresher training would be beneficial to reinforce key practices and ensure continued effectiveness. PAS training may be revisited in the future. Internally a Member Development Working Group has been created with the wider brief of training requirements across all Members.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson Greg Dewhirst	Underway - Training to be delivered internally. A rolling training document has been created. Highways &/or Flooding have been approached for training in Nov	Light Green	First training Scheduled for November 2025
PPR005	R5	Revise the Scheme of Delegation	Urgently review the scheme of delegation to ensure that Planning Committee is focused on making decisions on significant and controversial planning applications. It also needs to be clearer and more transparent.	A revised Scheme of Delegation has been drafted and is currently under review by Planning Department Team Leaders. The draft has been benchmarked against similar local authorities to ensure alignment with best practice. It will undergo further review by Clara Kerr before being presented to DMC in Oct/Novemeber. Finally it will be	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson	Underway - Aim to implement Autumn/Winter 2025 DMC Oct/Nov 2025	Amber	DMC Oct/Nov 2025, Full Council TBC

PPR006	R6	Develop a Corporately supported Communications Plan for the Planning Service	This will help to enhance the reputation of the planning service and encourage more self-service. Key successes (key decisions, CIL/S106 spend) should be reported - consider a newsletter for members/parish and town councils and one for Planning Agents; and review the website. This should include innovative approaches such as videos, use of digital platforms etc.	<p>The HDC Communications Team is developing a dedicated Communications Plan for the Planning Department, first draft completed 4 July 2025.</p> <p>The plan aims to strengthen engagement through a mix of digital tools, social media, and traditional channels. A new corporate digital engagement platform is being scoped to enhance outreach, while the existing Orlo Social Listening platform will continue to monitor public sentiment.</p> <p>Key messages will highlight how growth drives investment in communities, with a focus on promoting CIL funding rounds and showcasing examples of CIL spend. Additionally, the plan will include the reporting of enforcement cases to act as a deterrent and reinforce accountability.</p> <p>A workshop to establish audience, aims and desired outcomes took place on 20/8/2025</p> <p>Planning Teams are creating a timetable of anticipated required comms.</p> <p><i>This aligns with Recommendation 2. Unique ref CPC002</i></p>	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Greg Dewhirst Communications Team	<p>Underway - Initial Comms plan completed 4/7/2025. A workshop is completed 20/08/2025</p> <p>Planning Department teams Comms timetable to be completed 12/09/2025</p> <p>Initial outcomes to start October/November 2025</p>	Amber	October/November 2025
PPR007	R7	Develop and implement a long-term (3-year) Planning Service Improvement Programme	which should include:							
PPR008			a. Identify project management resource to support and manage the programme	The Change Programme Lead has been appointed and commenced their role on 1 April.	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr	Completed 01/04/2025	Green	Completed
PPR009			b. DM Process Improvement Review – to streamline processes, improve efficiency, release capacity and take considered risks. This should include a review of standard letters and templates	<p>A comprehensive review of existing processes will be conducted inline with the implementation of Idox Enterprise. Idox will be providing a consultant to maximise our usage of the software, date tbc All revised workflows will be documented and made accessible to staff via a dedicated SharePoint site, ensuring transparency and consistency across the department.</p> <p>A review of the standard letters & templates will take place as part of the process.</p> <p>R7c, Unique ref PPR010 needs completing before new process guides are written.</p>	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Greg Dewhirst Geoff Hardy	Underway - Idox Enterprise is being implemented started 25/6/2025. DM Process review is part of the Enterprise Task implementation process. Idox consultant will be with us in September/October. Sharepoint to be created once the tasks are live. Power BI Dashboards to be created.	Amber	Dec-25
PPR010			c. ICT/Digital Modernisation Project supported Corporately – Review of current ICT system for DM – decide on whether to change or make best use of functionality of current system. In the short term, prioritise essential performance information for managers (including performance on pre-application service).	<p>Idox to remain the software provider for DM. Implementation of Idox Enterprise, which brings enhanced automation, improved process continuity, and real-time access to high-quality data to support evidence-based decision-making will enhance the usage. PowerBI Dashboards will be created for realtime data updates. Information to be pulled from Idox. SME's (Subject Matter Experts) will be trained within the planning service to allow robust maintenance and a designated escalation point for issues.</p> <p>In parallel, the team is exploring AI-driven auto-validation for planning applications, PlanAI is being looked at alongside Cambridgeshire Shared Service and the use of redaction software is being assessed with the aim of saving officer/clerk time.</p>	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Greg Dewhirst Geoff Hardy	Underway - Idox Enterprise is being implemented started 25/6/2025, to be completed December 2025	Amber	Dec-25
PPR011			d. Consider the structure of the Planning Service – to meet the needs of the Corporate Plan/Place Strategy; better align the service. Examples include the three DM Teams (look at mix of experience and grades in teams), consider career grade policy for planners, add senior/experienced officer grades in Teams etc.	<p>A structural review of the Planning Service has resulted in the appointment of contractors to fill current vacancies.</p> <p>This approach ensures teams are fully resourced with a balanced mix of experience and seniority. At the same time, the support team has had a restructure, introducing updated job descriptions and titles to provide broader responsibilities and clearer career progression pathways.</p>	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr Shaun Robson	Completed July 2025	Green	Completed

PPR012			e. Culture change programme – to empower staff and achieve corporate priorities and ICARE values across the planning service	A culture change programme is being actively rolled out across the Planning Service, aimed at empowering staff and aligning behaviours with corporate priorities and the ICARE values. The initiative is shaped by recommendations from the Planning Services Peer Review, many of which emphasise the need for a cultural shift. A central theme is the creation of a 'Golden Thread' of ownership and accountability, encouraging officers to take initiative and deliver with confidence.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	All	Underway	Light Green	Continuous/Ongoing
PPR013			f. Income Generation Project – develop a vision, plan, achievable target, priorities and monitoring including customer feedback.	The Delegation of Discretionary Charges was approved at Full Council on 16 July 2025 and will remain in effect until the next budget cycle. The implementation of BNG and covering the relevant costs is imperative. A charging schedule has been developed and its implementation is in progress. There will be a change to the No Amendments policy (Recommendation 9b) allowing amendments however accompanied with a cost. Pre Apps service and pricing is being reviewed (Recommendation 8) These three tasks are started. In parallel, a comprehensive mapping exercise will assess current income-generating activities and explore potential new revenue streams, informed by benchmarking against other Planning Departments. (also see R8, Unique ref PPR014 & R16, Unique ref PPR030).	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Greg Dewhirst Shaun Robson Lewis Tomlinson	Underway - Delegation of Discretionary Charges approved at Cabinet (17/06/25) and full Council on 16/7/2025. Allowing amendments process will be completed by 1/10/2025. Implementaiton date tbc Pre App review has started with workshops for each planning department to provide feedback An updated service and pricing to be implemented by December 2025. A mapping exercise of existing and income generating opportunities will take place. To be	Amber	Winter 2025
PPR014	R8	Improve Pre-application Advice Service	Review charging , quality and length of advice and monitor speed and performance. We suggest reviewing in consultation with a planning agent/developer working group – to broaden range of options/types of pre-app advice.	Improvements to the pre-application advice service are planned to enhance clarity and value for applicants. The Agents & Developers Forum (R15) served as a platform for external input, with fees forming a key part of the wider discussion. This engagement allowed stakeholders to contribute feedback and help shape a more transparent and efficient pre-application process. All Planning Teams are being consulted through workshops on what they feel would improve the pre app process & value. This is linked with R7f, Unique ref PPR013	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson Lewis Tomlinson	Underway - Delegation of Discretionary Charges is complete Agent & Developers Forum relaunched 21/06/2025. All Planning Team workshops completed.	Amber	Winter 2025
PPR015	R9	Urgent - Short Term (1-6 months)	Wins should include:							
PPR016			a. Ensure sufficient short term capacity/resource is available and implemented promptly when required to provide cover for absences.	A flexible resourcing model has been developed using Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) monies to engage short-term contractors, improving responsiveness to absences when/if required.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson	Completed - A review of the Planning Services teams structure has taken place.	Green	Completed
PPR017			b. Review/change 'no amendments' policy	Discussed at the Agents & Developers Forum. A new preliminary charging schedule has been created. Internal process being developed, payment form creation in progress. This action will also be a part solution for R9c	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson Lewis Tomlinson Geoff Hardy	Underway - Discretionary Charges delegation approved. No Amendments charging schedule created. Payment form and internal process in creation.	Light Green	Oct-25

PPR018			c. Reduce over-reliance on extensions of time	The introduction of Idox Enterprise, with its automated reminder functionality, will significantly reduce the need for Extensions of Time by minimising the risk of human error. Team Leaders will also be prompted to actively monitor key dates to ensure timely progression of cases. A policy of strict adherence to timeframes has been implemented to all planning teams. To reinforce accountability, the use of Extensions of Time will be tracked as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) in all	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson	Underway - Idox Enterprise implementation started 25/6/2025 Appraisals underway.	Light Green	Dec-25
PPR019			d. Better performance information for DM Managers (see R7c), include pre-app performance	The rollout of Idox Enterprise will equip Officers, Team Leaders, and Management with real-time access to data directly from Idox Uniform. This data can be easily analysed or exported, supporting more informed decision-making and operational efficiency. (also see R7c) Power BI integration being developed to produce live dashboards. Discussions with Chelmsford Council who have already implemented this happening. Internally Business Performance & Insight will help the development and provide training to allow departmental Dashboard management.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Greg Dewhirst Geoff Hardy	Underway - Idox Enterprise implementation started 25/6/2025. Data can then be pulled directly from Idox Uniform. Working with Chelmsford Council to understand their PowerBI model. Business Performance & Insight briefed and planning for development timetable.	Amber	Enterprise programming to start Sept/Oct 2025 Power BI to be ready Q1 2026
PPR020	Page 98		e. ICT/Digital – agree actions corporately to address ICT challenges to ensure efficiency of current processes and decision-making.	Following discussions with 3CICT regarding corporate challenges an issues review has taken place over a 4 week period. This approach enabled effective tracking of issues & errors, helping 3CICT identify recurring patterns. The information provided supports either the resolution of issues internally or the escalation of evidence-based cases to the software provider. We have agreed with 3CICT to have a quarterly Showcase of developments and features from the other two authorities to the group to ensure HDC is utilising the 3C relationship fully. A new GIS web application has been developed by 3CICT and is being tested by DM. This action directly supports Recommendation 8 (Reference: CPC025) of the Corporate Peer Review Action Plan.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Corporate Greg Dewhirst	Underway - Discussions with 3CICT have taken place 4/6/2025. Issue tracking implemented through Hornbill to understand themes. GIS application testing between 18/8/2025 - 19/9/2025	Light Green	Continuous
PPR021			f. Give annual development appraisals to staff in line with emerging corporate policy.	Annual development appraisals have been implemented using the new corporate appraisal framework, offering a more structured and consistent approach to performance management. Individual performance will be tracked through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), informed by data exported from Idox Uniform, ensuring alignment with service objectives and organisational priorities. This data-driven approach promotes a culture of accountability, continuous improvement, and professional development, while also providing opportunities to recognise and celebrate individual success. KPI's will be monitored through data analysis created in R9d. Unique Ref PPR019 & R7c. Unique Ref	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson Team Leaders	Completed Appraisals started June 2025.	Green	Completed
PPR022			g. Planning Committee – consistent planning reports, templates and presentations. To be read in conjunction with changes to R5 Scheme of Delegation.	Planning Committee reports have been benchmarked against those of similar local authorities to develop a best practice template that ensures greater consistency, clarity, and professionalism. As part of this improvement, a new Executive Summary—generated using the AI tool Copilot—is being introduced to make reports more accessible, while maintaining technical accuracy and not creating extra	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson	Completed New templates to be used from Octoberr 2025	Green	Completed

PPR023			h. Secure dedicated legal advice on planning matters and legal agreements.	The Planning Department currently utilises 3C Legal under the existing corporate agreement. While this arrangement remains in place, there is scope to explore alternative third-party solutions. Procurement have sent out a Request for Quotes to allow a reserve panel incase 3C legal does not have the required capacity.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr	A Request for Quotes has been sent out by procurement to provide further options when 3C Legal do not have capacity	Light Green	Nov-25
PPR024	R10	Consider preparing planning guidance on Householder Extensions	This will enable self-service and more certainty for customers, better understanding for Parish and Town Councils and support DM to make faster and clearer decisions whilst creating capacity.	The Householder Guidance Form is being streamlined into a tick-box format for Officers, enabling faster processing of straightforward applications. To support applicants and reduce common errors and enquiries, guidance for householder extensions will be clearly signposted on the HDC Planning website. This self-service approach aims to improve the customer experience while easing demand on Officer time.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Greg Dewhirst Shaun Robson	Underway - A tick box form for Development Management (DM) has already been sourced and is being refined and designed to streamline the evaluation process and improve efficiency. Additionally, guidance for applicants will be developed, benchmarked and made available online.	Amber	Sep-25
PPR025	R11	Update Planning Enforcement Policy	Current policy last updated twelve years ago so in need of updating to reflect current priorities and resources and will help manage customer and Parish/Town Council expectations.	The updated Planning Enforcement Policy was adopted on June 5th, 2025.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Claudia Deeth Clare Bond Alison Twyford	Completed 05/06/2025	Green	Completed
PPR026	R12	Develop and agree a Planning and Parish and Town Councils Service Framework/Protocol	This should clearly set out parameters for how the planning service will support the 79 parish and town councils - to help manage expectations and better manage resources. This will cover DM, Local Plan and Enforcement matters and should be agreed by HDC. Consider alongside R14 and R16.	In relation to enforcement, the Planning and Parish/Town Council Framework has been partially addressed through the updated Corporate Planning Enforcement Policy. The Local Plan strategy also sets out its work and future work with Parish & Town Councils (R1) Training requirements are being assessed by the Member Development Working Group.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson Alison Twyford Clare Bond	Underway - Enforcement matters completed in the updated Corporate Planning Enforcement Policy	Amber	Ongoing
PPR027	R13	Set up clearer arrangements for better collaborative working between the Planning Service and key services and partners	This should include: • Regular meeting with County Council – and cover Local Plan, DM and Planning Committee support. • Internal Services Group – for engagement and collaboration on the Local Plan (see R1), performance on comments on planning applications. • Identify main point of contact in planning for council led projects • Setting up a Partnership Board with external stakeholders • Training between services on what they do and upcoming projects.	Implementation meet with Cambridge City Council on CIL and S106, particularly strategic sites. LPAG meets regularly to discuss the Local Plan The Change Programme Lead – Planning Services is the main point of contact Member Development Working Group has been created. The Planning Services Comms Plan has an element of internal promotion.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr	Underway - Several internal stakeholder groups meet. Other groups still need to be coordinated.	Amber	Ongoing
PPR028	R14	Set out clear Customer Service Standards	This will help the service provide the good and responsive customer service it aspires to have. We suggest setting out clear expectations for customers and officers on the level of service that can be expected and performance monitoring. We also suggest an annual Customer Satisfaction Survey with clear measures of success. Consider alongside R12 and reported through R6.	We are reviewing customer service standards to benchmark against comparable local authorities. These come in the form of Customer Service Standards or a Customer Service Charter. We aim to synchronise the publishing of these standards with the change to the No Amendments policy. The new corporate Digital Engagement platform will be a vehicle we can use to hold a Customer Satisfaction Survey.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr Shaun Robson Clare Bond	Underway - Service Standards from other Local Authorities being sourced. Initial draft created and circulated internally. The Corporate Digital Engagement platform is being procured.	Amber	Oct-25
PPR029	R15	Refresh and relaunch the Planning Agents and Developers Forum	A refresh and restart will help improve attendance. Changes should include clear agendas reflecting the matters to be covered at the Forum and take a collaborative approach that allows the Forum to input into the shaping of the planning service and local plan.	The Planning Agents and Developers Forum was relaunched on 21 June 2025 with a refreshed, more collaborative format. The new structure features clear agendas and encourages open dialogue between the Council and key stakeholders. This approach enables the Forum to play a meaningful role in shaping planning services and influencing the Local Plan, while strengthening relationships and ensuring policies are informed by	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Clara Kerr Shaun Robson Clare Bond Alison Twyford Lewis Tomlinson	Completed 21/07/2025	Green	Completed

PPR030	R16	Update the Statement of Community Involvement	To provide information to local communities and Parish and Town Councils as well as setting clear expectations of developers to engage early on larger schemes. Links with other recommendations.	The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is being updated. There is the potential to allow greater flexibility in how neighbours are notified of planning applications. In line with Government legislation, the revised SCI could clarify that notification may be via letters and/or site notices, depending on the case. This ensures statutory compliance while enabling a more proportionate and efficient engagement approach. We are sourcing other Local Authority SCI's for benchmarking and producing a cost analysis to understand any potential savings. Planning Policy are involved in process.	Greg Dewhirst	Clara Kerr	Shaun Robson Greg Dewhirst Clare Bond Geoff Hardy Fran Schulz	Underway - A review of SCI's has been completed for benchmarking. SCI being updated and returned to Policy team who are also making changes. This will then go to O&S before full council.	Light Green	Winter 2025 Planning will have updated the SCI September 2025 it will then be with Policy as they make any further changes before submitting to O&S and then Full Council.
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Green	Completed
Light Green	Ongoing
Amber	Started and progressing
Red	Not Started
Yellow	Action TBC

Planning Appeal Decisions Since August 2025 Committee

Ref No	Appellant	Parish	Proposal	Site	Original Decision	Delegated or DMC	Appeal Determination	Costs
24/003 78/ OUT	Mr Andy Brand (Abbey Properties)	Yaxley	Outline application (all matters reserved except access to London Road) for a proposed development of up to 115 dwellings to include public open space, landscaping, access and associated works (following demolition of existing buildings).	Livery Stable Folly Farm London Road Yaxley	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Allowed	N/A
19/007 93/ S73	Ms S McDougall	Buckden	Variation of condition 1 of application 16/00657/FUL- Updated plans and further developed design, to support structural engineers design, site variations and site excavations.	7 Marina View Mill Road Buckden St Neots PE19 5QS	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	Costs Refused
24/019 02/ FUL	Mr G D'amore	Yaxley	Erection of 2no. dwellings	50 Windsor Road Yaxley Peterborough PE7 3JA	Refused	Delegated	Appeal Dismissed	N/A

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