

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 20th January 2025

LATE REPRESENTATIONS SUMMARY

3(a) 23/01507/FUL - Erection of a Solar Photovoltaic Farm with associated substations and other supporting infrastructure including battery storage, inverters and transformers, fencing, CCTV, landscaping and installation of underground high-voltage cable within public highway - Land South of Abbotsley Country Homes, Drewels Lane, Abbotsley.

There are no late representations for this item.

3(b) 22/01460/OUT - Outline with all matters (except access) reserved for the erection of 25 - 30 dwellings - Land North of 6 Old Houghton Road, Hartford.

A representation has been received from Anglian Water advising the following:

'Section 2 - Wastewater Treatment-Objection

Anglian Water objects to the proposed development under Planning Application 22/01460/OUT due to the intended connection to the public foul drainage network. This site is located within the catchment of the Huntingdon (Godmanchester) Water Recycling Centre (WRC), which currently lacks the capacity to accommodate the additional flows that would be generated by the proposed development.

Anglian Water has determined that the site is unsustainable due to the associated pollution risk and the increased discharge rates, which could lead to a deterioration in water quality and an unacceptable risk of breaching environmental legislation at Huntingdon (Godmanchester) WRC. Considering these concerns, we recommend that planning permission be refused on the grounds of insufficient infrastructure capacity and to prevent environmental harm. Anglian Water collaborates with local planning authorities across the region to identify sustainable locations for future development, taking into account infrastructure capacity as part of the development plan processes. We also work closely with our regulators to identify opportunities for future growth investment. At present, no funding has been allocated at this Water Resource Centre (WRC) for AMP 7 (2020-2025) or AMP 8 (2025-2030). However, we may seek to promote investment through our future business plans.

Section 3 - Used Water Network-Objection

Anglian Water objects to any connection into our foul network from the proposed development. A sustainable point of connection (SPOC) cannot be given due to the development flows contributing to pollution and deterioration of the watercourse. As stated above the receiving WRC cannot accommodate additional flows. Anglian Water is committed to supporting sustainable growth and in doing so we must continue to meet our statutory obligations whilst balancing factors such as climate change and environmental protection.

However, if the LPA are minded to approve the application, despite our objection and risk of pollution, we recommend the following condition is applied:

Condition: no development shall commence until a strategic foul water strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local Planning Authority, in consultation with Anglian Water. This strategy will identify a sustainable point of connection to the public foul network. Prior to occupation, the foul water drainage works must have been carried out in complete accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To protect water quality, prevent pollution and secure sustainable development having regard to paragraphs 7/8 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework. If permission is granted we require the applicant to engage with us via our pre-development services and to submit a pre development enquiry. Information can be found on our website: Pre-planning (anglianwater.co.uk)'

Policy LP6 of the local plan states A proposal for any scale of development will be supported if:

d. Anglian Water Services do not raise concerns relating to the ability of waste water infrastructure to accommodate waste water flows from the proposal;

Paragraph 4.76 of the supporting text to LP6 confirms that the Huntingdon Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) serves Huntingdon, Godmanchester and Alconbury Weald and notes that increased discharge consent and process upgrades would be necessary should additional headroom not become available after capacity is reduced (expected around 2021/22 or 5,100 homes).

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

It is noted that on the previous application 18/02239/OUT, Anglian Water confirmed that the foul drainage from this development would be in the catchment of Huntingdon (Godmanchester) Water Recycling Centre and that would be available capacity for the flows. It is also

noted that there are large scale strategic allocated residential developments within this catchment area.

Anglian Water has recommended a condition in the instance that the LPA was minded to approve the application. For these reasons, it is considered that the proposed condition is appropriate and is therefore recommended.

3(c) 24/00433/FUL - Erection of 6 residential dwellings and garages following demolition of 5 barns (Pursuant to 22/00950/FUL) - Agricultural Buildings, Washingley Farm, Green End, Great Stukeley.

Retention of buildings clarification

In relation to point 7.14 of the Officer Report, this states 'The proposals are also not considered to adversely affect the form, scale, massing or proportion of the buildings to be retained with Policy LP33 stating that a modest increase in floorspace will be supported.'

For clarification, there are no longer buildings to be retained, however the proposed new buildings will represent a modest increase in floorspace.

Ecology survey clarification

The concerns raised by the Council's Ecology Officer in relation to surveys being out of date are carefully noted.

The Ecology Officer has referenced the CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management) advice note. This is a guidance note and states that 'It is important that planning decisions are based on up-to-date ecological reports and survey data. However, it is difficult to set a specific timeframe over which reports or survey data should be considered valid, as this will vary in different circumstances.'

In this case the original application undertook its surveys in 2018 and 2021. The results and outcomes for mitigation from these surveys were taken into account when making the decision. The decision was then issued in 2023 (04.07.2023). This application was submitted less than 1 year (06.03.2024) after the decision was issued on application 22/00950/FUL It is also noted that the previously approved planning permission is still extant until 04.07.2026 where they can implement the consent without any further survey work being required.

The CIEEM guidance states that if the data is 18months to 3 years out of date then there are updates required and goes into detail of these

updates. The last survey was in August 2021 and the submission of this new application was in March 2024, therefore meaning that it is within the 3 year timeframe.

The surveys showed that there was negligible potential for roosting in the daytime surveys, apart from barn 8's first floor, and the nighttime survey showed potential in barn 5a's first floor. Barn 5a is now proposed to be demolished and rebuilt.

The conclusion of the surveys was that:

'A very small population of common lizards and great crested newts were discovered nearby during the surveys. Building 5a on the site supports three roosting common pipistrelle, Barn owls are roosting in barns and common birds are nesting in barns. The primary habitats of ecological value on the site are the hedgerows and ponds (albeit in a poor condition) will be retained. Recommendations include mitigation for roosting bats and precautionary measures for foraging bats, birds (including barn owls), great crested newts, reptiles and hedgehogs. Bat mitigation will require licensing from Natural England. With the recommendations followed as described, the proposed development could proceed with a minimal risk of significant impact to protected, priority or rare species.'

Government guidance (Protected species and development: advice for local planning authorities) notes that it will not normally be appropriate to condition surveys however it goes on to state:

"In exceptional cases, you may need to attach a planning condition for additional surveys. For instance, to support detailed mitigation proposals or if there will be a delay between granting planning permission and the start of development. In these cases a planning condition should be used to provide additional or updated ecological surveys to make sure that the mitigation is still appropriate. This is important for outline applications or multi-phased developments."

The bats would be displaced in a conversion as well as a demolition and so mitigation measures such as bat boxes would be required in either case. Normally conditions are not suitable for ecological surveys however each case is on its own merits and given that this site could be implemented under the 2022 permission, the timeline of the previous application being decided and submission of the current application, the outcomes of the previous surveys and proposed mitigation, it is felt exceptional circumstances would allow for a condition to be used in this instance. This condition would be for updated surveys and further clarification of mitigation prior to work on the site. This would also comply with CIEEM guidance.

A condition requiring updated ecological survey and any associated mitigation measures is therefore recommended in addition to the other conditions set out at the bottom of the Officer Report.

3(d) 24/01980/S73 - Variation of condition 21 (Opening Hours) of 1101319FUL to allow 24 hour use of units 2 and 3 as a gym - The Rowley Arts Centre, Huntingdon Street, St Neots, PE19 1BY.

A further representation has been received in support of the proposal raising the following matters:

“The current gym has a track record of causing no nuisance. Bringing these council owned units back into use for the benefit of the residents of St Neots would only be a positive for the area.”

It is not considered that this representation raises any further points not addressed within the Officer Report.