



# East Cambridgeshire District Council

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## Meeting: Planning Committee

Time: 2:00 pm

Date: Wednesday 14 January 2026

Venue: Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE

Enquiries regarding this agenda: Patrick Adams

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## Committee membership

**Quorum:** 5 members

### **Conservative members**

Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith  
Cllr Lavinia Edwards  
Cllr Martin Goodearl  
Cllr Mark Goldsack (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Bill Hunt (Chair)  
Cllr Alan Sharp

### **Conservative substitutes**

Cllr Keith Horgan  
Cllr Julia Huffer  
Cllr Lucius Vellacott

### **Liberal Democrat and Independent members**

Cllr Chika Akinwale  
Cllr Christine Colbert  
Cllr James Lay  
Cllr John Trapp  
Cllr Ross Trent  
Cllr Christine Whelan (Lead Member)

### **Liberal Democrat and Independent substitutes**

Cllr Lee Denney  
Cllr Lorna Dupré  
Cllr Mary Wade

**Lead Officer:** David Morren, Strategic Planning and DM I Manager

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**10 am** Planning Committee members meet at The Grange reception for site visit.

## AGENDA

### 1. Apologies and substitutions

**[oral]**

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| <b>2. Declarations of interests</b>   | <b>[oral]</b>   |
| To receive declarations of interests from Members for any items on the agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.   |                 |
| <b>3. Minutes</b>   | <b>Page 5</b>   |
| To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 3 December 2025.  |                 |
| <b>4. Chair's announcements</b>   | <b>[oral]</b>   |
| <b>5. 25/00371/FUL – Land Off Water Lane, Kirtling</b>  | <b>Page 21</b>  |
| Location: Land Off Water Lane, Long Acre, Kirtling Green CB8 9PG  |                 |
| Applicant: Sue Stubley  |                 |
| Public access link: <a href="#">25/00371/FUL   To build a purpose-built Wildlife Veterinary Hospital including residential facilities   Land Off Water Lane Long Acre Kirtling Suffolk</a>    |                 |
| To build a purpose-built Wildlife Veterinary Hospital including residential facilities.   |                 |
| <b>6. 25/01170/FUL – Little Lane, Ely</b>   | <b>Page 71</b>  |
| Location: 10 Little Lane, Ely CB6 1AZ   |                 |
| Applicant: Mrs Colbert  |                 |
| Public access link: <a href="#">25/01170/FUL   Garage conversion, removal of garage door and infill with window and addition of porch to rear   10 Little Lane Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 1AZ</a> |                 |
| To build a garage conversion, removal of garage door and infill with window and addition of porch to rear.  |                 |
| <b>7. 25/0309/LBC – Main Street, Little Thetford</b>  | <b>Page 93</b>  |
| Location: 4 Main Street, Little Thetford, Ely CB6 3HA   |                 |
| Applicant: Miss Bailey  |                 |
| Public access link: <a href="#">25/00309/LBC   Replacement window in north dormer   4 Main Street Little Thetford Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 3HA</a>  |                 |
| For a replacement window in north dormer.   |                 |
| <b>8. Sunnica Non-material Change (NMC) Application</b>   | <b>Page 105</b> |
| <b>9. Planning performance report – November 2025</b>   | <b>Page 121</b> |

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## Notes

1. Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. Please report to the main reception desk on arrival at The Grange. Visitor car parking on-site is limited to 1h but there are several [free public car parks close by](#) (<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/parking>)

open-spaces-and-toilets/car-parks/car-parks-ely). The maximum capacity for meetings in the Council Chamber has been set by the Fire Officer at 100 persons. Allowing for Member/Officer attendance and room layout constraints this will normally give a capacity for public attendance of 30 seated people and 20 standing. Public access to the Council Chamber will be from 30 minutes before the start of the meeting and, apart from for registered public speakers, is on a “first come, first served” basis.

The livestream of this meeting will be available [on the committee meeting's webpage](https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/node/2643) (<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/node/2643>). Please be aware that all attendees, including those in the public gallery, will be visible on the livestream.

2. The Council has a scheme to allow [public speaking at Planning Committee](https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/public-participation-meetings/speak-committee-meeting) (<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/public-participation-meetings/speak-committee-meeting>). If you wish to speak on an application being considered at the Planning Committee please contact the Democratic Services Officer for the Planning Committee [democratic.services@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@eastcambs.gov.uk), to **register by 10am on Tuesday 13 January**. Alternatively, you may wish to send a statement to be read at the Planning Committee meeting if you are not able to attend in person. Please note that public speaking, including a statement being read on your behalf, is limited to 5 minutes in total for each of the following groups:
  - Objectors
  - Applicant/agent or supporters
  - Local Ward Councillor
  - Parish/Town Council
  - County Councillors
  - National/Statutory Bodies
3. The Council has adopted a ‘Purge on Plastics’ strategy and is working towards the removal of all consumer single-use plastics in our workplace. Therefore, we do not provide disposable cups in our building or at our meetings and would ask members of the public to bring their own drink to the meeting if required.
4. Fire instructions for meetings:
  - if the fire alarm sounds, please make your way out of the building by the nearest available exit, which is usually the back staircase or the fire escape in the Chamber and do not attempt to use the lifts
  - the fire assembly point is in the front staff car park by the exit barrier
  - the building has an auto-call system to the fire services so there is no need for anyone to call the fire services
  - the Committee Officer will sweep the area to ensure that everyone is out
5. Reports are attached for each agenda item unless marked “oral”.
6. If required, all items on the agenda can be provided in different formats (such as large type, Braille or audio tape, or translated into other languages), on request, by calling main reception on (01353) 665555 or e-mail: [translate@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:translate@eastcambs.gov.uk)
7. If the Committee wishes to exclude the public and press from the meeting, a resolution in the following terms will need to be passed:

“That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no(s). X because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category X of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).”





# East Cambridgeshire District Council

## Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning Committee

Held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE at 2:00pm on  
Wednesday 3 December 2025

### Present:

Cllr Chika Akinwale (left at 3:54 pm)  
Cllr Christine Colbert  
Cllr Lavinia Edwards  
Cllr Mark Goldsack (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Keith Horgan (substitute)  
Cllr Julia Huffer (substitute)  
Cllr Bill Hunt (Chair)  
Cllr James Lay  
Cllr John Trapp  
Cllr Ross Trent  
Cllr Lucius Vellacott (substitute)  
Cllr Christine Whelan

### Officers:

Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Kevin Breslin – Locum Planning Lawyer  
Selina Raj Divakar – Planning Team Leader  
Kevin Drane – Trees Officer  
Rachel Gordon – Interim Planning Team Leader  
David Morren – Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager

### In attendance:

ECDC Comms  
Six members of the public

## 31. Apologies and substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith, Cllr Martin Goodearl, Cllr Alan Sharp and Cllr John Trapp. Cllr Julia Huffer substituted for Cllr Ambrose Smith, Cllr Lucius Vellacott substituted for Cllr Goodearl and Cllr Keith Horgan substituted for Cllr Sharp.

## 32. Declarations of interest

Cllr Keith Horgan declared a personal interest in agenda item 5, the application 24/01126/OUM at Mereside Works, Soham, as a ward member for Soham

North and a member of Soham Town Council. He explained that he did not serve on the Town Council's planning committee, had not made any public pronouncements on the application and was coming to the Committee with an open mind. Cllr Mark Goldsack also declared a personal interest in agenda item 5, as both a district councillor and a county councillor for the town of Soham. He confirmed that he was coming to the Committee with an open mind. Cllr Chika Akinwale declared a personal interest in agenda item 6, the Tree Preservation Order at Prickwillow, as the local ward member who was coming to the meeting with an open mind.

### **33. Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

### **34. Chair's announcements**

The Chair reported that this was Selina Raj Divakar's last Planning Committee meeting before she left the authority. The Chair wished her all the best in her new job.

### **35. 24/01126/OUM – Mereside Works, Soham**

Selina Raj Divakar, Planning Team Leader, presented a report (AA110, previously circulated) recommending approval for an outline application for the erection of a residential led mixed use development comprising of up to 99 units, with all matters reserved except for access at 25 Mereside, Soham.

The Committee received the following statement from objector Gillian Miller: "Plans in June 2020 specified building directly behind 15 and 15a Mereside and also behind the Willows. I understand the reasons for not building behind the nursery school. On the most recent plans my and my neighbours' properties 15 and 15a will be the only homes directly overlooked, blocking both the light and our privacy and also reducing the values of the properties. I suggest that the proposed homes 11 and 12 should not be built but replaced by planting new trees, helping to make up for the mature trees, which will have to be felled. I estimate that to be about 10 trees."

"Planning permission for 90 homes was refused in June 2024, as ill thought out. How can you now justify building an additional nine homes?"

The Committee then received the following statement from objector Donna Martin:

"The land in question provides the sole natural drainage basin to land west of Soham High Street. Any development on this site will cause flooding to existing older properties at 67, 69, 71, 73 and 75 Mill Corner and significantly to numbers 73 and 75, which have experienced six major house floods in 30 years. I speak for all residents at Mill Corner and Mereside who not only oppose development on the site in question but are afraid of it. Number 73 Mill Corner has flooded so many times the owner can no longer afford the excess on her insurance."

"The open drainage ditch on my property collects run off ground water from the bottom of Clay Street and buildings on this part of Mill Corner adjacent to and to the east of Soham station. At times of heavy rainfall the ditch does not have the capacity to hold the amount of water discharged into it, often causing minor flooding. This ditch flows into an underground pipe, which directly connects to the land under consideration. Due to persistent flooding from 1995 and the discovery that Soham Lode discharges into the same land when the River Ouse is in flood and cannot take water from Soham Lode, in 1997 East Cambridgeshire District Council dug a relief channel spanning the western boundary of the land under consideration. In 2020/21, following the applicant's attempt to clear the site by use of machinery, my ditch flooded to the extent that the water pressure was so great, it began to undermine my outbuildings. It took two years for the County Council flood and water team to investigate the matter. When they eventually sent a tanker, the operator stated that they disposed of 8,000 gallons of water but the ditch was refilling from the pipe that ran from the site this applicant is proposing to develop. When the matter was finally dealt with, the landowner denied any responsibility for soil blocking the channel, and we were told that we had been holding an estimated half a million tonnes of water.

"This developer, which some of you wish to support, intends to build homes on this site. The developer states that as part of the development they wish to include a wetland wildlife habitat. This is a wetland wildlife habitat. The area in question is low lying in the region of 20 feet below sea level. It is criss-crossed with ditches, which provide drainage for homes in Mereside. County Council Highways who are regularly in attendance at flood events at Mereside state that nobody really knows how it works. When Soham Lode cannot discharge into the River Ouse, the Environment Agency opens the sluice and allows the water to flood into the land this developer wishes to build homes on. Land where the ditches will already be full of water. In 2022 it was confirmed to me by the Environment Agency that they do not intend to change this arrangement. I have seen the proposed development site under two metres of water. Attenuation tanks beneath Soham Station constructed deliberately for the purpose of draining the land under discussion have proven that they cannot cope during times of heavy rainfall. This proposal cannot be considered in isolation due to the sensitive nature of the drainage system and how it affects homes in the immediate surrounding area. Flooding here is not a one in one hundred year event. The purpose of outline planning is to consider the suitability of a site. The main consideration being the sustainability and future proofing against global warming and higher risk of flooding events. At a public meeting the development company, when questioned, could not say how water courses would be maintained. Neither could they say how they would dispose of run off without adding to an already existing issue. The suggestion of underground attenuation tanks does not work in clay and would cause so much ground water displacement it would increase the seriousness of existing issues. To date, despite many requests, I have not been able to obtain full drainage plans for this site, neither have I been able to obtain a map of drainage post Soham train station development. This week after submitting a Freedom of Information Act request to East Cambridgeshire District Council, I was told that no update to

drainage plans exist. Surely it is folly to proceed in this decision without full knowledge of how millions of gallons of the ground water that will discharge from the hard standing and roofs that this development would create, would be disposed of without causing flooding to many existing homes. I put it to you that any development on this site is unsustainable."

Following questioning from Cllr Mark Goldsack to Gillian Miller it was noted that the actual locations of any buildings in plans were only indicative as these would have to be agreed under the reserved matters application.

In reply to Cllr Christine Colbert, Donna Martin stated that she had contacted the Environment Agency about her drainage concerns, who in turn had liaised with the Council in this matter. She was concerned about the development, as rain from the site would run off into the drainage ditch by her home, which had regularly flooded in the past.

The Committee received the following statement from the consultant Richard Conroy:

"My name is Richard Conroy from Total Planning. I would like to thank the case officer, I think that she presented the scheme incredibly well, alongside a comprehensive report that explains this outline application. The detail has not come before Members yet and it will come at the reserved matters stage.

"This application is at an outline stage. The key things being considered are the principle of development and access. With regards to access, I think that it is important to bear in mind that there is previous consent for this site, that was referred to earlier, for 31 houses. So, the vehicular access is very similar to that, so in principle the Council has accepted this vehicular access. Obviously, this development could bring forward a larger number of dwellings. So, we have to consider the transport infrastructure impact of a larger number of dwellings. We undertook new traffic surveys on local junctions in September. We have provided an updated transport statement to the officers that has been reviewed by Cambridgeshire County Highways team, who found that there was no adverse impact in terms of the local Highways network. This site, as described by the case officer, is consistent with the principles laid out in the Council's Local Plan. It provides a mix of employment and civic uses. It will generate consistent day time activity and attract local services. It will potentially provide a new civic public realm space, next to the station. It provides opportunities for public open space and key routes from the station to the site. It is a flexible development proposal. It will also potentially deliver a new sense of place and a strong sense of arrival around the new station that has been delivered for Soham.

"In terms of the Local Plan and the principle of development, the principle has been established through the site allocation. What we are proposing is consistent with that. Officers welcome it and I believe that Members should be supportive of those general arrangements. The vehicular access has been accepted before. What we are proposing now has been accepted by the County Council Highways team. We have had to carefully consider drainage and flooding because there are drainage ditches within the site and the point made

about neighbouring properties draining into this site is correct, but our proposals set out mitigation measures, which will actually expand the amount of ditch capacity space for flooding, so as a result of these measures that risk of flooding will actually be reduced. That is why the lead local flood authority have raised no objections to the scheme, as it has the potential to reduce the flood risk for neighbouring properties.

“Lastly on affordable housing, a White Paper that has been published by central government that places affordable housing de facto at 20%, as opposed to 30%, which is what the Council’s local policy originally states.”

Neil Piston, one of the land owners made the following statement:

“With regards to flooding and drainage, we have spent a lot of time and money looking at this. We cleared the drains some two years ago and we understood that the low level of the site has to accommodate approximately 1.5 million gallons of water as a precaution for flooding when the Lode overflows. To accommodate that the culverts and ditches need to be deepened and significantly widened to take this water and if we can do this it will actually increase the flow through the site and stop the flooding up at Mill Corner, which we proved when we cleared the site some two years ago. I don’t believe there has been any significant flooding since then.”

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan’s questions about the transport assessment, Richard Conroy stated that a new survey had been carried out in September, observing traffic at junctions throughout the course of the day and week. Cllr Horgan suggested that the concerns of the Town Council and officers should be addressed in a new survey. Neil Piston confirmed that a new survey would have to be carried out, but the Highways Authority had confirmed that their survey had been a worst-case scenario and even then, they had no serious concerns about the development. The Planning Team Leader explained that the developer had been advised by the County Council to re-do their transport assessment, however, as detailed in the report, the County Council had stated that the development would not have a severe impact on the local highway network and the road junction would continue to operate within capacity.

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, Richard Conroy explained that the outline application was requesting permission for up to 99 homes and the Council would need to decide what was acceptable at the reserved matters stage. He confirmed that he had read the Soham and Barway Neighbourhood Plan.

In reply to Cllr Chika Akinwale, Richard Conroy explained that a viability assessment had indicated that the developer could only deliver 20% affordable homes. In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, Richard Conroy explained that the viability assessments carried out by the developer disagreed with the Council’s assessment. He added that small increases in building materials could make a large impact on profits and many other sites were also struggling with the viability issue due to the current market, which the Government had recognised, hence the White Paper referred to earlier.

In response to Cllr Chika Akinwale's question about the need for 1 and 2 bedroom homes, Richard Conroy explained that the developer was liaising with the Council regarding the housing mix and would discuss ways in which the authority's aspirations would be met.

In reply to Cllr Chika Akinwale, Richard Conroy explained that a flooding consultant had confirmed that the proposed drainage work would actually reduce the risk of flooding in the area. Neil Piston confirmed that the plans included widening the drainage channel where Donna Martin lived and the exact specifications would need to be agreed at the reserved matters stage.

In reply to Cllr Ross Trent, Richard Conroy agreed to ensure that residents were consulted on the design of the development before being submitted for agreement at the reserved matters stage.

In reply to Cllr Chika Akinwale, Richard Conroy reported that locations had been identified for play spaces and would have to be agreed at the reserved matters stage. He confirmed that the plan was to ensure that 10% of the homes would be accessible for disabled people.

Councillors were asked if they had any questions for the officers.

In reply to Cllr James Lay, the Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager explained that drainage issues would have to be resolved in the reserved matters application and not at the outline stage. The Lead Local Flood Authority had confirmed that drainage issues could be resolved.

In reply to Cllr Chika Akinwale, the Planning Team Leader assured the Committee that the Soham and Barway's Neighbourhood Plan would be given significant weight during discussions on reserved matters. The developer would have to contribute to the Soham commons fund to provide recreational activities for residents. The Housing mix in the development would need to comply with the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan.

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, the Planning Team Leader explained that the national planning policy allowed buildings to be higher than recommended in the Neighbourhood Plan if they did not dominate landscape and respected the character of the area. This would need to be reviewed further in the reserved matters application. She also confirmed that matters highlighted in the ecology report would form part of the discussions under the Section 106 Agreement.

The Committee moved into debate.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott expressed his support for this outline application for development which was on brownfield land, was on the edge of town and in the Local Plan. However, he hoped that the Council would push for a minimum of 30% affordable housing in discussions on the reserved matters. He proposed that an additional recommendation be added to ensure that the Committee would receive any associated reserved matters applications. This was seconded by Cllr Christine Colbert.

Cllr Keith Horgan stated that he would support the outline recommendation, although he had concerns that would have to be resolved under the reserved matters application. He highlighted that the site had been allocated 90 homes in the Local Plan and the application had increased this to 99 units.

Cllr Mark Goldsack supported the outline application. The site had been allocated for development for years. He noted that much was promised under reserved matters, with drainage and the policies in the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan of particular importance. He strongly supported the amendment proposing that reserved matters issues come back to the Committee.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that building on brownfield site was preferable to building on farmland and so she supported this outline application. The concerns of neighbours regarding drainage and being overlooked needed to be resolved under reserved matters if the reserved matters application was to be approved. She mentioned that the site at Bellway was delivering 30%-40% affordable housing and so she did not accept that this application could only deliver 20% affordable homes.

Cllr Christine Whelan expressed concerns about both the promise of only 20% affordable housing and the volume of traffic entering the site. She doubted that many commuters would use the station, as trains were infrequent and there was no direct route to London. She was not convinced that the traffic survey was viable.

The Chair expressed his support for the application and hoped that all the concerns identified by the Committee would be dealt with under the reserved matters application.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott proposed and Cllr Christine Colbert seconded the recommendation in the report, with the one additional recommendation discussed above. A vote was taken and with 10 votes in favour, 0 votes against and 1 abstention.

It was resolved:

- (i) to grant delegated authority to the Strategic Planning & Development Management Manager to finalise the terms and completion of the s106 legal agreement;
- (ii) that following completion of the s106, planning application 24/01126/OUM be approved, subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1;
- (iii) that the Committee delegates authority to refuse the application in the event that the applicant does not agree any necessary

extensions to the statutory determination period to enable the completion of the s106 legal agreement;

- (iv) that any associated reserved matters applications be considered by the Committee.

### **36. T/PO/E/03/25 – Main Street, Prickwillow**

Kevin Drane, Trees Officer, presented this report (AA111, previously circulated), which recommended that the Committee confirm the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) E/03/25 for the woodland off Main Street, Prickwillow.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer read out a statement from objectors to the application, Rebecca and Sean Quinn:

“We live at 42 Main Street, Prickwillow and own the house which backs directly onto the area which is the subject of this TPO. As both my husband and I work full time we are unable to attend the hearing today. This is meant with no disrespect at all to the Committee but as a teacher and a lawyer we have student/client commitments which prevent us attending a hearing in the middle of the day.

“We originally submitted an objection to the TPO during the summer. The Council acknowledged our objection and provided further information. We have since responded to this by email and provided further photographic evidence of the trees overhanging significantly into our garden. We have also discussed our concerns with the applicants.

“We have at all times maintained that it is not the concept of the TPO per se we object to, it is the scope of it and the failure of the applicants to adequately maintain the land it relates to and the implications this has for us going forward if the TPO is granted as drafted.

“Our main concerns are:

1. Scope of the TPO
2. Maintenance of the land

“The TPO covers a wider area than the area where the trees which were the subject of the original grant funding are planted. It comes right up to the boundary of our property where there are other trees of a different type.

“The Council has stated that there are clear views of the woodland from publicly accessible locations such as between properties on Main Street and the drainage museum, which are sufficient for the woodland to have a public amenity value. We feel this is a real stretch, as the views are limited and there is very little space between the houses allowing the view.

“In our opinion, the applicants do not adequately maintain the area. This routine maintenance was a condition of the grant to plant the trees in the first place, and this obligation is not fulfilled in any shape or form at the present time. We have repeatedly requested that the trees be maintained around the area that immediately buffers the boundary line of our property and they have failed to do so, despite saying if we ever needed anything doing, just to tell them. They even came round following our objection and we explained our concerns and still nothing has been done. This situation will undoubtedly not improve once the TPO is formalised.

“Whilst we have been advised that the presence of a TPO does not stop reasonable maintenance, we would be legally required to submit requests for approval before anything at all can be done to the trees which are the subject of the TPO. This will inevitably cause us to incur time and inconvenience. Failure to do so would leave us liable to costs and sanctions.

“We feel that the onus should not be on us to do this. We are very busy professionals and feel the onus should be on the owners of the land to conduct reasonable and proactive maintenance so that issues do not arise, rather than us having to constantly waste time and energy to solve problems not of our making.

“We do not feel we should have to seek approval for issues which were existing before the commencement of the order. We would have imagined that reasonable and considerate action should be insisted upon before either order is formalised. We see no equity in us having to apply for permission to solve pre-existing issues.

“The applicants have not planted any trees in their own sight line from their property, yet the trees come right up and, in some cases, actually significantly intrude over our boundary line. This causes health and safety issues as they overhang our daughter’s trampoline by at least 15 feet. When asked to control the nettles that protrude through onto our child’s trampoline, we were told yes, but they are great for the peacocks. No action or engagement with us has occurred since this conversation in the summer.

“We have suggested a small buffer zone so that the TPO does not include trees on our boundary line, which were not part of the original planting and are in fact of a different species of tree altogether. This would mean we were able to prune such trees should they overhang our property, without having to apply for approval. We consider this a reasonable compromise and adjustment to ensure no ongoing issues, no time wasted and no unnecessary expense. We would then have no objections. We provided a plan of such a buffer to the Council previously.

“We do not consider that we should be penalised for the applicant’s failure to maintain their own project, one which does not negatively impact on them at all but does us, especially when the scope of the TPO could legitimately be restricted to the original planting without any negative implications for anyone.

“Many thanks for taking the time to consider our response.”

The Committee received the following statement from owner of the wood, Sonia Lewis:

“We moved to Prickwillow in 1998 and we had just over a hectare of grassland which had not been used for years and years. So, this was when we started to plant our wood. The small whips were deciduous native trees and barely showed above the grass and at that time there was only one other house in sight. The Hereward Housing terrace, which was there, was due for demolition and it wasn’t until many years later that two large, detached houses were built and incidentally those people who live on either side of those who are objecting, like the wood. The first occupants regarded the wood as an asset, saying that they would rather have woods than houses.

“The trees have constantly amazed us. In no time at all we had birds, insects and butterflies take up residence. Two species of butterfly delighted me. I was learning, I found out about the buckthorn, which is the food for the brimstone and we planted a few buckthorns and in came the brimstone butterflies within the next spring. We also have speckled woods there, which wouldn’t be possible without trees. I record this in a wood diary and any change in species goes in this. We have sparrowhawks, buzzards, green and speckled woodpeckers. They all have nested, along with other more common garden birds such as blackbirds, thrushes, robins, siskins etc. and more recently we have seen a revival of hedgehogs, which is lovely, and bats roost in the alders.

“The wood continues to give back so much. John, my husband, made ladder back chairs from the ash and cherry trees. I fire my pots in a wood kiln and I make glazes from the wood ash. Each year we open our wood during July weekends for open studios, and anybody can come. We have tried to follow good management practices in our wood. We have been on a sharp learning curve, and we have had help from the Small Woods Association.

“So, we were thinking, in particular, because of our age, we decided to apply for this TPO, because we are not going to last forever. Sadly, my husband has demonstrated this because he died at the end of August, but this merely emphasises the fact that when I die the trees will still be here. I like to think that they are a legacy for all of us.”

Councillors were invited to ask question.

In reply to Cllr Julia Huffer, Sonia Lewis explained that the wood had been well established before the neighbours objecting to the TPO had moved in.

In reply to Cllr James Lay, Sonia Lewis reported that there was one active beehive in the wood and she hoped to expand on this.

In reply to Cllr Chika Akinwale, Sonia Lewis confirmed that she was prepared to work with the Council to draw up a simple management plan to keep the trees from encroaching on boundaries. She added that her son, who lived

locally, was prepared to take on responsibility for looking after the wood when the time comes.

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, Sonia Lewis confirmed that she was aware that only deadwood could be taken from trees that were under a Tree Preservation Order, without a consent order.

In reply to Cllr Mark Goldsack, Sonia Lewis explained a tree surgeon, who did work for the Wildlife Trust, had assisted with the maintenance of the trees and she wanted to work with the neighbours to address their concerns.

Councillors were invited to ask the officers questions.

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, the Trees Officer explained that all neighbours were made aware of any Tree Preservation Orders close to their land, a list of all trees with Tree Preservation Orders was available on the Council's website and there was no charge for getting a consent order to prune trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

In reply to Cllr Chika Akinwale, the Trees Officer explained that it was not possible to add a condition of a management plan to a Tree Preservation Order. In reply to Cllr Mark Goldsack, the Trees Officer explained that the conditions agreed when a wood was planted were not the same as ongoing maintenance conditions for an established wood. The Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager added that planning permission was not required for planting trees.

The Committee moved into debate.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that she believed that the concerns of the neighbour could be addressed, the wood was well established in an area where woodland was scarce and should be enjoyed for years to come. She supported the officer's recommendation.

Cllr Lucius Vellacott asserted that this was one of the few woodlands in East Cambridgeshire and was a community asset. Simple maintenance was acceptable under the terms of a Tree Preservation Order and so he supported the officer's recommendation.

The Chair proposed and Cllr Julia Huffer seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and the Committee unanimously agreed

to resolve:

**to Approve** the confirmation of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) E/03/25 for the woodland off Main Street, Prickwillow.

### 37. TPO/E/04/25 – Main Street, Little Downham

Kevin Drane, Trees Officer, presented this report (AA112, previously circulated), which recommended that the Committee confirm the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) E/04/25 for a Lime Tree at 97 Main Street, Little Downham.

Cllr Chika Akinwale left the meeting at 3:54 pm.

The Committee received the following statement from an objector, Brian Higginson, who was acting as an agent to the homeowner.

“I just want to deal with a few simple facts to start with. Kevin alluded to the fact that the tree owners had a report from their own surveyors, Argenta who stated that ‘in my opinion it would be incorrect to retain T3 given the evidence we possess.’

“The house is subsiding; it’s got cracking damage. It’s not just the house; there’s a garage next to it and the lime tree is beyond the garage. We talk about the need to have lime roots in a trial pit. If we think about the flank of the garage, if we dig a big trial pit and if we find roots, be it lime or poplar, we can try and link it to a tree. This lime tree is quite close to the garage. It is so close that I think that it is beyond reasonable doubt that we would find lime roots, so why should we have to dig a trial pit to find them in the first place?

“I think that you have to be aware that one of your residents in the district has a subsidence problem, which they want resolved and we are trying to resolve it. If we don’t do this, it just drags out the process and it takes longer and longer, so that the suffering carries on. I think that to a degree we must be aware that there is damage occurring.

“There is a little note here from the subsidence engineer, who just said that the garage is badly damaged by subsidence, as illustrated by level monitoring. Along with the main house, the right house boundary wall between the two properties.

“So, we have evidence that we have shrinkable soil. We have evidence of trees, we have evidence of seasonal movement, which links it to vegetation. The one thing that we don’t have is lime roots in a big trial pit. I think that if this tree was on the periphery of the property and some distance from the garage, you would need more evidence, but it is so close. It is beyond reasonable doubt that the lime tree is associated with the damage. Obviously if you put a TPO on the tree and we apply to remove it and you refuse, the insurer is within his right to look for compensation.”

Councillors were invited to ask Brian Higginson questions.

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, Brian Higginson explained that the insurance engineers had decided where to dig trial pits and so he could not explain why no trial pits had been dug by the garage.

In reply to Cllr Lucius Vellacott, Brian Higginson explained that he assumed that the lime tree must have caused subsidence damage due to its proximity to the garage.

In reply to Cllr Julia Huffer, Brian Higginson accepted that poplar trees did more subsidence damage than lime trees. However, the lime tree in question was in its early maturing stage, where trees removed more water from the soil and lime trees were assessed as "medium" in terms of likelihood to cause subsidence damage. Poplar trees were assessed as "high".

In reply to Cllr Christine Colbert, Brian Higginson explained that the maximum distance for lime trees to cause damage was 20 metres away, whilst in 50% of cases the lime tree was within 6 metres of the damage. So the known facts indicated that the tree was causing damage to the garage.

In reply to Cllr Mark Goldsack, Brian Higginson reported that the insurance company had been kept informed of all developments regarding this matter and currently they saw no reason to dig an additional trial pit, although that view could change. If movement continued after the poplar tree was removed, this would prove that the lime tree was causing damage.

Councillors were invited to ask questions to the officer.

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, the Trees Officer reported that the lime tree was planted prior to 1993, which was before the garage and the home were built. He explained that Building Control had reported that the home's foundations should be designed by an engineer due to the proximity of trees. The foundations of the garage did not need to be reported to Building Control.

In reply to Cllr Mark Goldsack, the Trees Officer assured the Committee that if the stump of the poplar tree was left after the tree was removed, it would be treated to ensure that there was no further growth.

In reply to Cllr Keith Horgan, the Trees Officer stated that when a tree needed to be removed, the insurance company would liaise with the tree owner to decide who would pay for its removal.

The Committee moved into debate.

Cllr Julia Huffer stated that lime tree was there in 1993, before the house and garage had been built. There needed to be clear evidence that the tree was damaging the garage before it could be removed and as this evidence had not been provided, she asserted that the Committee should agree with the officer's recommendation and approve the confirmation of the Tree Preservation Order. Cllr Keith Horgan agreed and suggested that stronger foundations should have been added to the garage when it was built so close to a tree. Cllr James Lay suggested that the onus was on the objector to prove that the lime tree was doing damage by digging a trial pit, as had been done with the poplar tree. Until this was done the Tree Preservation Order should remain in place.

The Chair stated that if it was proved that a tree was doing damage, it could be removed. However, if a tree that was not doing damage was removed, it could not be restored.

Cllr Julia Huffer proposed and Cllr Keith Horgan seconded the recommendation in the report. A vote was taken and the Committee unanimously agreed

to resolve:

**to Approve** the confirmation of the Tree Preservation Order (TPO) E/04/25 a Lime Tree at 97 Main Street, Little Downham.

### **38. Planning Performance Report – October 2025**

David Morren, Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager, presented a report (AA113, previously circulated) summarising the performance of the Planning Department in October 2025. He explained that the report provided only details of the appeals that had been received that month.

Cllr James Lay asked if an annual performance report could be brought to the Committee. In response to questioning, the Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager suggested that the Operational Services Committee discussed Planning's Service Plan, whilst this Committee focussed on performance data. He asked whether the Committee wanted the annual report to be based on a calendar year or the civic year. A vote was taken and with 7 votes in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions it was agreed that the Committee should receive an annual performance report at the end of the calendar year. The Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager explained that this report would go to February's Committee.

In response to a question from Cllr Mark Goldsack, the Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager explained that the Council was receiving fewer planning applications but these applications were for larger developments and were more complex. The Council had provided the Government with information on the number of completions and would be providing them with details of the authority's current five year land supply later this month. This data would be put on the website and also shared with the Committee.

In response to Cllr Keith Horgan, the Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager reported that figure in brackets in the determinations table was the performance target. He believed that it should be possible to indicate how long it was taking to process planning applications that had missed their performance targets. He added that the average time for processing applications had reduced and work was being done to resolve applications that had been on the waiting list the longest.

It was resolved:

- (i) that the Planning Performance Report for October 2025 be noted;
- (ii) that the Committee receive a performance report for the calendar year in February.

The meeting concluded at 4:42 pm.

Chair.....

Date.....



**25/00371/FUL**

Land Off Water Lane

Long Acre

Kirtling

Suffolk

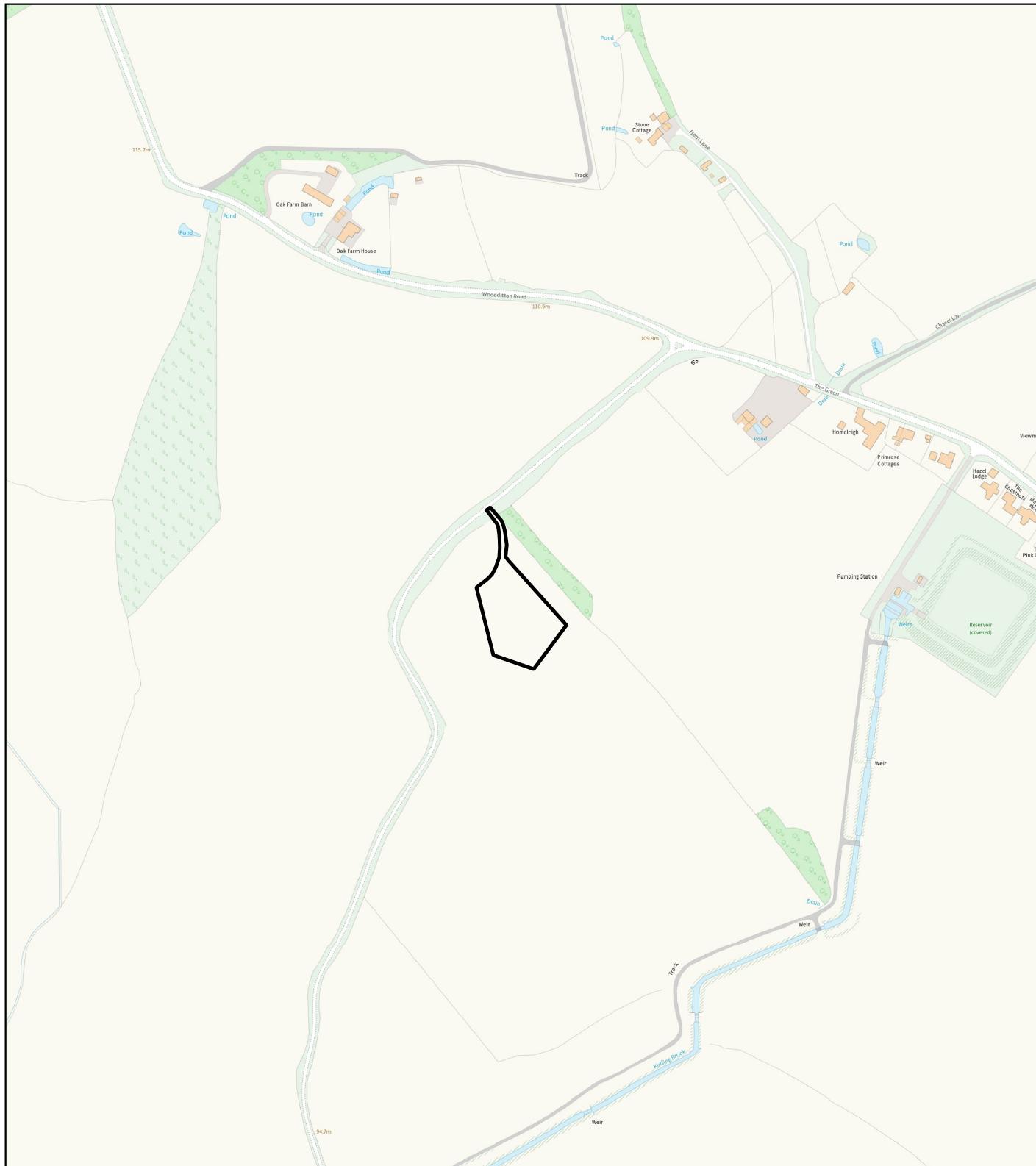
To build a purpose-built Wildlife Veterinary Hospital including residential facilities

To view all of the public access documents relating to this application please use the following web address or scan the QR code:

<http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=STUCK8GGG7200>







25/00371/FUL



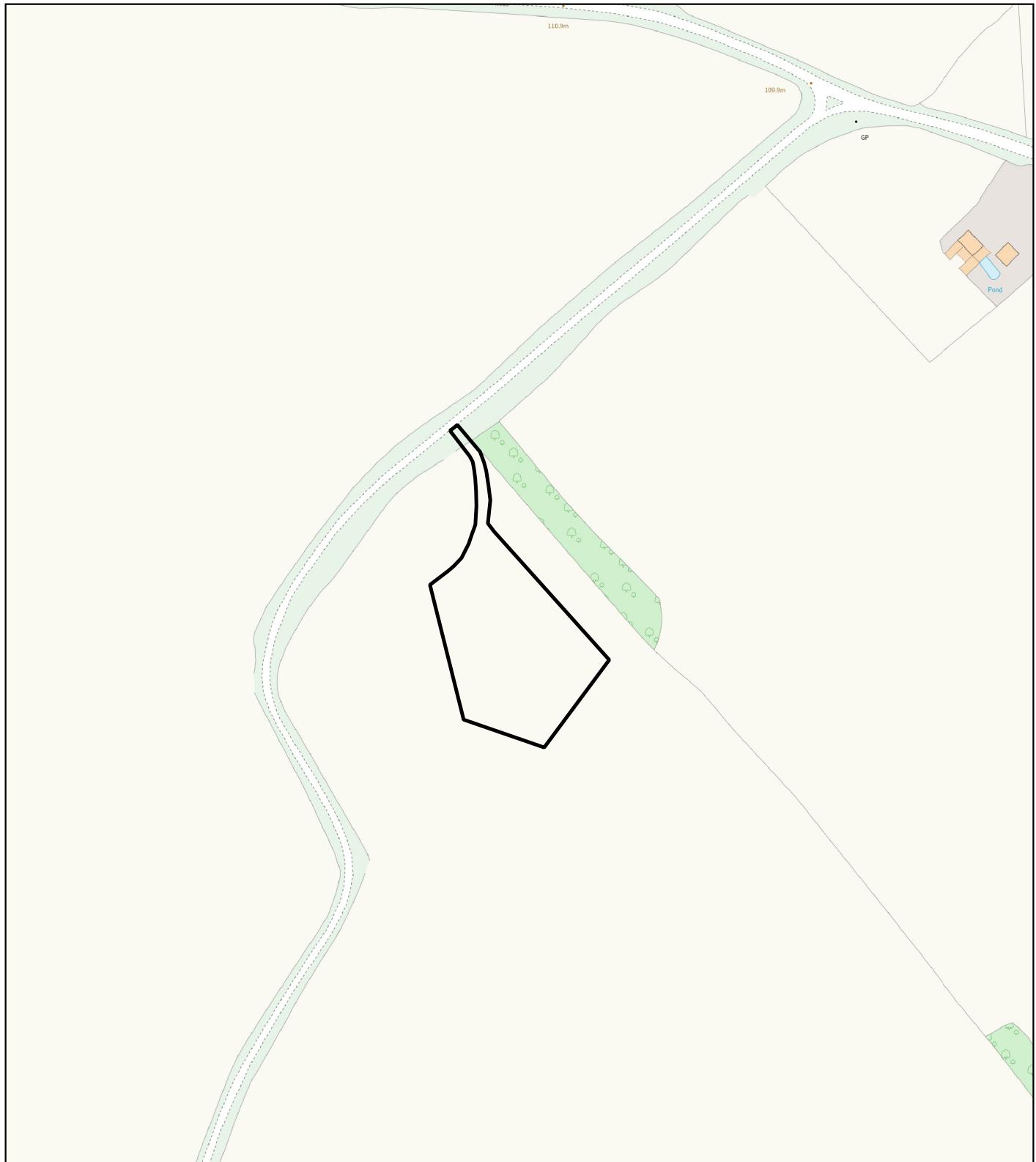
Land Off Water Lane  
Long Acre  
Kirtling

East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

Date: 16/06/2025  
Scale: 1:5,000



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25/00371/FUL



Land Off Water Lane  
Long Acre  
Kirtling

East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

Date: 16/06/2025  
Scale: 1:2,500



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**TITLE:** 25/00371/FUL

Committee: Planning Committee

Date: 14 January 2026

Author: Planning Officer

Report No: AA114

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**Site Address: Land Off Water Lane Long Acre Kirtling Suffolk**

**Proposal: To build a purpose-built Wildlife Veterinary Hospital including residential facilities**

**Applicant: Sue Stuble**

**Parish: Kirtling**

**Ward: Woodditton**

Ward Councillor/s: James Lay  
Alan Sharp

**Date Received: 23 April 2025**

**Expiry Date: 16 January 2025**

**1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are recommended to REFUSE the application for the following reasons:

1. Policy GROWTH 2 states that outside of the development envelopes, development will be strictly controlled, having regard to the need to protect the countryside and the setting of towns and villages. Development will be restricted to the main categories listed in the policy, and may be permitted as an exception, providing there is no significant adverse impact on the character of the countryside and that other Local Plan policies are satisfied. The proposal does not fall within any of the exception policies listed in GROWTH 2 and therefore would be unacceptable in principle. There is insufficient justification as to why the proposed development needs to be in this specific location or why someone needs to live on site. The proposal is therefore considered to be

contrary to GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and Chapter 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

2. Policy ENV 1 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals should ensure that they provide a complementary relationship with the existing development and conserve, preserve and where possible enhance the distinctive and traditional landscapes and key views in and out of settlements. Policy ENV 2 states that development proposals ensure that the location, layout, massing, materials and colour of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area. The proposal would result in a large amount of development projecting into the countryside against the general pattern of development in the area. The proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of the scale of the development proposed and is therefore contrary to Policies ENV 1 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
3. Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that new development will be expected to ensure that there is no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and that occupiers and users of new buildings, especially dwellings, enjoy high standards of amenity. The proposal has the potential to result in noise and disturbance to the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings, however, there is a lack of information submitted in respect of the use of solar panels with battery storage and air source heat pumps to make a full assessment of the impact of the proposal to residential amenity. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

1.2 The application was called in committee by Cllr Sharp and was heard at the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025. The application was deferred by members and a three-month period given to the applicants to allow an opportunity to address the five reasons for refusal. The applicant met that deadline and following a consultation period, the application is being brought back before the planning committee for consideration.

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for a purpose-built wildlife hospital which includes residential facilities.

2.2 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link [Simple Search](#).

## **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 There is no planning history at this site.

## **4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT**

The proposed wildlife hospital would be situated on a parcel of land along Water Lane and would occupy approximately 0.48ha (1.18 hectares) of the wider site. The site is outside of the development envelope of Kirtling and is therefore considered to be in the countryside. The site is accessed by a single-track road. There is a row of trees to the north of the site which provides some screening on approach. The wider site is surrounded by hedgerows; these are beyond the red line boundary of the site. To the east of the wider site is a Public Right of Way (Footpath 141/20). To the southwest of the site is a County Wildlife Site (CWS) and the verge along Water Lane is a protected road verge. At the time of the site visit (28<sup>th</sup> April 2025) and the subsequent committee site visit (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025), the site contained storage containers, a static caravan and other paraphernalia such as hutches, which have been placed on the land without the benefit of planning permission. There have also been trees planted, and bee hives placed on the land, although all of this is outside of the red line boundary.

## **5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES**

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site. **Please note** the comments summarised below are from the consultation carried out following the submission of new information. The original consultee responses can be found on the Council's website.

**East Cambs Ecologist – 9 December 2025**

### Ecology

From the information provided the Senior Ecologist has reviewed this application and, as of 21/11/25 supports this application with conditions and S106 agreement in place to secure significant BNG habitats and secure offsite measures for protected species.

There are some inconsistencies and minor issues, but these can be dealt with via discharge of condition (for example, not listing the location of bat boxes to meet NPPF section 15 and ENV7). Not all previous issues have been overcome at present and conditions will be required to ensure the council meets its biodiversity duty towards NERC Act 2006 species and meets its obligations under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, where local authorities are required to do everything they reasonably can to prevent crime, including wildlife crime. A species release schedule would be required to ensure that no wild animal releases caused additional harm to local wildlife in order to conserve, restoring or otherwise enhance a population of a particular species.

## BNG

With the updated information provided the Senior Ecologist approves the baseline conditions this application meets the minimum legal requirement for BNG for the current redline boundary and requires S106 to secure monitoring of the site.

## **Environmental Health - 10 October 2025**

I note that the proposal involves battery storage and ASHPs which I had not previously commented on. These elements would fall under the control of the noise condition I recommended in my initial response and so I have no additional comments to make at this time

## **Local Highways Authority - 30 October 2025**

Following a careful review of the documents provided to the Local Highway Authority as part of the above planning application, the effect of the proposed development upon the public highway would likely be mitigated if the following conditions form part of any permission that the Planning Authority is minded to issue in regard to this proposal.

### Comments

The proposal seeks to introduce a new access point from Long Acre, Kirtling, to a purpose-built Wildlife Veterinary Hospital. The accompanying Transport Report outlines that the facility is expected to generate additional vehicle movements along Long Acre. This is due to the employment of approximately eight staff, onsite accommodation for the applicant, four treatment rooms and one intensive care room, as well as movements associated with veterinary personnel, a wildlife ambulance, visitors dropping off limited wildlife, and servicing activities related to the management and maintenance of the site, its facilities, equipment, and deliveries.

Long Acre is considered, at present, to be inadequate to serve the scale of the development proposed within this application by virtue of its restricted width, lack of passing places and the poor geometry and width of its junction with Woodditton Road. At present, this arrangement appears to be inadequate to facilitate two-way vehicular movements.

In order to make this development acceptable, the applicant should provide appropriate measures to mitigate the potential increased risk of highway safety issues as a result of the proposed intensification of Long Acre. These should include the provision of a passing bay along Long Acre, equidistant between the site and junction at Woodditton Road and the regularisation of the junction between Long Acre and Woodditton Road to enable two vehicles to pass in the junction without hinderance.

Whilst the intensification of use of the junction, based on the Transport Report provided, looks to be fairly modest, it is considered that these minor highway works are necessary to accommodate any intensification of use to ensure safe and suitable access can be made to the site. It is considered that, given the variety of vehicles such as visitors, deliveries and staff that will access the site via motor

vehicle, provision must be made to allow two-way vehicle movements to the site to prevent obstruction to the carriageway, verge damage or reversing manoeuvres onto Woodditton Road. The deficiencies present with the existing junction arrangement are evident from the overrun verges apparent. Without prejudice to any additional information and based on the records available to the County Council at present, it looks to be that adequate space is available within the extent of the public highway for the provision of these works. For the avoidance of doubt, it would be the preference of the LHA that any proposed highway works details are approved on a specific, separate plan prior to determination of decision.

It is also observed that the access width proposed within the site is slightly below that of which the Local Highway Authority (LHA) would consider acceptable for a development of this scale. It would be expected that this development would provide an access of at least 5 metres (16.4ft) wide for the first 8 metres (26.2ft) within the site, whereas a 4.5 metre (14.7ft) access has been proposed. There appears to be adequate space on site to create an access that is an appropriate width. Further, any proposed gate shall be 10 metres (32.8ft) back from the carriageway edge into the site.

Given the site context, consideration shall be given to the impact of the construction of the site to the public highway within the vicinity of the site. Temporary measures shall be proposed to prevent damage to the highway verges on either side of the carriageway by contractor motor vehicles and how any such damage will be repaired at no expense to the LHA.

It is observed that the parking provision provided on site may not be adequate for the scale of the development proposed, however this is something the LPA may wish to comment upon. Due to its restricted carriageway width, Long Acre is not a suitable location for any overspill parking and adequate parking provision shall be provided on site.

Should the applicant be willing to accept the conditions outlined, this development would be considered to be acceptable to the LHA.

The conditions requested are the submission of an engineering scheme for the improvement of Long Acre and the junction of Long Acre and Woodditton Road, the proposed vehicle access to be a minimum of 5 metres (16.4ft) in width for a minimum distance of 8 metres (26.2ft), any gates to be set back a minimum of 10 metres (32.8ft), the submission of a construction traffic management plan, that the access is constructed so its falls are levels are such so that no private water drains across or onto the public highway and that the vehicular access is constructed using a bound material for the first 5 metres (16.4ft).

#### **Parish - 31 October 2025**

At its meeting on 27th October 2025, Kirtling and Upend Parish Council considered the above planning application.

Councillors agreed that, in principle, the Parish Council has no objection to the concept of establishing a wildlife hospital. The Council recognises the potential community and environmental benefits such a facility may bring.

However, the Council expressed serious concerns regarding the financial viability of the proposed project and the likelihood of its successful completion. Councillors felt that, without clear and credible evidence of sustainable funding for both construction and ongoing operation, there remains a significant risk that the development may not be completed or maintained as intended.

The Council has also received a number of objections from local residents, raising the following issues:

1. The proposal lies outside the village envelope, with insufficient justification for the choice of site.
2. The development comprises 20 acres of Grade 2 high-quality agricultural land.
3. The development would increase noise and light pollution, causing lasting harm to the area's open rural character and dark skies.
4. The level of community support claimed appears to have been overstated by the applicant.
5. Concerns regarding potential future expansion and precedent.
6. Uncertainty over ownership and control in the event of the owner's demise.
7. Inadequate evidence has been provided on the following points:
  - Financial viability of the project
  - Expected traffic levels
  - Impact on local ecology
  - Scale and impact of proposed on-site utilities

For these reasons, while the Parish Council does not object in principle to the idea of a wildlife hospital, it requests that the Planning Authority carefully consider these concerns before determining the application.

In addition, the Council asks that the representations made by Ms Sue Stuble at the meeting on 27th October be taken into account, specifically:

1. A wildlife-only covenant would be placed on the site, also limiting residential use to a maximum of 1,000 square feet on the site as a whole.
2. All containers would be removed from the site within 18 months of work commencing.
3. The developer would, at all times, act with respect for the environment.

#### **Ward Councillors - 10 October 2025**

This application will need the Full Planning Committee to give their views.

#### **Waste Strategy (ECDC) - 21 October 2025**

Following the change of proposal title to include residential facilities, I have included the standard advice for primary residential properties. Please note that ECDC will only collect the waste from the residential property if it is the primary residence of the owner, if it is to be used to accommodate workers on overnight shifts then waste produced would be classed as commercial. All waste produced from the veterinary hospital will require a registered commercial waste collection as per the previous comments.

East Cambs District Council will not enter private property to collect waste or recycling, therefore it would be the responsibility of the owners/residents to take any sacks/bins to the public highway boundary on the relevant collection day and this should be made clear to any prospective purchasers in advance, this is especially the case where bins would need to be moved over long distances; the RECAP Waste Management Design Guide defines the maximum distance a resident should have to take a wheeled bin to the collection point as 30 metres (98.4ft) (assuming a level smooth surface).

Under Section 46 of The Environmental Protection Act 1990, East Cambridgeshire District Council as a Waste Collection Authority is permitted to make a charge for the provision (delivery and administration) of waste collection receptacles, this power being re-enforced in the Local Government Acts of 1972, 2000, and 2003, as well as the Localism Act of 2011.

**The Ely Group Of Internal Drainage Board - No Comments Received**

**Enforcement Section - No Comments Received**

**Cambs Wildlife Trust - No Comments Received**

**ECDC Trees Team - No Comments Received**

5.2 A site notice was displayed near the site on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

5.3 Neighbours – all addresses who were originally notified or commented as part of the first consultation were reconsulted. The responses received are summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council's website.

5 comments were received from neighbouring properties. All 5 are objections to the proposal for the following reasons:

*The vast majority of comments are from non-residents, there will be much more appropriate locations in the County, concerns around funding, existing lane is too narrow and in poor condition, loss of Grade 2 agricultural land, conflicts with the Local Plan, a residential dwelling would result in permanent harm, a business operating 24/7 would significantly increase the number of vehicles, this is the wrong place to build the hospital, basic principles have not changed since the original submission, will have a significant and irreversible impact on the rural character of the area, building is sited in an exposed and prominent location, residential accommodation on site is unjustified.*

1 objection was received from a Kirtling resident who is not a neighbour to the site:

*The planning statement includes several contrived statements and is selective in the policies referred to, issues with the transport report, concerns about the intention for the wider site, concerns that conditions/restrictions would not be observed, does not address concerns about scale, the views of local residents should be given due weight and consideration.*

32 comments were received from ECDC residents outside of Kirtling. 30 letters of support were received:

*No wildlife facilities in the area, the building would provide much needed space and facilities, little focused provision for hedgehog rescue/rehabilitation in the district, would provide specialist care for injured and sick wildlife, support volunteering and local engagement, strengthen local resilience, important service for the welfare and protection of wildlife.*

2 letters of objection were received:

*Loss of agricultural land, unsuitable rural location, disruption to existing local wildlife, there are a number of alternative suitable locations, approval would set a damaging precedent, poor access to the site, concerns around funding.*

140 comments were received from outside of the District. All 140 are letters of support:

*Wildlife hospital desperately needed, outgrowing the current premises, only place for miles where wildlife can be taken, hedgehogs need help, praise for the applicant and the work that she does, the proposed hospital is modest in scale, development has destroyed wildlife habitats, the proposed location appears well suited, would provide an essential service for wildlife, wildlife hospital will be an asset to the village, hedgehogs are in decline, many vets and organisations such as the RSPCA are unable to accept or treat certain species, habitat being lost due to development, plans have been scaled back, ECDC has a Hedgehog Recovery Campaign.*

A letter of support has also been received from Vets 4 Pets, Newmarket:

*Newmarket Vets 4 Pets are in full support of the planning for this new hospital. It will be a great asset to the area, and it will be hugely beneficial to the local wildlife and their rehabilitation. If it did go ahead we would be happy to provide veterinary support.*

A letter of support has also been received from Cllr Lucius Vellacott:

*A few residents in Soham have contacted me about the above application in Kirtling. I do not normally comment on applications outside my ward/neighbouring Soham North, however as this would affect the entire District and has generated public interest in my ward, I am compelled to share a few thoughts.*

*I would like to express my support for the application.*

*I understand the application previously faced barriers relating mainly to:*

1. GROWTH 2 (Location)
2. Impact on countryside harming character of area
3. Noise (inc. lack of highways information)
4. Possible highways safety issues, lack of parking information
5. Harm to habitats without sufficient BNG

*I do think that considerable weight should be applied to the necessity of a wildlife hospital and the professional contributions to the application from the industry which support this. It is an essential expansion to allow the much-used service to continue.*

*I am on a preliminary reading of the technical documents assured that the reasons for refusal have been adequately addressed. There may not be the intense level of detail but on balance, as you noted in your original report to committee, there is such strong need for a facility of this nature.*

*Regarding GROWTH 2, whilst I know officers have to follow the rules as written, I think committee will and should understand that GROWTH 2 is intended to prevent urban sprawl, and a facility like this is very much in the spirit of the exemptions provided. When we talk about not being sure that this location is the best one, we don't consider that the applicant probably can't access any other land...!*

*Fundamentally, when something as 'good' as this is proposed we should be looking for absolutely every reason to say 'yes' to it and I really hope planning committee will do so provided there is reassurance (which I believe there is) that the issues have been addressed.*

## **6.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

### **6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)**

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| GROWTH 2 | Locational strategy  |
| GROWTH 5 | Presumption in favour of sustainable development                 |
| ENV 1    | Landscape and settlement character                               |
| ENV 2    | Design   |
| ENV 4    | Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction |
| ENV 7    | Biodiversity and geology   |
| ENV 8    | Flood risk   |
| ENV 9    | Pollution  |
| COM 7    | Transport impact   |
| COM 8    | Parking provision  |

### **6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents**

Design Guide  
Country Wildlife Sites  
Natural Environment SPD  
Climate Change SPD  
Flood and Water

### **6.3 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)**

- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 4 Decision-making
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- 3 Decision-making policies
- 4 Achieving sustainable development
- 5 Meeting the challenge of climate change
- 14 Achieving well-designed places
- 15 Promoting sustainable transport
- 19 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

6.4 Planning Practice Guidance

## **7.0 PLANNING MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMENTS**

7.01 It is our understanding that from 24<sup>th</sup> December 2025, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy will have been published, and we further understand that this site is highly likely to be allocated for a woodland measure under Policy WO3A, the action for which states:

*“WO3A - improve biodiversity by creating mixed deciduous woodland consisting of appropriate native or climate change tolerant (European only) species to increase resilience and diversity. Such newly created woodlands are to be within 2.5 kilometres of existing woodland, though in practice should be much closer (ideally within 500 metres).”*

*Newly created woods would ideally form a woodland block (or group of woodlands within 200 metres of each other) which are at least 40 hectares in size. Woodland creation would be expected over approximately 80% of the site area mapped under this measure, with the remaining 20% a mosaic of other complementary habitats such as species-rich grassland, scrub, ponds, and individual trees.”*

This means that the site is to be officially allocated as being in an ‘Area that could become of particular importance for biodiversity (ACB), specifically for woodland’ and the decision maker has to have regard to this.

However, due to report writing deadlines, at the time of writing there is insufficient information to be able to make an informed judgement as to the bearing of the above on the application. Therefore, a verbal update will be provided on this topic at the committee meeting.

### **7.1 Principle of Development**

7.1.1 Policy GROWTH 2 states that outside of the development envelopes, development will be strictly controlled, having regard to the need to protect the countryside and the setting of towns and villages. Development will be restricted to the main categories listed in the policy, and may be permitted as an exception, providing there is no significant adverse impact on the character of the countryside and that other Local Plan policies are satisfied.

7.1.2 The planning statement sets out that it is ‘*abundantly clear that such a use is acceptable*’, based on the development types listed as exceptions to Policy GROWTH 2 which include:

- Dwellings for essential rural workers
- Residential care homes
- Small-scale employment development
- Horse racing and equestrian development
- Renewable energy development; and
- Agriculture, horticulture and forestry

7.1.3 The planning statement also states that it is disingenuous to dismiss the proposal on the basis of Policy GROWTH 2 as:

*‘The proposal includes a dwelling for an essential rural worker. Whilst the development would provide care for wild animals, as opposed to care for humans – there are parallels to be drawn with residential care homes. The development comprises small-scale employment – of the applicant and volunteers, as well as peripheral employment of vets, suppliers etc. If the proposal was for a horse hospital, it would be captured by Policy GROWTH 2 – which raises the obvious point – that such development is in the Countryside where one expects to find animals. The proposal incorporates renewable energy development and is not too far removed from an agricultural use; instead of the growing of animals for food, the proposal rehabilitates animals to maintain wild populations.’*

7.1.4 The proposal is not comparable to a residential care home. While it may provide some employment in the future, the relevant policy (EMP 3) is only for B1, B2 and B8 uses. It is correct that if the proposal was for equine use, it would be captured by GROWTH 2 and EMP 5 but it is not. The proposal is not for an agricultural use.

7.1.5 The proposal does not fall within any of the exception policies listed in GROWTH 2 and therefore would be unacceptable in principle. Therefore, to depart from policy, there would need to be sufficient justification as to why the hospital needs to be sited in this specific location.

7.1.6 Following assessment of the original submission, officers concluded that sufficient justification had not been provided as to why the hospital needed to be located in this specific location or why someone needed to live on site.

7.1.7 It was unclear in the previous submission as to where other wildlife hospitals are within the local area. Clear information has now been submitted as to where the other wildlife hospitals are. It is considered that it has been sufficiently demonstrated that there are no other wildlife hospitals in close proximity. From Ely, the proposed site would be approximately a 20-mile drive, with Shepreth Hedgehog Hospital being approximately 28 miles. The LPA accept that there is a lack of these types of facilities and that there is a need for one in the locality.

7.1.8 The current submission includes the same site assessment as previously submitted. It is noted that largely that the land became unavailable (sold to someone else, higher offer made by someone else) or that it was too far for volunteers rather than being unsuitable for the animals. It is also noted that in respect of Newton Cricket Ground that the alternative site assessment states that 10.5 acres is ‘small but

adequate' and at a site in Ousden that part of the reason the land was not pursued was because the land available was not sufficient and then lists the size as 2.5 acres. The alternative site assessment now includes the application site but the size of 27 acres is misleading. The land within the red line of this application equates to approximately 1.21 acres and therefore is smaller than both of the above. This suggests that the scale of the site at Kirtling may be insufficient and that further land may be required; the applicants Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that '*While the sale includes a larger parcel of land (27 acres), this application pertains solely to a 1.21-acre area, as delineated by the red line boundary. However, the broader site should be considered within the context of a long-term strategic vision for conservation and wildlife rehabilitation.*' It must be made clear that only the land within the red line would have permission for this use, if permission were to be granted.

7.1.9 The site selection assessment sets out that this site was identified as the most suitable location, as it was considered to meet all of the essential criteria more effectively than any of the alternative sites considered, offering a balance of accessibility for the public while remaining secluded from major roads, residential areas, and overhead power lines and that this ensures an optimal environment for wildlife recovery. However, the DAS also sets out that '*in many cases, animals are returned to the same area once rehabilitated and ready for release*' and specifically in relation to hedgehogs, states that all hedgehogs will be returned to their found location and where this is not possible a new location will be found but they will not be released on site due to the presence of the badger sett. In addition to this, there is no requirement known to the LPA that a facility of this nature has to be in the countryside.

7.1.10 The alternative site assessment considers the whole size of the site, not just that within the red line boundary. It assesses the access as 'good' when actually it needs significant upgrades to be acceptable for the use proposed (this will be addressed in full in the Highways section of this report). In addition, animals will not be rewilded here, and hedgehogs cannot be rewilded here which means increased trips to other locations to carry this out.

7.1.11 From the information presented, it is concluded that whilst there is a need for a wildlife hospital, it has not been demonstrated that it needs to be in this location. The need does not outweigh the harm and impact to the countryside, discussed in further detail in the Visual Amenity section.

7.1.12 In respect of the residential accommodation proposed, the justification that has been given is limited in detail but states that it is related to the '*rigours of hourly feeds, the administration of medication at all hours and positioning to respond to emergencies as they arise*' and that the animals require continuous 24/7 care. While the LPA believe there would be a need for someone to be on site 24/7, it is considered that there is still insufficient justification for someone to live on site. It is not detailed as to why this could not be managed through shift work; even just the feeding requirements would require someone to be up all night and working. While there may be emergencies to deal with, the hourly feeding and medication administration are planned tasks that can be programmed into a workers' shifts.

7.1.13 The LPA does not consider the proposal to fall within Policy HOU 5 'rural workers dwellings.' A proposal would only fall within the definition of an essential rural worker if it is for the purposes of attending the essential needs of a rural activity. Unless it can be demonstrated that the specifics of the business/activity require it to be located in a rural location then it does not meet the definition of an essential rural worker. As noted above, the LPA consider that it has not been demonstrated that the proposal needs to be in this location; furthermore, the Council's Ecologist has confirmed there is no legislative requirement for a wildlife hospital to have a countryside location. However, even if the LPA accepted that it was relevant, it is considered that it would not comply with the policy. It has not been demonstrated that a dwelling is essential to the needs of the business. It has not been demonstrated that the enterprise will remain financially viable, it has not been demonstrated that the dwelling would be unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income that the enterprise could sustain and it is not sited to avoid visual intrusion – this remains one of the reasons for refusal.

7.1.14 In December 2025, a consultation for the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was launched. At the time of the committee meeting, the revised NPPF will still be in consultation and holds very limited weight in the decision-making process. However, it provides clear direction in respect of development in the countryside.

7.1.15 Policy s5 of the revised NPPF states that only certain forms of development should be approved outside of settlements. Those forms of development are listed within the policy. The LPA consider that the proposal does not fall within any of the exceptions listed. In respect of development proposals that do not fall within one of the categories listed, policy s5 states that they should only be approved in exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal substantially outweigh the adverse effects, including to the character of the countryside and in relation to promoting sustainable patterns of movement. It is therefore considered that the proposal is contrary to this policy for the reasons set out above. In addition, the location of development is discussed in other chapters of the revised NPPF, such as Chapter 5 (meeting the challenge of climate change), where it states that development proposals should be located where a genuine choice of sustainable modes of transport exist.

7.1.16 In respect of rural workers dwellings, Policy HO11 of the revised NPPF states that development proposals for isolated homes in the countryside should only be supported where '*there is an essential need for a rural worker, including those taking majority control of a farm business to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside.*' This is the same wording as the current NPPF and therefore does not alter the LPA's stance on this element of the proposal.

7.1.17 While the proposal is much clearer as to the operation of the site, it has still failed to demonstrate as to why it needs to be in this specific location or why someone needs to live at the site. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

## 7.2 Visual Amenity

7.2.1 Policy ENV 1 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals should ensure that they provide a complementary relationship with the existing development and conserve, preserve and where possible enhance the distinctive and traditional landscapes and key views in and out of settlements. Policy ENV 2 states that development proposals ensure that the location, layout, massing, materials and colour of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area.

7.2.2 The proposed wildlife hospital would be situated on a parcel of land along Water Lane and would occupy approximately 0.48 hectares (1.21 acres) of the wider site. The site is visible from a number of vantage points; from Water Lane, from the Public Right of Way which runs to the east of the site and from Woodditton Road.

7.2.3 The original submission proposed to construct the hospital out of storage containers. Officers recommended refusal on the basis that the storage containers were unlikely to result in a high-quality design. It was also considered that the number of buildings resulted in overdevelopment and that the proposal resulted in a large amount of development projecting into the countryside against the general pattern of development.

7.2.4 The current proposal has removed all of the additional buildings so the only building proposed is the hospital itself. The DAS sets out that the design echoes nearby farm buildings and illustrates how the final design has been achieved. The proposed building is made up of four rectangular elements with a courtyard in the centre. The materials proposed are red brickwork, black painted weatherboard, treated oak frames and clay pantiles for the roof. The aviary would be wire mesh.

7.2.5 The design in isolation is of a much higher quality than that previously proposed, and it is considered that element of the previous recommended reason for refusal has been resolved. However, the proposed building is still a very large building, measuring approximately 50 metres (164ft) in width, 41 metres (135.5ft) in depth at its deepest point and approximately 6.5 metres (21.32ft) in height at its highest point. It is considered that by virtue of its scale and location that it would still result in a large amount of development projecting into the countryside against the general pattern of development. In addition, the proposal includes a large area of hardstanding to accommodate the access and parking which would further erode the rural nature of the countryside.

7.2.6 There is also a tree belt along the northern boundary of the wider site and hedgerows around the wider site. The tree belt along the northern boundary of the site does screen the site from view on approach from Woodditton Road from the north. Within the site, there is some tree and hedge planting proposed, and further tree planting proposed around the perimeter of the wider site. It is considered that while the tree planting may assist in softening the development, landscaping cannot be used to screen harmful development and cannot be relied upon in perpetuity.

7.2.7 The proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of the scale of the development proposed and is therefore

contrary to Policies ENV 1 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

### **7.3 Residential Amenity**

7.3.1 Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that new development will be expected to ensure that there is no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and that occupiers and users of new buildings, especially dwellings, enjoy high standards of amenity.

7.3.2 The closest dwellings to the site are situated to the north of the site on Woodditton Road and The Green. The main issues raised by neighbours in respect of residential amenity are increased traffic and noise and disturbance.

7.3.3 It is considered that the physical development would not result in harm to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings, in respect of overshadowing, overbearing or overlooking as there is sufficient distance between the site and the neighbouring properties to avoid these impacts.

7.3.4 Concern was raised previously around how the site would be powered as this was ambiguous. The DAS sets out that the energy source would be a solar voltaic array comprising 66 panels with integrated battery storage and three Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP). The Council's Environmental Health Officer has commented that these elements would fall under the control of the noise condition previously recommended. However, this condition requires that the specific noise level omitted from the site shall not exceed background level. Given the location of the site and that background noise is likely to be very low, it is considered that this condition would be easily breached. Officers consider that this condition would not be reasonable to impose as it is unknown whether it could be complied with.

7.3.5 As it is considered that the condition could not be imposed, the LPA would need to be satisfied that no adverse noise impacts would occur. No information relating to the noise of these elements has been submitted and therefore it is not possible for the LPA to make a sound judgement as to whether there will be an impact to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings.

7.3.6 There was concern in relation to noise and disturbance from vehicle movements but there was previously little information provided as how the site would operate. The current submission sets out that it is envisaged that the hospital would ultimately employ three full time nursing staff working 09:00-18:00 and three part time assistants working 18:00-21:00. In addition to this, there would be a full-time office manager and an administrative assistant working 09:00-17:00. The Transport Report concludes that on a worst-case basis, that there would no more than 8 vehicle trips to the hospital (16 two-way movements – 8 arrivals/8 departures). This is based on three members of staff, the applicant and one vet surgeon (five people in total), with visitor traffic to the site is expected to be intermittent with 2-10 animal related visits per day and deliveries averaging two movements per day. For clarity, these numbers are based on movements taking place during the AM and PM peak highway periods.

7.3.7 While this assessment was undertaken for highways and transport purposes and not noise, the worst-case basis is 8 vehicle movements in the AM and PM peak times. Therefore, the remainder of the day would have more sporadic vehicle movements. It is therefore considered that there is unlikely to be a significant adverse impact to residential amenity from the vehicle movements, however the LPA does not have surety that the solar panels with battery storage and air source heat pumps would not create a noise impact, particularly in a very quiet area.

7.3.8 It is considered that the proposal lacks sufficient information to fully assess the potential impacts to the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

#### **7.4 Highways**

7.4.1 Policy COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals shall provide a safe and convenient access to the highway network.

7.4.2 The site would be accessed from Long Acre. From the plans submitted, the access would be upgraded with hardstanding (off white limestone gravel) as it is currently an informal field access.

7.4.3 The application was previously recommended for refusal on the basis that there was insufficient information for both the Local Planning Authority and the Local Highway Authority (LHA) to assess whether there would be any significant impacts to the operation of the highway.

7.4.4 The LHA have been consulted and have commented that the Transport Report outlines that the facility is expected to generate additional vehicle movements along Long Acre due to the employment of approximately eight staff, onsite accommodation for the applicant, four treatment rooms and one intensive care room, as well as movements associated with veterinary personnel, a wildlife ambulance, visitors dropping off limited wildlife, and servicing activities related to the management and maintenance of the site, its facilities, equipment, and deliveries.

7.4.5 The LHA consider that at the present time, Long Acre is inadequate to serve the scale of the development proposed within the application by virtue of its restricted width, lack of passing places and poor geometry and width of its junction with Woodditton Road. They consider that the arrangement appears to be inadequate to facilitate two-way vehicular movements.

7.4.6 To make the development acceptable, appropriate measures to mitigate the potential increased risk of highway safety issues must be provided and the LHA have advised that this should include the provision of a passing bay along Long Acre, equidistant between the site and junction at Woodditton Road and the regularisation of the junction between Long Acre and Woodditton Road to enable two vehicles to pass in the junction without hinderance. However, it is for the applicant to put forward an acceptable mitigation scheme.

7.4.7 The LHA have concluded that while the intensification of the use of the junction, based on the Transport Report provided, looks to be fairly modest, they consider that the highway works are necessary to accommodate any intensification of use to ensure safe and suitable access can be made to the site. They have commented that given the variety of vehicles that will access the site that provision must be made to allow two-way vehicle movements to the site to prevent obstruction to the carriageway, verge damage or reversing manoeuvres onto Woodditton Road.

7.4.8 The scheme would not be considered acceptable without upgrades to the road as set out above. It is therefore considered that it would be necessary to impose a condition, should the application be approved, that the scheme and the highway works are carried out prior to any other development on site. This is to ensure that the access is suitable for the intensification of use that the hospital will result in.

7.4.9 The LHA have further commented that the access width is slightly below that which the LHA would consider acceptable for development of this scale. They have requested a condition that the access width be 5m (16.4ft) in width for 8m in length. They have also commented that the impact of construction should be considered and have recommended a condition for a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CEMP) to include measures to prevent damage to the highway verges.

7.4.10 Additional conditions requested are that any gates to be set back a minimum of 10 metres (32.8ft), that the access is constructed so its falls are levels are such so that no private water drains across or onto the public highway and that the vehicular access is constructed using a bound material for the first 5 metres (16.4ft).

7.4.11 Policy COM 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals should provide adequate levels of car and cycle parking.

7.4.12 There are no parking standards in the Local Plan for this type of development. The submitted information shows that 10 parking spaces are proposed. There are six spaces for staff (including handover periods), a dedicated space for the hospital ambulance to the rear of the building, a disabled parking space, an allocated space for a visiting vet and a designated animal drop off space which will also serve deliveries. Cycle parking has been provided to accommodate four bicycles.

7.4.13 The LHA have commented that the parking provision provided on site may not be adequate for the scale of the development and that due to its restricted carriageway width, Long Acre is not a suitable location for any overspill parking and therefore adequate parking provision should be provided on site.

7.4.14 The parking provision does appear to be on the low side, particularly as the drop-off and delivery space is shared, and it is estimated that there would be an average of 2-10 animal drop-offs per day and 2 deliveries.

7.4.15 However, there are six staff parking spaces. Based on the staffing numbers provided, there will be five staff present during the day (three nursing staff and two admin staff) which would leave a staff space free between 9am and 5pm. The admin staff would finish at 5pm, with the evening shift starting at 6pm. Around this time, it is likely that all staff spaces would be taken but once the day shift nursing staff left for the day, three spaces would then be available. Aside from the hour or

so of the day when handover would occur, there would be additional parking spaces available.

7.4.16 It is considered that the parking is likely to be sufficient given that there will be staff spaces available for much of the day, if, for example, a drop-off and a delivery were to be on site at the same time.

7.4.17 Originally it was proposed to have an educational classroom, conference facilities and community engagement (for example, visits from Brownie groups on site) and these have been removed from the proposal, with the focus just being on the wildlife hospital. However, given that these activities could result in a significant intensification of the site, it is considered that if the application were approved, it would be reasonable to restrict the use to a wildlife hospital only and that no secondary/ancillary uses can take place at the site.

7.4.18 It is considered that with the imposition of the conditions requested by the Local Highway Authority that the proposal is considered to comply with Policies COM 7 and COM 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

## **7.5 Ecology and Trees**

7.5.1 Policy ENV 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that all applications for development that may affect biodiversity and geology interests must be accompanied by sufficient information to be determined by the Local Planning Authority, including an ecological report, to allow potential impacts and possible mitigation measures to be assessed fully. It also states that all development will be required to protect the biodiversity and geological value of land and buildings and minimise harm to or loss of environmental features, such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, wetland and ponds. Policy ENV 1 states that development proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the pattern of distinctive historic and traditional landscape features such as watercourses, characteristic vegetation, individual and woodland trees, field patterns, hedgerows and walls and their function as ecological corridors for wildlife dispersal. Policy ENV 2 states that all development proposals will be expected to make efficient use of land while respecting the density, urban and village character, public spaces, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area.

7.5.2 The Council has adopted the Natural Environment SPD which states that all developments must result in biodiversity net gain.

7.5.3 Since April 2024, it has been mandatory to provide 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unless exempt.

7.5.4 The application was previously recommended for refusal on the basis that there was insufficient information submitted for the LPA to be satisfied that the proposal would not result in harm to protected species and would protect, mitigate and enhance biodiversity.

7.5.5 Initially when the information was resubmitted, the Council's Senior Ecologist objected on the basis that there was an error in the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric due to the omission of a small area of the Protected Road Verge (PRV). The

LPA decided to allow the applicant to address this as there was disagreement around the location of the PRV and if it had not been resolved and the baseline was not agreed then a positive decision could not have legally been issued, should members be minded to approve the application.

7.5.6 In respect of BNG, additional information has now been submitted with the full extent of the PRV included within the baseline. The Council's Senior Ecologist has commented that they approve the baseline, and the application meets the legal minimum requirement for BNG. The proposals for the mitigation of the Protected Road Verge (collecting seed from the existing habitat or other suitable alternative) are considered to be acceptable. They have also commented that not all habitat features within the red line boundary are set out in the plan and there is a lot of detail in terms of offsite habitats which are outside of the red line boundary, but these matters can be addressed at discharge of condition stage.

7.5.7 They have further commented that there are some small inconsistencies in the submitted information and the ecology report does not cover the creation of ponds within the red line boundary, however, these minor issues can be dealt with as part of the mandatory BNG condition. A s106 agreement is required to secure the compensation for the degradation of the PRV.

7.5.8 In respect of ecology, the Senior Ecologist has confirmed that they support the application with conditions. The conditions requested are that the mitigation measures in section 6 of the ecology report are strictly followed, a Species Release Schedule to be submitted to prevent harm to protected species, details of escape prevention measures and disease control measures to be submitted to prevent harm to protected species and a biodiversity enhancements schedule detailing the type and location of the proposed enhancements.

7.5.9 The conditions requested would be reasonable and necessary to impose as they would fully address issues which were previously a concern to the LPA and contributed to the reason for refusal.

7.5.10 With the additional information submitted and the imposition of the conditions as set out above, it is considered that the reason for refusal previously given has been resolved.

7.5.11 The Council's Trees Officer has verbally raised concern about the long-term viability of the tree in the courtyard due to the netting proposed above it, however, a soft landscaping scheme is required by condition to provide specific details of the planting proposed and this concern could be addressed through that plan.

7.5.12 The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies ENV 1, ENV 2 and ENV 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended), the Natural Environment SPD and Chapter 15 of the NPPF.

## **7.6 Flood Risk and Drainage**

7.6.1 Policy ENV 8 states that all developments and re-developments should contribute to an overall flood risk reduction. The sequential and exception test will be strictly applied across the district and new development should normally be located in

flood zone 1; the application site is situated in flood zone 1 and therefore is considered to be acceptable.

7.6.2 The Planning Statement sets out that surface water would be disposed through a network of underground pipes connecting roof downpipes and external drainage points into a designated wildlife pond. The pond has been designed to provide natural attenuation, allowing water to be stored and gradually released.

7.6.3 Foul drainage would be managed via an on-site treatment plant and once filtered and treated, outflow would be directed to the wildlife pond. This would require Building Regulations approval and at this stage a percolation test and design of the drainage field would be required. This type of development must have building regulations approval and may require a permit from the Environment Agency, both of which are legislation separate to planning. The applicant would need to apply separately for these consents, and any grant of planning permission does not negate the need to comply with other relevant legislation.

7.6.4 The submitted information states that the water supply would come via a borehole. The DAS states that the precise location will be determined following a hydro ecological survey. While this means that there is a lack of information available at this time, this element of the proposal may require separate planning permission and Environment Agency consent. To ensure that a water supply has been secured, if approved, a condition could be imposed that details of the water supply are provided to the LPA prior to the commencement of development.

7.6.5 There are no obvious concerns or objections to the methods of water disposal and therefore the proposal is considered to comply with Policy ENV 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

## 7.7 Climate Change

7.7.1 Local Plan Policy ENV4 states: 'All proposals for new development should aim for reduced or zero carbon development in accordance with the zero carbon hierarchy: first maximising energy efficiency and then incorporating renewable or low carbon energy sources on-site as far as practicable' and 'Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they have considered maximising all aspects of sustainable design and construction.' The adopted Climate Change SPD encourages all development to include sustainability measures within their proposal.

7.7.2 The revised proposal includes sustainability benefits which includes 66 solar panels, Air Source Heat Pumps and a renewable energy strategy.

7.7.3 However, it is considered that there would be sufficient scope to incorporate a number of sustainability benefits and if approved a detailed sustainability statement could be conditioned.

7.7.4 With the imposition of a condition for the submission of a sustainability statement, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy ENV 4 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and the Climate Change SPD.

## 7.8 Other Material Matters

7.8.1 Concern has been raised regarding (including by the Parish Council) how the build would be funded and what would happen if the applicant were to run out of money. The LPA would not routinely seek a funding plan or confirmation of how a development was being funded in relation to an application unless clearly relevant. An example of this would be the stipulation in HOU5 that applications for rural workers dwellings must demonstrate that the enterprise must be and remain financially viable. While the applicant has asserted that HOU 5 is relevant, the LPA do not and therefore this information has not been sought. If the application were being approved, a condition would be imposed for a phasing plan to set out the intended stages of delivery at the site.

7.8.2 There has been reference made throughout the application and the comments received as to ECDC supporting hedgehogs through the adoption of the Hedgehog SPD. However, the SPD is to inform the reader what the average developer should do, such as create hedgehog highways as part of their development, rather than express any type of support for development of this nature.

## 7.9 Planning Balance

7.9.1 There is undoubtedly a lot of support for the application as evidenced by the number of positive comments received both times the LPA have consulted. There are also a number of positive elements to the application such as supporting wildlife and the positive benefits that the proposal brings to those who volunteer at the current establishment. Letters of support have also been submitted from vets, other wildlife hospitals and charities including the British Hedgehog Preservation Society.

7.9.2 However, when considering the material planning considerations, the proposal is unacceptable in principle, results in harm to the character and appearance of the area and lacks sufficient information to assess the impacts of the proposal to residential amenity.

7.9.3 It is considered that while there is a lot of support for the proposal, there have been objections received from residents who live close to the site. Weight has been given to the letters of support from vets and other wildlife professionals, however, there are no material planning considerations that outweigh the significant conflicts with policies outlined in this report and the resulting three reasons for refusal.

## 8.0 Human Rights Act

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority, such as East Cambridgeshire District Council, to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance. The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation set out below is considered to be a proportionate

response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

#### 9.0 **Equalities and Diversities**

In considering this planning application due regard has been had to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Account has been taken of the PSED and it is considered that the recommendation set out below would not undermine the objectives of the duty.

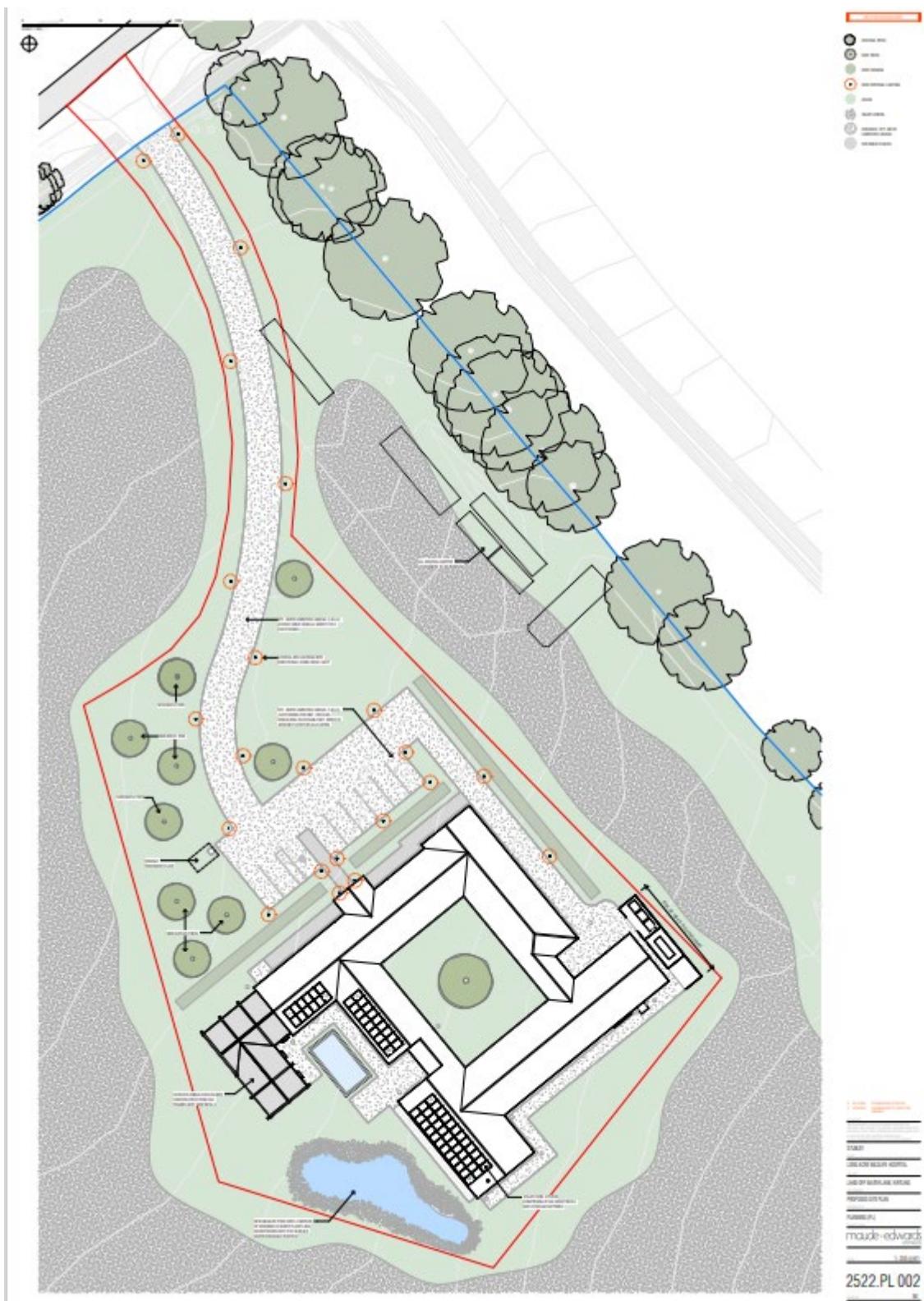
### **10 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1: Original Officer Report

### **PLANS**

The following plans are a selection of those submitted as part of the application and are provided to illustrate the proposed development. They may not be to scale. The full suite of plans can be found on the Council's website.

25/00371/FUL





1 PROPOSED NORTH-WEST (FRONT) ELEVATION



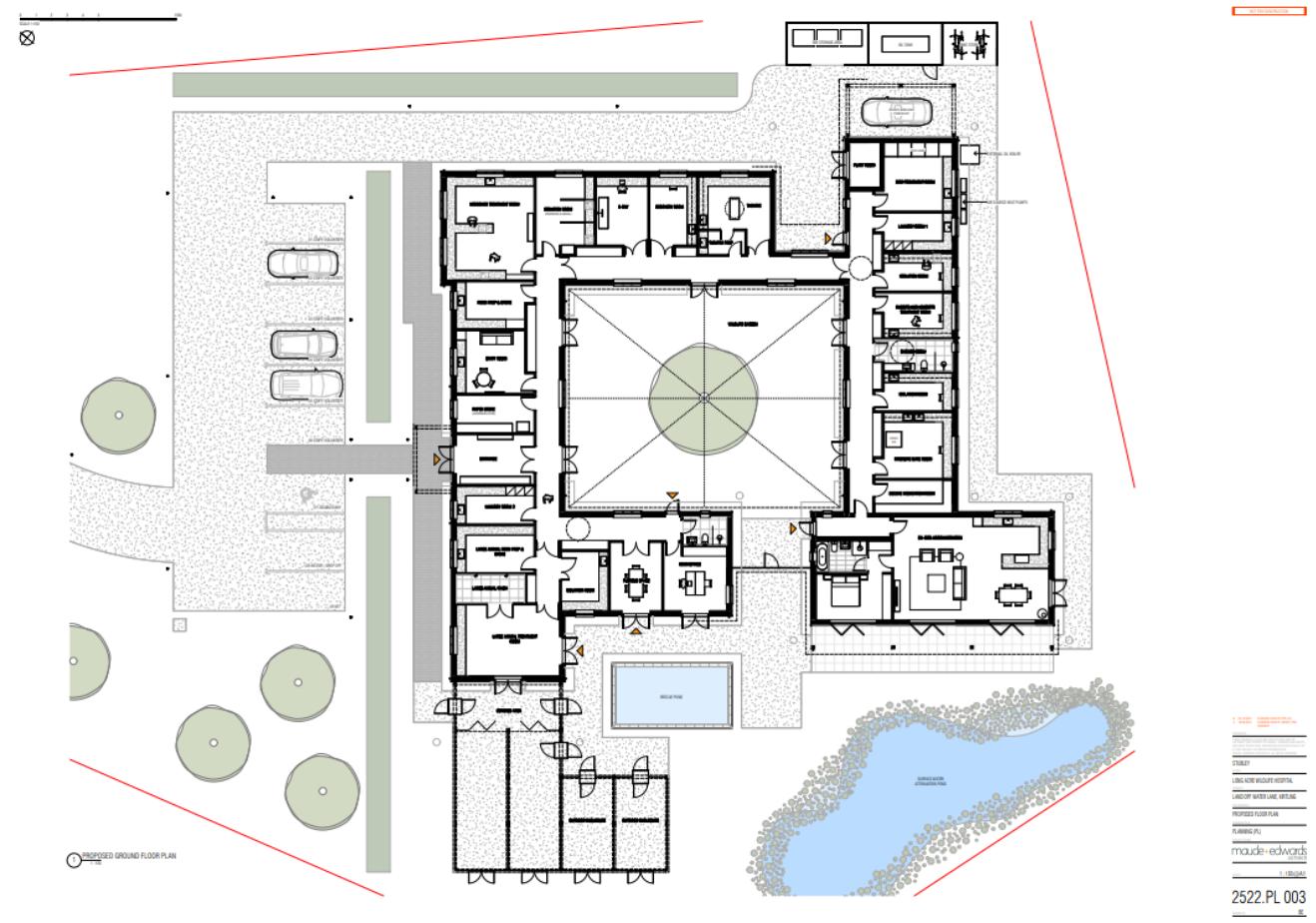
2 PROPOSED SOUTH-EAST ELEVATION



3 PROPOSED NORTH-EAST ELEVATION



4 PROPOSED SOUTH-WEST ELEVATION





## Appendix 1

### **TITLE: 25/00371/FUL**

Committee: Planning Committee

Date: 2 July 2025

Author: Planning Officer

Report No: AA30

Contact Officer: Rachael Forbes, Planning Officer  
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**Site Address: Land Off Water Lane Long Acre Kirtling Suffolk**

**Proposal: To build a purpose-built Wildlife Veterinary Hospital including residential facilities**

**Applicant: Sue Stubley**

**Parish: Kirtling**

**Ward: Woodditton**

Ward Councillor/s: James Lay  
Alan Sharp

**Date Received: 23 April 2025**

**Expiry Date: 18 June 2025**

### **1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are recommended to REFUSE the application for the following reasons:

1. Policy GROWTH 2 states that outside of the development envelopes, development will be strictly controlled, having regard to the need to protect the countryside and the setting of towns and villages. Development will be restricted to the main categories listed in the policy, and may be permitted as an exception, providing there is no significant adverse impact on the character of the countryside and that other Local Plan policies are satisfied. The proposal does not fall within any of the exception policies listed in GROWTH 2 and therefore would be unacceptable in principle. There is insufficient justification as to why the proposed development needs to be in this specific location or why someone needs to live on site. There is a lack of clarity around the proposals and concerns about the suitability of the site. The proposal is therefore

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considered to be contrary to GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and Chapter 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

2. Policy ENV 1 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals should ensure that they provide a complementary relationship with the existing development and conserve, preserve and where possible enhance the distinctive and traditional landscapes and key views in and out of settlements. Policy ENV 2 states that development proposals ensure that the location, layout, massing, materials and colour of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area. The proposal would result in a large amount of development projecting into the countryside against the general pattern of development in the area. The storage containers and other buildings are unlikely to result in a high-quality design. The proposal includes four buildings, access and hardstanding and this would result in overdevelopment of the site. The proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of the scale, amount and design of the development proposed and is therefore contrary to Policies ENV 1 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
3. Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that new development will be expected to ensure that there is no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and that occupiers and users of new buildings, especially dwellings, enjoy high standards of amenity. The proposal has the potential to result in noise and disturbance to the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings, however, there is a lack of information submitted in respect of traffic movements and the operation of the site to allow a full assessment of the impact of the proposal to residential amenity. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)
4. Policy COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals shall provide a safe and convenient access to the highway network. Policy COM 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals should provide adequate levels of car and cycle parking in accordance with the Council's parking standards. The proposal is not supported by sufficient transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway or highway safety. In addition, due to the lack of information around the operation of the site, it cannot be assessed as to whether the proposal provides sufficient parking provision for the use. The proposal does not include sufficient information to allow the LHA and LPA to be certain that there would be

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no significant impacts to the operation of the highway or highway safety nor to ascertain if any mitigation measures would be required. There is also insufficient information provided to ensure that the level of car and cycle parking proposed is suitable. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policies COM 7 and COM 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and Chapter 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

5. The proposed development would potentially result in harm to protected species, and the loss of habitats of importance by virtue of the partial removal of the protected road verge. There is concern regarding conflict between species and whether hedgehogs could be rewilded successfully. There is insufficient information submitted to address the objections and concerns. In addition, the protected road verge has not been factored into the Biodiversity Net Gain Metric, nor has suitable mitigation been included. The area for the biodiversity improvement is greater than the site area. These issues result in the baseline habitat being incorrect. There is insufficient information submitted for the LPA to be satisfied that the proposal would not result in harm to protected species and would protect, mitigate and enhance biodiversity. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies ENV 1, ENV 2 and ENV 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended), the Natural Environment SPD, Chapter 15 of the NPPF, as well as failing to meet the overarching objectives of the Environment Act 2021 in achieving net gains in biodiversity and protection of irreplaceable habitats

1.2 The application is being heard by committee because it was called in by Councillor Sharp for the following reasons:

1.3 Levels of public interest and in the interests of transparency

### **2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

2.1 The application seeks planning permission for a purpose-built wildlife hospital which includes residential facilities. The proposal includes the hospital itself, a multi-purpose agricultural barn, a prefab which is proposed to be used as a temporary hospital and educational classroom and a static caravan for temporary staff accommodation. The function of these buildings will be discussed within the report and the scale of the buildings will be set out in the visual amenity section. The hospital would provide 24/7 care for wildlife and proposes to provide training for veterinary nurses.

2.2 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link [Simple Search](#).

### **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 There is no planning history at this site.

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### 4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

The proposed wildlife hospital would be situated on a parcel of land along Water Lane and would occupy approximately 0.48ha (1.18 hectares) of the wider site. The site is outside of the development envelope of Kirtling and is therefore considered to be in the countryside. The site is accessed by a single-track road. There is a row of trees to the north of the site which provides some screening on approach. The wider site is surrounded by hedgerows; these are beyond the red line boundary of the site. To the east of the wider site is a Public Right of Way (Footpath 141/20). To the southwest of the site is a County Wildlife Site (CWS) and the verge along Water Lane is a protected road verge. The site currently contains storage containers, a static caravan and other paraphernalia such as hutches, which have been placed on the land without the benefit of planning permission. There have also been trees planted, and bee hives placed on the land, although all of this is outside of the red line boundary.

### 5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

**Parish - 13 May 2025**

- Although the council is not against the idea of a hedgehog hospital, it does have serious concerns about the scale of what is planned for the land off Water Lane and the nature of the hospital buildings. Kirtling and Upend Parish Council, therefore, feels that this application should be refused for the following reasons
- The planned development is very close to the village envelope and residences in Woodditton Road and The Green. The use of the hospital for 24-hour care as well as a training and education resource would increase the number of vehicles visiting the site.
- The proposed development is oversized for its location and the number and nature of the buildings is inappropriate and not in keeping with the other dwellings nearby and throughout the village. There are concerns about the number of containers and what they will look like in what is currently a very picturesque setting
- The proportion of the land to be used for buildings is excessive for the site and will be visible from the road and local footpaths where residents walk. It is felt that the planned development with the number of buildings is too large to suitably blend into its surroundings and not negatively impact on the area.
- We are not confident that this development has been fully thought through. Old portacabins, containers and a mobile home have been sited on the land for some time prior to the planning application being validated. There does not appear to have been a be a sustainable business/funding plan for this development so far so there is concern that it may have to be abandoned and become an eyesore. Alternatively, should the hospital not be financially viable,

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a dwelling with residential use could remain on the site which would not have been granted permission without its use as part of the wildlife hospital.

- Three local residents have already attended Parish Council Meetings to express concerns about the containers and buildings already sited here and the scale and impact of the planned development.

### **Environmental Health (Scientific Officer) - 6 May 2025**

Although no contamination information has been supplied with the application this appears to be a greenfield site. I recommend that a condition requiring investigation for contamination is not required. I recommend that standard contaminated land condition 4 (unexpected contamination) is attached to any grant of permission.

### **Environmental Health - 25 April 2025**

- Recommends a condition to control construction hours
- Recommends a condition to submit a method statement should ground piling be required
- No issues to raise with the proposed lighting but recommends a condition to prevent any additional external lighting
- Has no immediate concerns to raise in respect of noise, however would recommend a condition that the noise emitted from the site shall not exceed the background noise level.

### **East Cambs Ecologist – 20 June 2025**

- Objection 1 – harm to protected species
- Objection 2 – protected road verge removal
- Several queries raised regarding the size of the plot, the inclusion of a koi pond, the use of the classroom and why the bird room is not adjacent to an aviary
- Objects in respect of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as an inaccurate baseline habitat has been used.

### **Local Highways Authority - 13 May 2025**

- Object because the application is not supported by sufficient transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway or highway safety.

### **ECDC Trees Team - 30 May 2025**

- The proposal does not appear to impact any existing trees on or adjacent the site. The soft landscaping information lacks detail so there will need to be a condition to provide a detailed soft landscaping scheme by condition should the proposal be approved.

### **Waste Strategy (ECDC) - 28 May 2025**

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- Have provided general advice on waste disposal which could be included as an informative on the decision notice if approved.

**The Ely Group Of Internal Drainage Board - No Comments Received**

**Enforcement Section - No Comments Received**

**Ward Councillors - No Comments Received**

**Cambs Wildlife Trust - No Comments Received**

5.2 A site notice was displayed near the site on 28 April 2025, and a press advert was published in the Cambridge Evening News on 8 May 2025.

5.3 Neighbours – 28 neighbouring properties were notified and the responses received are summarised below. A full copy of the responses are available on the Council's website.

Five comments were received from those who were directly notified by letter. The majority of these were objections for the following summarised reasons:

*Arable land being lost, approval of residential accommodation sets dangerous precedent, out of keeping with the countryside, if charity vacates it would be primed for residential use, noise and disturbance, significant increase in traffic, visual impact, there is already a wildlife hospital in Shepreth, badgers are a risk to the hedgehogs, access is poor and would need making up to highway standard, exposed rural location, badgers are a material planning consideration, the village survey does not include residents close to the site, does not comply with policy, proposal lacks basic infrastructure and no access to mains electricity or sewage.*

Those supporting did so for the following summarised reasons:

*Sympathetic to rural location, the site would be a gain for biodiversity, valuable and sustainable enterprise*

Eight comments were received from residents of Kirtling but who were not directly notified by letter. Those objecting did so for the following summarised reasons:

*Number of policies against approval of planning permission, issues around inadequate parking, roads and increase in traffic, significant impact to landscape, storage containers are already on site, loss of arable land, this scenic spot has been blighted by storage containers, delivery of containers will disrupt road traffic, provision of lighting will cause issues, noise and disturbance, height and scale, environmental impact (biodiversity), inappropriate land use, light pollution, pressure on local infrastructure.*

Those supporting did so for the following summarised reasons:

*Valuable way to support wildlife, location is remote, would help biodiversity, hedgehogs are on the red list, it will enable the younger generation to learn about*

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*wildlife, tremendous boost for the village, the proposal has been given thought and consideration.*

Twenty-two comments were received by residents of East Cambs located outside Kirtling. These comments were all in support for the following summarised reasons:

*ECDC supports hedgehogs, current facility is full and expansion is required*

Ninety-three comments have been received from outside of the district. These comments were all in support for the following summarised reasons:

*Would provide 24hr wildlife service, wild animals being turned away from vets, essential service for wildlife, the applicant has thought about the site and respecting the area, consideration should be given to the 'greater good' being achieved, rejection risks the charity ceasing to exist, hedgehogs are at risk, ECDC committed to help recover the hedgehog population with the Hedgehog SPD, general support for the applicant and the good work of the charity, this facility is urgently needed, people have used the applicant's current facility, current hospital has outgrown its site, site would be an improvement to biodiversity, nowhere on this side of Cambridgeshire that provides these facilities, the site is ideal on a quiet rural lane, there are no planning policies preventing this and does not result in harm, nine rescue centre recently closed across Cambridgeshire, reasonable distance from neighbouring properties, buildings are single storey and planting is planned, will be of a scale with the connections to train a new generation of veterinary nurses, only covers a small proportion of the site, noise and disturbance will not be an issue, if not agricultural there will be no spraying of chemicals which would be a benefit.*

### **6.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

#### **6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)**

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| GROWTH 2 | Locational strategy  |
| GROWTH 5 | Presumption in favour of sustainable development                 |
| ENV 1    | Landscape and settlement character                               |
| ENV 2    | Design   |
| ENV 4    | Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction |
| ENV 7    | Biodiversity and geology   |
| ENV 8    | Flood risk   |
| ENV 9    | Pollution  |
| COM 7    | Transport impact   |
| COM 8    | Parking provision  |

#### **6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents**

Design Guide  
Country Wildlife Sites  
Natural Environment SPD  
Climate Change SPD  
Flood and Water

#### **6.3 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)**

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- 2 Achieving sustainable development
- 4 Decision-making
- 9 Promoting sustainable transport
- 12 Achieving well-designed places
- 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

**6.4** Planning Practice Guidance

### **7.0 PLANNING MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMENTS**

#### **7.1 Principle of Development**

- 7.1.1 Policy GROWTH 2 states that outside of the development envelopes, development will be strictly controlled, having regard to the need to protect the countryside and the setting of towns and villages. Development will be restricted to the main categories listed in the policy, and may be permitted as an exception, providing there is no significant adverse impact on the character of the countryside and that other Local Plan policies are satisfied.
- 7.1.2 The proposal does not fall within any of the exception policies listed in GROWTH 2 and therefore would be unacceptable in principle. Therefore, to depart from policy, there would need to be sufficient justification as to why the hospital needs to be sited in this specific location.
- 7.1.3 The planning statement sets out that the use proposed is '*unique in that it includes small scale employment development, health, welfare and medical to wildlife so requires to be in a rural or semi-rural location*' but does not actually set out the details as to why this is required. The applicants statement sets out that '*relocation to the new hospital would enable the work to continue in a more sustainable environment, meeting the Five Welfare needs described in the Animal Welfare Act 2007, particularly, to be housed with, or apart from other animals and the ability to express normal behaviour*' and that there will be separate areas for separate species, mimicking their natural habitats to reduce stress during their stay. The applicant has also provided a document setting out which alternative sites were considered and have concluded that the location of this land is the only viable location. The statement sets out that the site is accessible enough to bring in casualties, whilst still being quiet and away from busy roads, housing and power lines, allowing wildlife the best chance of recovery and at the same time the existing volunteer team would be able to continue. In addition, the applicants statement sets out that most vet surgeries are unable to take in wildlife and that in the Cambridgeshire area, many have closed due to stress or lack of funds.
- 7.1.4 However, no real justification has been provided as to specifically why this location would be required or is the most viable. In respect of the alternative sites assessment, it is noted that largely that the land became unavailable (sold to someone else, higher offer made by someone else) or that it was too far for volunteers rather than being unsuitable for the animals. It is also noted that in respect of Newton Cricket Ground that the alternative site assessment states that 10.5 acres is 'small but adequate' and at a site in Ousden that part of the reason the land was not pursued was because the

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land available was not sufficient and then lists the size as 2.5 acres. The land within the red line of this application equates to approximately 1.21 acres and therefore is smaller than both of the above. This suggests that the scale of the site at Kirtling may be insufficient and that further land may be required (which is another concern the Council's ecologist has raised).

- 7.1.5 There is no specific, detailed information as to why this location is essential/suitable for the care and rewilding of animals. One of the Council's concerns regarding the location is that there is a badger sett in close proximity and therefore it would be difficult to rewild hedgehogs as they would likely be preyed upon by badgers. This will be discussed further in the ecology section of this report. It has not been explained why an animal could not be transported from a site to an appropriate location for rewilding.
- 7.1.6 In addition to this, the hospital includes residential accommodation. While it is noted that there are many statements made by professionals that someone needs to be on site 24/7, there is no substantive information as to why (for example, the specific needs of different animals). However, if it was accepted that a 24/7 presence was required, the information submitted states that there would be 3 full time nurses employed for round the clock care. Therefore, if there are staff employed at the site 24/7, it is considered that this would not require someone to live on site and residential accommodation would not be required. There has been no information submitted as to how shift patterns would work or how many people would be on site at any one time. In addition, there is a static caravan shown on the plan that is noted as temporary staff accommodation but there is no real explanation as to what this means. It is unclear whether this is temporary accommodation while the hospital is being built or for staff to sleep in on a temporary basis.
- 7.1.7 There also appears to be a mix of uses on site with the presence of the agricultural barn. Apart from potentially housing large animals (which the Council's Ecologist has raised concerns with and will be discussed in full in the relevant section of this report), it is not clear how or whether this is an ancillary use to the hospital. It is set out that this barn will have a number of functions (space for large animals, agricultural storage, space for community engagement). Insufficient information has been provided as to how this use supports the function of the site as a wildlife hospital. If the wider area is to be farmed, it may be more appropriate for the barn to be sited outside of the red line.
- 7.1.8 A letter has been submitted with the application from Professor Dick White, which states that it is essential that each UK regional area (25-mile radius) is able to access one centre that can provide care for abandoned juvenile hedgehogs and states that the proposed location is 40 to 50 miles distant from other such facilities in Norfolk/Buckinghamshire. It is unclear where the nearest wildlife hospitals are, for example, one letter states that PACT in Norfolk is the closest, others say Shepreth. This is an important detail if the location of the hospital is to be justified on the basis that each regional area is able to access one centre.
- 7.1.9 The proposal does not fall within an exception to GROWTH 2 and is therefore unacceptable in principle. There is insufficient justification as to why the hospital needs to be in this specific location or why there is a need for someone to live on site. It is also unclear as to whether there is another centre within a 25-mile radius. In addition,

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larger sites have been discounted for being too small and there are other concerns around the suitability of the site, such as the presence of badgers. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to GROWTH 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

### 7.2 Visual Amenity

- 7.2.1 Policy ENV 1 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals should ensure that they provide a complementary relationship with the existing development and conserve, preserve and where possible enhance the distinctive and traditional landscapes and key views in and out of settlements. Policy ENV 2 states that development proposals ensure that the location, layout, massing, materials and colour of buildings relate sympathetically to the surrounding area.
- 7.2.2 The proposed wildlife hospital would be situated on a parcel of land along Water Lane and would occupy approximately 0.48ha (1.18 hectares) of the wider site. The site is visible from a number of vantage points; from Water Lane, from the Public Right of Way which runs to the east of the site and from Woodditton Road.
- 7.2.3 The development proposed consists of the hospital building which would be a series of storage containers linked together and clad. This building would be approximately 39 metres (127ft) at its widest point, 19 metres (62ft) deep at its deepest point and 3 metres (9.8ft) in height, excluding the solar panels. There is also an agricultural barn proposed, which from the 3D visuals plan would be timber clad with a clear roof. This building would be approximately 15 metres (49ft) deep and wide and 3.7 metres (12ft) in height. In addition to this would be a prefab building (approximately 12.5 metres (41ft) in width, 4 metres (13ft) in depth and 2.7 metres (8.8ft) in height) and a static caravan which is approximately 13.6 metres (44ft) in width, 4.4 metres (14.4ft) deep and 3.6 metres (11.8ft) in height.
- 7.2.4 The submitted plans show that there is planting proposed around the access and along the northern boundary of the site. There is also a tree belt along the northern boundary of the wider site and hedgerows around the wider site. The tree belt along the northern boundary of the site does screen the site from view on approach from Water Lane from the north and the tree planting and cladding proposed may go some way to aid in assimilating the development into the surroundings, landscaping cannot be relied upon in perpetuity.
- 7.2.5 It is considered that the proposed development would change the character and appearance of the area and would project a large amount of development into the countryside. The use of storage containers and prefab buildings have a high potential to result in a poor-quality design, particularly when considering the items that are already stored at the site. There is also a lack of consistent design rationale across the whole site which makes the site appear disjointed and lack cohesion.
- 7.2.6 In addition, the application site contains a lot of development with the site appearing very full; the proposal includes four buildings as set out above but there is also hardstanding for access and car parking. It is considered that the quantum of development proposed would result in an overdevelopment of the site.

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7.2.7 It is considered that the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area due to the scale, amount and design of the development proposed and is therefore contrary to Policies ENV 1 and ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

### 7.3 Residential Amenity

7.3.1 Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that new development will be expected to ensure that there is no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers and that occupiers and users of new buildings, especially dwellings, enjoy high standards of amenity.

7.3.2 The closest dwellings to the site are situated to the north of the site on Woodditton Road and The Green. The main issues raised by neighbours in respect of residential amenity are increased traffic and noise and disturbance.

7.3.3 It is considered that the physical development would not result in harm to the amenity of neighbouring dwellings, in respect of overshadowing, overbearing or overlooking as there is sufficient distance between the site and the neighbouring properties to avoid these impacts.

7.3.4 The Council's Environmental Health Officer (EHO) has raised no concerns in respect of the proposal and has recommended conditions to control construction hours, and a method statement should ground piling be required. He has raised no issues in respect of the lighting proposed but has recommended a condition that to prevent additional external lighting without the express permission of the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

7.3.5 The Council's EHO has also commented that he has no immediate concerns to raise in respect of noise but has recommended a condition that noise emitted from the site shall not exceed background level. However, officers consider that this condition would not be reasonable to impose as it is unknown whether it could be complied with.

7.3.6 There is concern that there would be the potential for noise and disturbance, particularly from vehicle movements but there is little information provided with the application as to how the site would operate. For example, in respect of traffic movements, the submitted information states there would be 10-15 vehicle movements a day including staff and volunteers dropping off injured animals and deliveries. However, in the applicants statement it says that there would be 3 full time vet nurses providing round the clock care, 3 part time assistants, 1 part time admin assistant and a Hospital Manager. The statement also sets out that there are 20 volunteers but only four people per day can currently be used at the existing site due to lack of space. The information submitted gives the impression that existing volunteers do not live locally so would need to drive as public transport is limited. There is no information as to how many staff and volunteers would be on site at any one time or regarding shift patterns and when people would be moving to and from the site.

7.3.7 The submitted information states that the living room of the residence will be used for conference facilities, that there is an educational classroom, that the multipurpose barn would provide a space for community engagement and that local groups want to

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help with the project such as Brownies/Guides but there is no indication as to the scope or frequency of these uses, all of which have the potential to create traffic movements and noise and disturbance.

7.3.8 It is considered that the proposal lacks sufficient information to fully assess the potential impacts to the residential amenity of neighbouring dwellings. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy ENV 2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

### 7.4 Highways

7.4.1 Policy COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals shall provide a safe and convenient access to the highway network.

7.4.2 Policy COM 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals shall provide a safe and convenient access to the highway network.

7.4.3 The site would be accessed from Water Lane. From the plans submitted, the access would be upgraded with hardstanding as it is currently an informal field access.

7.4.4 The Local Highway Authority (LHA) have objected to the proposal as it is not supported by sufficient transport information to demonstrate that the proposed development would not be prejudicial to the satisfactory functioning of the highway or highway safety. This additional information would be required to enable the Local Highway Authority to establish whether the proposal is considered acceptable, and what conditions, may be required to mitigate the impact of the development on the public highway, if necessary. The LHA have also noted that the proposals include an educational classroom, and specific detail would be required regarding the expected trip generation in relation to this. While they haven't specifically mentioned the other uses such as conference facilities, this would also need to be addressed.

7.4.5 The LHA have also commented that the visibility splay diagram provided does not conform with requirements set out under the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges for adequate inter-vehicle visibility on a derestricted road. However, they have concluded that it is apparent that adequate visibility is available along Water Lane.

7.4.6 Policy COM 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that development proposals should provide adequate levels of car and cycle parking in accordance with the Council's parking standards

7.4.7 While there are no parking standards in the Local Plan for this type of development, there are 11 spaces proposed which, given different uses mentioned within the submission (educational classroom, accommodation on site, conference facilities, community engagement, staff, volunteers and agricultural use) officers are not convinced 11 spaces would be sufficient, particularly as there are limited public transport options. However, without sufficient information as to the operation of the site in respect of the scale of some of the uses proposed and the shift patterns expected for staff/volunteers this is very difficult to assess.

7.4.8 In addition, the application form states that there are 10 cycle spaces, but these do not appear to be specified on the submitted drawings. The provision of cycle parking could

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be conditioned, however, given the uncertainty around the uses on the site means that the LPA cannot ascertain the level of cycle parking required.

7.4.9 The proposal does not include sufficient information to allow the LHA and LPA to be certain that there would be no significant impacts to the operation of the highway or highway safety nor to ascertain if any mitigation measures would be required. There is also insufficient information provided to ensure that the level of parking proposed is suitable. The proposal is therefore considered contrary to Policies COM 7 and COM 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

### 7.5 Ecology

7.5.1 Policy ENV 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 states that all applications for development that may affect biodiversity and geology interests must be accompanied by sufficient information to be determined by the Local Planning Authority, including an ecological report, to allow potential impacts and possible mitigation measures to be assessed fully. It also states that all development will be required to protect the biodiversity and geological value of land and buildings and minimise harm to or loss of environmental features, such as trees, hedgerows, woodland, wetland and ponds. Policy ENV 1 states that development proposals should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the pattern of distinctive historic and traditional landscape features such as watercourses, characteristic vegetation, individual and woodland trees, field patterns, hedgerows and walls and their function as ecological corridors for wildlife dispersal. Policy ENV 2 states that all development proposals will be expected to make efficient use of land while respecting the density, urban and village character, public spaces, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area.

7.5.2 The Council has adopted the Natural Environment SPD which states that all developments must result in biodiversity net gain.

7.5.3 Since April 2024, it has been mandatory to provide 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) unless exempt.

7.5.4 The Council's Senior Ecologist has raised two objections to the proposal. The first is harm to protected species. The existing storage at the site (which would be relocated onto the application site if approved) has been placed within 30m of an active badger sett and will require a licence for disturbance would be required to remove the structures and no structure should have been placed on the land without a licence which is a concern as the proposal is for a wildlife hospital.

7.5.5 In addition to this, the presence of badgers in close proximity to the site, infection control measures would need to be put in place to protect animals from infection but also to prevent sick animals infecting the native population. There is also concern that hedgehogs could not be released here as they would be eaten by the badgers.

7.5.6 The Senior Ecologist has also raised concern that there is a large animal room in the hospital but nowhere for them to recover and the agricultural shed would not be appropriate due to the specific requirements of large animals and that outdoor pens would be expected for acclimating animals for release. She has raised concern that

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the redline boundary of the site may be inappropriate (too small) as it is not accommodating the basic needs of sick animals.

- 7.5.7 The second objection is that the protected road verge which runs along Water Lane is proposed to be fragmented and partially removed. The road verge adjoins a County Wildlife Site (CWS) and therefore the proposal is currently contrary to Policy ENV 7 as it does not protect the biodiversity and geological value of the land nor minimise harm to or loss of environmental features.
- 7.5.8 In respect of BNG, the Senior Ecologist has objected on the basis that baseline habitat is incorrect and the road verge, which is a protected road verge for its flora diversity, needs to be factored into the habitats and accounted for within the metric with suitable mitigation included. The area for the biodiversity improvements is shown as 0.58ha (1.4 acres) which is greater than the site size which means that a revision of onsite habitats would need to occur.
- 7.5.9 The Senior Ecologist has also queried the size of the plot in relation to the field use and has commented that other parts are already in use and not determined in the application and if the wider site is to be grazed, where are the facilities for livestock. She has also queried why there is a Koi pond shown on the plans and why this is required as these are not a native species and if it is for native fish rescue then the pond shown would be too small. In addition, she has commented the classroom is concerning as it is not clear whether this is for professional education or schools and if the intention is for schools, then the site is too small and lacks appropriate visitor facilities. Finally, she has queried why the bird room shown on the plans which is not near an aviary as the stress on native birds not being outside would likely kill them.
- 7.5.10 The Trees Officer has commented that the proposal does not appear to impact any existing trees on or adjacent the site but the soft landscaping information lacks detail. However, a detailed soft landscaping scheme could be secured by condition if the application was to be approved.
- 7.5.11 The proposal has the potential to result in harm to protected species and there are serious concerns regarding the potential rewilding of hedgehogs in close proximity to a badger sett and if rewilding has to occur off site, then this suggests that the location is not appropriate and adds to the conclusion that there is insufficient justification for the proposed hospital to be sited here. In addition, the proposal would result in partial removal of a protected road verge which has not been mitigated against. There are also a number of queries raised as set out above. The proposal also does not comply with the legal requirement to provide 10% BNG as the baseline habitat is incorrect.
- 7.5.12 There is insufficient information submitted for the LPA to be satisfied that the proposal would not result in harm to protected species and would protect, mitigate and enhance biodiversity. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies ENV 1, ENV 2 and ENV 7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended), the Natural Environment SPD, Chapter 15 of the NPPF, as well as failing to meet the overarching objectives of the Environment Act 2021 in achieving net gains in biodiversity and protection of irreplaceable habitats.

**7.2**

**7.3**

**7.4**

## Appendix 1

### 7.5 7.6

#### 7.6 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 7.6.1 Policy ENV 8 states that all developments and re-developments should contribute to an overall flood risk reduction. The sequential and exception test will be strictly applied across the district and new development should normally be located in flood zone 1; the application site is situated in flood zone 1 and therefore is considered to be acceptable.
- 7.6.2 There has been concern raised that the site lacks basic infrastructure. The application form states that surface water would be disposed of via soakaway and foul water disposed of via a septic tank. No details of the soakaways have been shown on the submitted drawings and only basic details of the septic tank have been included.
- 7.6.3 The septic tank would require Building Regulations approval and at this stage a percolation test and design of the drainage field would be required. This type of development must have building regulations approval and may require a permit from the Environment Agency, both of which are legislation separate to planning. The applicant would need to apply separately for these consents, and any grant of planning permission does not negate the need to comply with other relevant legislation.
- 7.6.4 In addition, soakaways would also require Building Regulations approval, and it is considered that the site would likely be large enough to accommodate soakaways.
- 7.6.5 There are no obvious concerns or objections to these methods of water disposal and therefore the proposal is considered to comply with Policy ENV 8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended).

#### 7.7 Climate Change

- 7.7.1 Local Plan Policy ENV4 states: 'All proposals for new development should aim for reduced or zero carbon development in accordance with the zero carbon hierarchy: first maximising energy efficiency and then incorporating renewable or low carbon energy sources on-site as far as practicable' and 'Applicants will be required to demonstrate how they have considered maximising all aspects of sustainable design and construction.' The adopted Climate Change SPD encourages all development to include sustainability measures within their proposal.
- 7.7.2 The proposal has some sustainability benefits in that the proposed development would re-use existing storage containers, a prefab and a static caravan. It also incorporates solar panels. There are also mentions of other elements that could be considered a sustainability benefit, for example, wind power but this is only mentioned in one document and no details have been submitted.
- 7.7.3 However, it is considered that there would be sufficient scope to incorporate a number of sustainability benefits and if approved a detailed sustainability statement could be conditioned. However, certain sustainability benefits such as wind power (turbine) may require planning permission in their own right so would need to be applied for separately.

## **Appendix 1**

7.7.4 With the imposition of a condition for the submission of a sustainability statement, it is considered that the proposal would comply with Policy ENV 4 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2015 (as amended) and the Climate Change SPD.

### **7.8 Other Material Matters**

7.8.1 The Parish Council have commented that there does not appear to have been a sustainable business/funding plan so there is concern that it may have to be abandoned and become an eyesore. The LPA would not routinely seek a funding plan in relation to an application unless clearly relevant (such as the stipulation in HOU5 that applications for rural workers dwellings must demonstrate that the enterprise must be and remain financially viable), however, it is noted that in the Ecological Impact Assessment that the timings for development are unknown but it is likely to be in phases as funding becomes available. If the application were being approved, a condition would be imposed for a phasing plan to set out the intended stages of delivery at the site.

7.8.2 There have been comments made that the site lacks basic infrastructure. There has been very limited information submitted in relation to this. Where this has been mentioned, it is inconsistent. For example, one document mentions wind power, but this has not been mentioned anywhere else. While this information could potentially be secured by condition, this is another area where there is a lack of detail as to the operation of the site which does not assist officers in assessing the proposal.

7.8.3 There has been reference made throughout the application and the comments received as to ECDC supporting hedgehogs through the adoption of the Hedgehog SPD. However, the SPD is to inform the reader what the average developer should do, such as create hedgehog highways as part of their development, rather than express any type of support for development of this nature.

### **7.9 Human Rights Act**

7.9.1 The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority, such as East Cambridgeshire District Council, to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance. The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation set out below is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

### **7.10 Equalities and Diversities**

7.10.1 In considering this planning application due regard has been had to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act, including discrimination,

## **Appendix 1**

harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Account has been taken of the PSED and it is considered that the recommendation set out below would not undermine the objectives of the duty.

### **7.11 Planning Balance**

7.11.1 There is undoubtedly a lot of support for the application as evidenced by the number of positive comments received. There are also a number of positive elements to the application such as supporting wildlife and the positive benefits that the proposal brings to those who volunteer at the current establishment. In addition, the hospital would provide training opportunities for veterinary nurses. Letters of support have also been submitted from vets, other wildlife hospitals and charities including the British Hedgehog Preservation Society.

7.11.2 However, when considering the material planning considerations, the proposal is unacceptable in principle, results in harm to the character and appearance of the area and lacks sufficient information to assess the impacts of the proposal to residential amenity, highway safety, parking and biodiversity. In addition, the proposal is not complying with the legal requirement to provide 10% Biodiversity Net Gain due to an incorrect baseline habitat.

7.11.3 It is considered that while there is a lot of support for the proposal, there have been objections received from residents who live close to the site and from the Parish Council. Weight has been given to the letters of support from vets and other wildlife professionals, however, there are no material planning considerations that outweigh the significant conflicts with policies outlined in this report and the resulting five reasons for refusal.

## **8.0 APPENDICES**

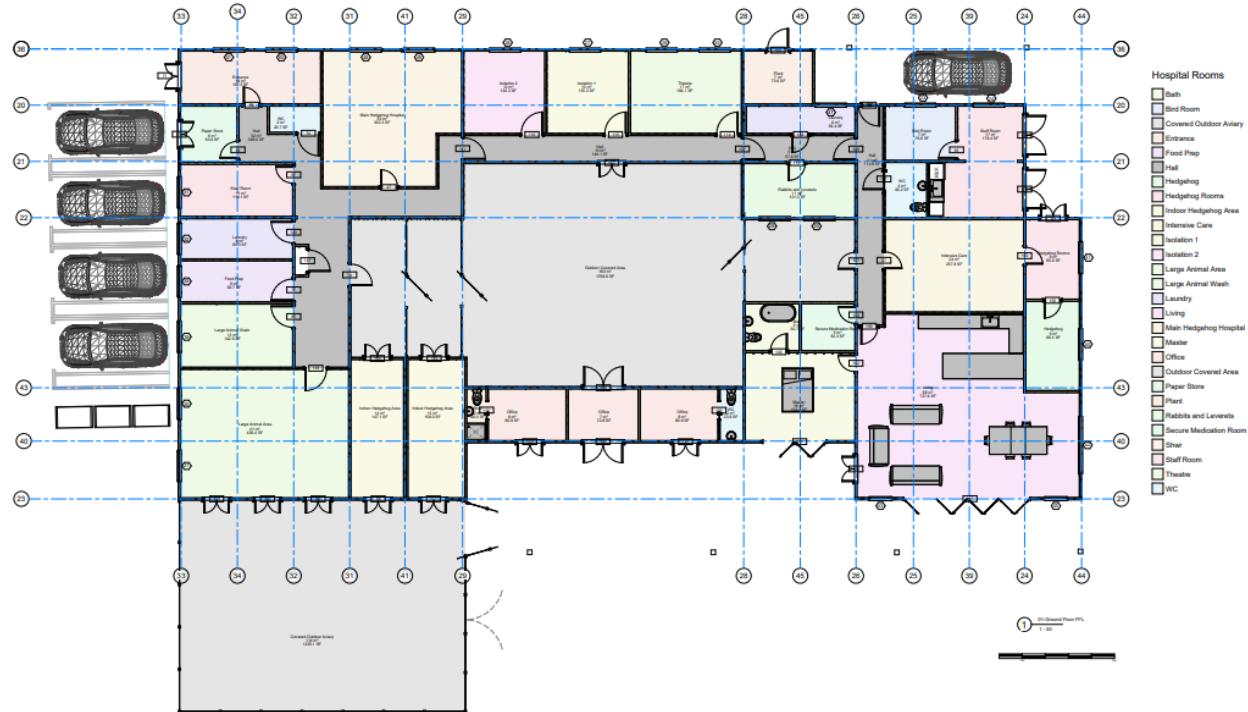
### **8.1 None**

## **PLANS**

The following plans are a selection of those submitted as part of the application and are provided to illustrate the proposed development. They may not be to scale. The full suite of plans can be found on the Council's website.

25/00371/FUL

# Appendix 1



A0

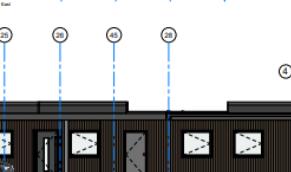
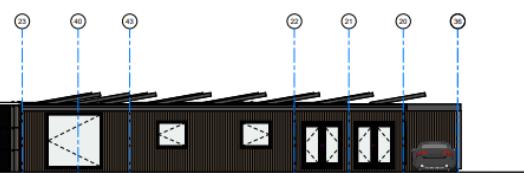


External Cladding to Container Units



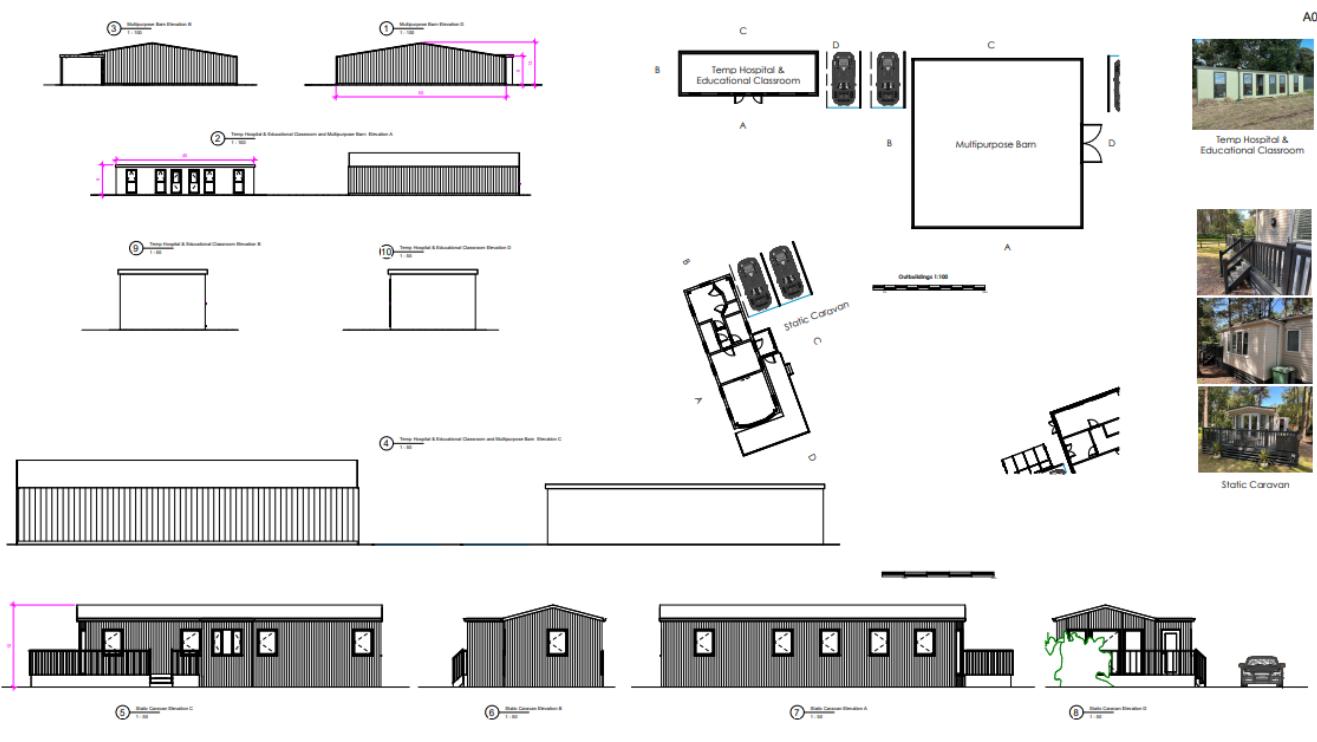
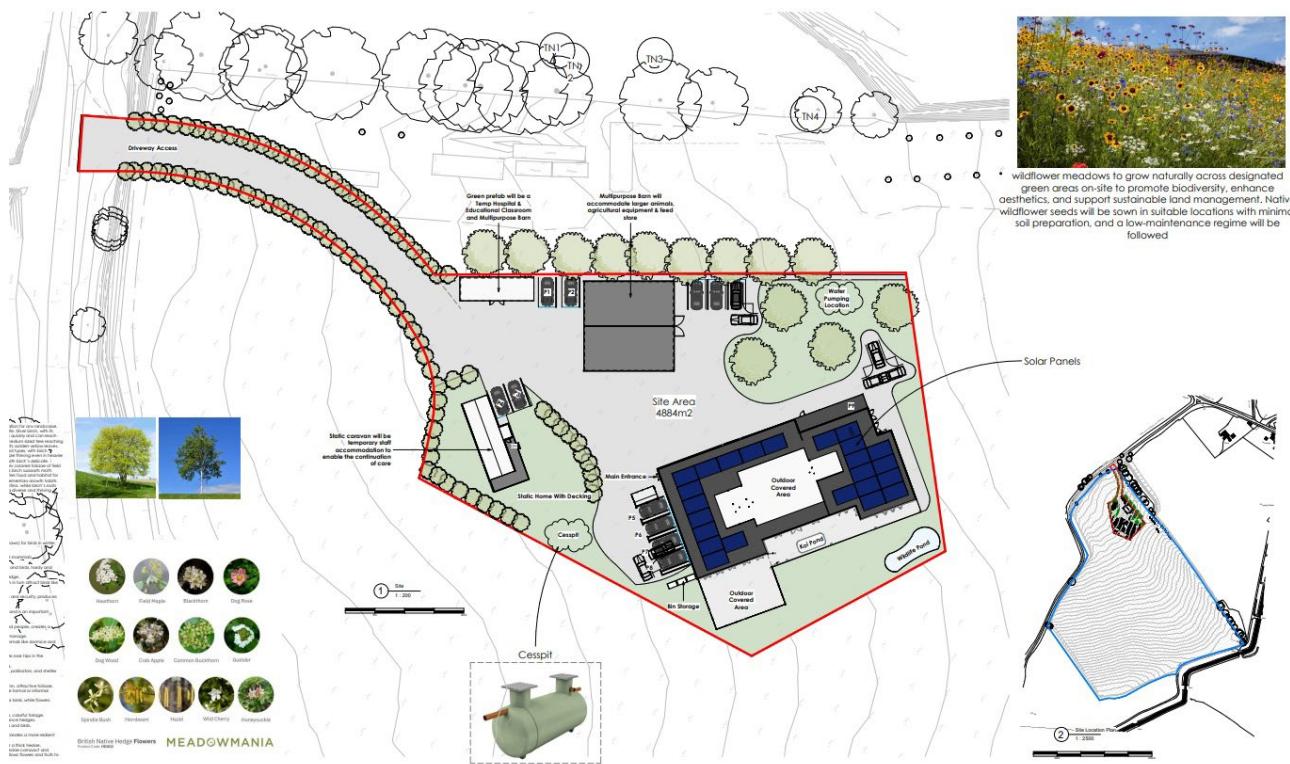
Solar Panels to Roof

1:100



1:100

# Appendix 1





**25/01170/FUL**

10 Little Lane  
Ely  
CB6 1AZ

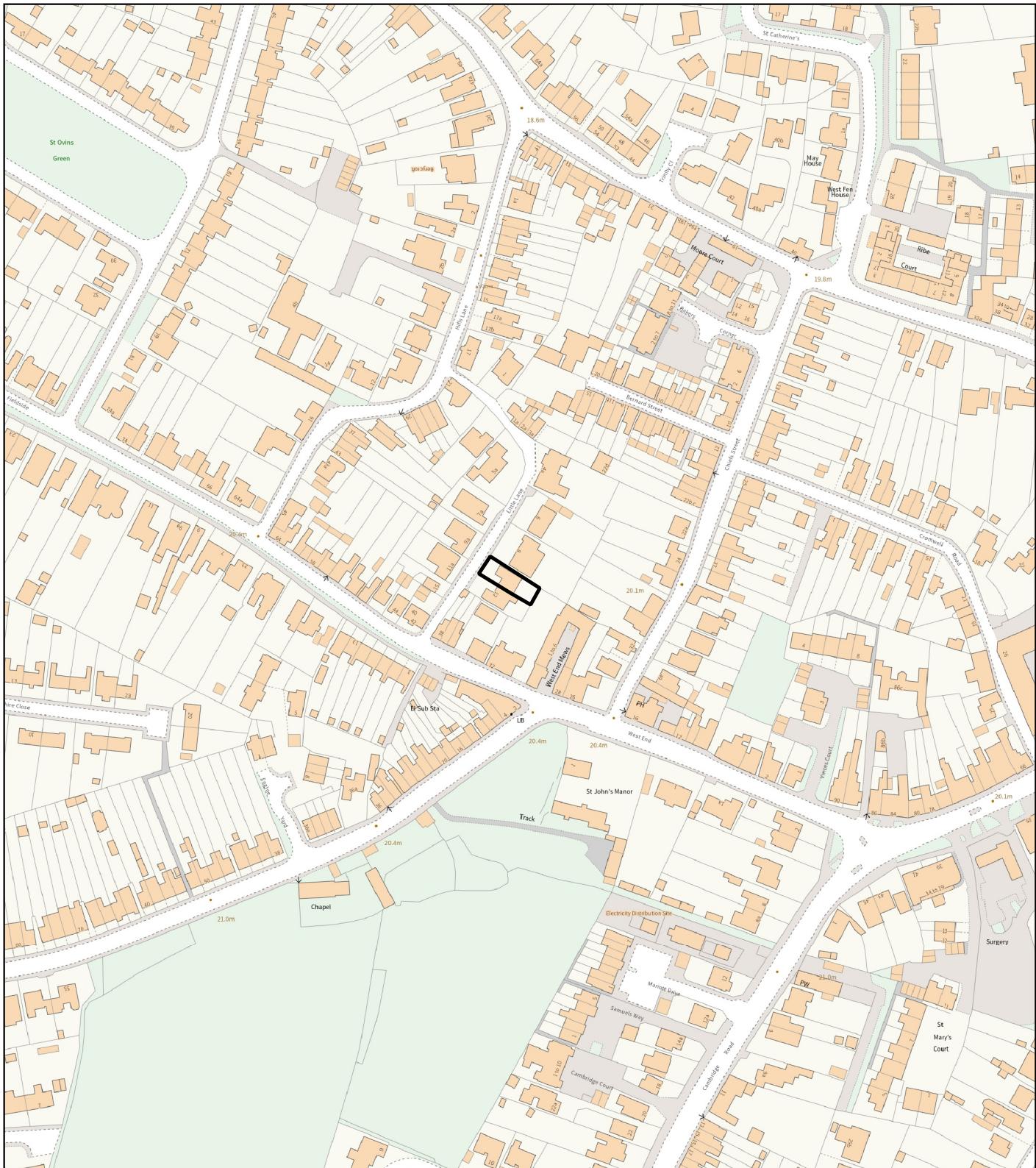
To build a garage conversion, removal of garage door and infill with window and addition of porch to rear.

To view all of the public access documents relating to this application please use the following web address or scan the QR code:

<https://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=T4KR0EGGKIE00>







25/01170/FUL



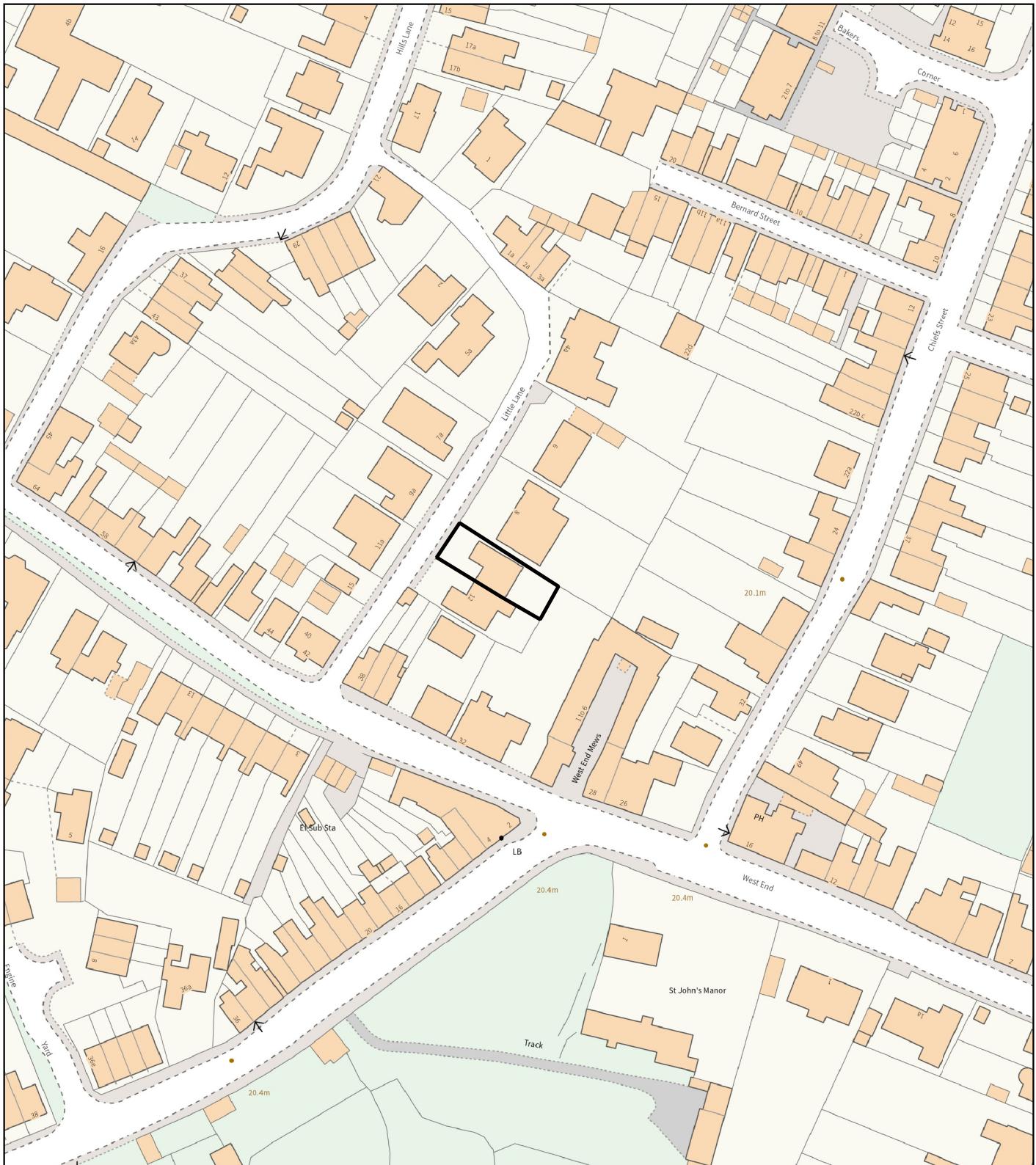
# 10 Little Lane Ely

## East Cambridgeshire District Council

Date: 23/12/2025  
Scale: 1:2,500



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25/01170/FUL



10 Little Lane  
Ely

East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

Date: 23/12/2025  
Scale: 1:1,250



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**TITLE:** 25/01170/FUL

Committee: Planning Committee

Date: 14 January 2026

Author: Planning Officer

Report No: AA115

Contact Officer: Philip Baum, Planning Officer  
philip.baum@eastcambs.gov.uk  
01353 616241  
Room No 011 The Grange Ely

**Site Address: 10 Little Lane, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB6 1AZ**

**Proposal: Garage conversion, removal of garage door and infill with window and addition of porch to rear**

**Applicant: Mrs Colbert**

**Parish: Ely**

**Ward: Ely West**

Ward Councillor/s: Christine Colbert  
Ross Trent  
Christine Whelan

**Date Received: 23 October 2025**

**Expiry Date: 18 December 2025**

**1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 Members are recommended to APPROVE the application for the following reason(s):

1. The proposed developments would have no significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area;
2. The proposed developments would not harm the significance of the Ely Conservation Area;
3. The proposed developments would have no significant detrimental impacts on the amenities of neighbouring properties.

1.2 The application is being heard by committee because it triggers the Councils Constitution in respect of applications made by or on behalf of Members and which are recommended for approval (Constitution: Part 5: Codes and Protocols:

Guidance on Planning Matters: 2.0 Members Making Planning Applications, Para. 2.2). Although this is a minor householder application, it has been agreed that ALL applications made by or on behalf of Members, including minor householder applications, and which are recommended for approval, will be referred to the Planning Committee for determination.

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

- 2.1 The application proposes the conversion of the existing garage and adjoining utility into a playroom and erection of a rear lean-to porch outside the existing French doors to the study. The garage conversion would involve infilling the garage door opening with a white u-PVC window surrounded by white u-PVC cladding over a matching brick base. The rear porch would consist of white u-PVC windows over white u-PVC panels on a matching brick base with white u-PVC glazed roof.
- 2.2 The proposed garage conversion and rear porch require planning permission due to the dwelling being within the Ely Conservation Area as both would consist of plastic cladding.
- 2.3 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link [Simple Search](#).

## **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

- 3.1 95/00374/FUL - Erection of a pair of chalet bungalows. **Approved 27-July-1995**

## **4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT**

- 4.1 The application site is an existing dwelling within a residential area. It is within the development envelope and Conservation Area.
- 4.2 The dwelling consists of a modern semi-detached one-and-a-half storey side gabled bungalow with single front and rear gabled dormer windows and front jerkinhead roof wing over to its north-eastern side, housing an integral garage and entrance porch.
- 4.3 The residential curtilage to the front is mainly paved with herringbone brick edged with a horizontal course and soldier course up to the edge of the highway to provide parking although there is a small planted area contained by the front elevation of the main house, side elevation of its front jerkinhead roof wing, the boundary with the attached dwelling and back edge of the parking area.
- 4.4 The residential curtilage to the rear is paved across the rear elevation of the house with concrete slabs to form a patio with herringbone brick pathway leading down to a small gabled timber shed in the corner of the north-eastern side and south-eastern rear boundaries. The remainder is laid to lawn and other planting, including two mature silver birch trees located at the far end of the rear garden.

4.5 The external walls of the bungalow are mainly finished with stretcher bond buff brick with openings headed by a soldier course, except for beneath a pair of bay windows in the south-west side of the front jerkinhead roof wing and on the gables of the dormers, which are finished with white u-PVC horizontal shiplap cladding. The roof is finished with concrete plain tiles, the windows and doors are white u-PVC, and the garage has a black roller shutter door.

4.6 The north-eastern side boundary adjoins a neighbouring dwelling consisting of a modern single storey detached side gabled bungalow finished with stretcher bond grey brick walls, concrete plain tile roof and white u-PVC windows and doors.

4.7 The south-eastern rear boundary adjoins the large rear garden of a traditional dwelling on West End consisting of a large two-storey detached gabled house finished with stretcher bond buff brick walls, slate tile roof, white sliding sash windows and light blue two panel three quarter lite front door with plain fanlight.

4.8 The south-western side boundary adjoins the attached dwelling which is a mirror image but without double bay windows in the north-eastern side of its front wing. The external walls are also mainly finished with stretcher bond buff brick with soldier courses over openings except for beneath the pair of windows in the north-eastern side of the front wing and on the gables of the dormers which are also finished with white u-PVC horizontal shiplap cladding. The roof is also finished with concrete plain tiles, the windows and doors are also white u-PVC, but the garage has a white roller shutter door.

4.9 The north-western front boundary adjoins the highway opposite two dwellings both consisting of single storey detached gabled bungalows. One is finished with white painted smooth rendered walls, white u-PVC shiplap effect cladding of half its gable, a salmon brick base and concrete roll profile tile roof. The other is finished with stretcher bond salmon brick walls with white painted smooth render and concrete roll profile tile roof.

4.10 A small two-storey house neighbouring the former bungalow opposite includes white u-PVC horizontal shiplap cladding on its gabled porch and first floor window.

## **5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES**

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees, and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

**City of Ely Council - 4 November 2025**  
Responded with no objection.

**Ward Councillors –**  
No responses.

**Consultee for Other Wards in Parish –**  
No response.

**ECDC Conservation Officer - 27 October 2025**  
Responded with no objection.

### **CCC Local Highways Authority - 31 October 2025**

Responded with no objection. It is considered that the proposed development would have no material impact on the public highway as, although the proposal does incur the loss of a parking space within the garage, it appears that the driveway can facilitate 2-3 vehicles. It is pointed out that it is at the discretion of the Local Parking Authority to determine if this is sufficient parking provisions for a property of this size.

- 5.2 A site notice was displayed near the site on 31 October 2025 and a press advert was published in the Cambridge Evening News on 6 November 2025.
- 5.3 Neighbours – 3 neighbouring properties were notified but there were no responses.

## **6.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

### **6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023) (ECLP)**

Policy GROWTH 2: Locational strategy  
Policy GROWTH 5: Presumption in favour of sustainable development  
Policy ENV 2: Design  
Policy ENV 4: Energy and water efficiency and renewable energy in construction  
Policy ENV 7: Biodiversity and geology  
Policy ENV 11: Conservation Areas  
Policy COM 8: Parking provision

### **6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents**

Climate Change SPD  
Ely Conservation Area Appraisal SPD  
Design Guide SPD  
Natural Environment SPD

### **6.3 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)**

Chapter 2: Achieving Sustainable development  
Chapter 4: Decision-making  
Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport  
Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places  
Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### **6.4 Planning Practice Guidance**

Climate change  
Design: process and tools  
Historic environment  
Natural environment

## **7.0 PLANNING MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMENTS**

- 7.1 The main planning considerations relevant to the determination of this application relate to:

- Principle of Development
- Impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties
- Impact on the biodiversity of the area
- Impact on the significance of the Ely Conservation Area
- Impact on parking provision

### **Principle of Development**

7.2 ECLP Policy GROWTH 2 (locational strategy) states that, within the defined development envelopes, development to meet local needs will normally be permitted provided there is no significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and that all other material planning considerations are satisfied.

7.3 The site is within the defined development envelope for Ely and would meet the needs of the household. Furthermore, it is considered that the proposal would have no significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and all other material planning considerations are satisfied, as discussed under the following headings.

7.4 In conclusion, the proposals are acceptable in principle and therefore comply with ECLP Policy GROWTH 2.

**Impact on the character and appearance of the area**

7.5 ECLP Policy ENV 2 (design) seeks high quality design that enhances and complements local distinctiveness through its relationship to existing features. For example, existing important landscaping features are expected to be retained, and its scale, form, massing, materials and colour are expected to be sympathetic to the surrounding area.

7.6 Although the external walls of the bungalow are mainly finished with stretcher bond buff brick with openings headed by a soldier course, it also includes white u-PVC horizontal shiplap cladding on the side wall of its front wing and gable of its dormers, as does the attached dwelling. One of the bungalows opposite includes white u-PVC horizontal shiplap cladding on half of its front gable. Furthermore, a small two-storey house neighbouring the bungalow opposite includes white u-PVC horizontal shiplap cladding on its gabled porch and first floor window.

7.7 Considering the above examples of white u-PVC horizontal shiplap cladding identified in the surrounding area, it is therefore considered that the infill of the existing garage door opening with white u-PVC horizontal shiplap cladding would not appear incongruous with the appearance of the dwelling or its surrounding area. Furthermore, it is considered the most appropriate way of infilling the existing opening headed by a soldier course given the proposed window would not be as wide.

7.8 The proposed rear porch would not harm the original architectural character of the dwelling, which would remain predominant. Its lean-to form would be sympathetic to the original building. Although it would not be fully carried out in matching brick, it

would have a matching brick base, and the attached dwelling has an existing white u-PVC conservatory to its rear. It is considered that white u-PVC windows over white u-PVC panels with a white u-PVC glazed roof would be appropriate to the rear.

7.9 To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with ECLP Policy ENV2, it is recommended that planning permission is granted on the condition that the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development are either as detailed on the application form and Dwg No. SE-2397A PP1000 received 23rd October 2025 or submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to their use in the construction of the development.

7.10 Regarding two mature silver birch trees located at the far end of the rear garden of the application site, it is considered that the erection of a porch to the rear would have no significant detrimental impacts on these given erected on the existing patio and given the degree of separation. It is therefore considered that an assessment of such is not required in the submitted application.

7.11 In conclusion, subject to the recommended condition regarding the specified materials, it is considered that the proposal would have no significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area. The proposals therefore comply with ECLP Policy ENV 2 in this respect.

**Impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties**

7.12 ECLP Policy ENV 2 (design) expects there to be no significantly detrimental effect on the residential amenity of nearby occupiers, and that occupiers and users of the extended dwelling would still enjoy high standards of amenity.

7.13 It is considered that the built form of the proposed rear porch would not result in any significant harm to neighbouring residential amenity through overshadowing or over massing given it would be largely glazed, given the built form of the neighbouring dwellings and given its degree of separation from the neighbouring dwellings to the north-east and south-east.

7.14 The attached dwelling to the south-west has an existing hipped roof conservatory to its rear, and the proposed rear porch would not extend beyond its rear end. Furthermore, the proposed porch would be to the north-east of the rear conservatory of the attached dwelling and therefore not in the direction of the path of the sun.

7.15 The neighbouring dwelling to the north-east has an existing extension to its rear with no windows in its south-west side elevation. Even if a window were to be added later, the degree of separation would offset any impact on such. Furthermore, the proposed rear porch would not extend beyond the rear end of the rear extension.

7.16 The south-eastern rear boundary of the application site opposite the rear elevation of the proposed rear porch adjoins the far end of the large rear garden of a dwelling on West End and the proposed porch would be to its north-west, therefore not in the direction of the path of the sun.

7.17 The proposed porch is largely glazed but would not result in significant harm to the privacy of the neighbouring properties through overlooking given the site levels and boundary screening. Furthermore, the proposed playroom window to the front would not result in significant harm to the privacy of the neighbouring properties opposite through overlooking given the degree of separation.

7.18 Regarding private garden space, the proposed porch would not result in a reduction of such for the host dwelling below the level required in the Design Guide SPD.

7.19 In conclusion, the proposal would have no significant detrimental impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties through overshadowing, over massing or overlooking or the host property through loss of private garden space. Therefore, the proposals comply with ECLP Policy ENV 2 in this respect.

#### **Impact on the biodiversity of the area**

7.20 ECLP Policy ENV 7 (biodiversity and geology) requires protection of the biodiversity of land and buildings with harm to or loss of environmental features minimised; provision of appropriate mitigation measures where harm to environmental features and habitat is unavoidable; and maximisation of opportunities for enhancement of natural habitats as an integral part of the proposed development.

7.21 It is considered that the conversion of an existing garage and erection of a porch to the rear on an existing patio would have no significant detrimental impacts on protected species or ecological habitat. It is therefore considered that an assessment of such is not required in the submitted application. Furthermore, it is considered disproportionate to condition ecological enhancements in this instance.

7.22 In conclusion, the proposal would have no significant detrimental impact on the biodiversity of the area. Therefore, the proposals comply with ECLP Policy ENV 7.

#### **Impact on the significance of the Ely Conservation Area**

7.23 ECLP Policy ENV 11 (Conservation Areas) seeks a particular high standard of design and materials in order to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area; and retention of attractive traditional materials and features. It also expects developers to show how the Ely Conservation Area Appraisal SPD has informed their proposals.

7.24 The Ely Conservation Area Appraisal is divided into zones which are subdivided. The application site is within Zone C but does not fall within any of the subdivisions appraised. The site is between two of these subdivisions; West End and St John's Road to the south and West Fen Road to the north, therefore it is not in a prominent location within the Conservation Area.

7.25 It is considered that the proposals would not harm the significance of the Ely Conservation Area given the application site is not situated in a prominent position within it.

7.26 The materials, details and features proposed for the development generally match the existing dwelling and are consistent with the general use of materials in the area.

7.27 The proposed rear porch would not harm the original architectural character of the dwelling, which would remain predominant. Its lean-to form would be sympathetic to the original building.

7.28 The ECDC Conservation Officer reinforces these considerations as it was advised that the proposals would have no conservation implications.

7.29 To safeguard the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in accordance with ECLP Policy ENV 11, it is recommended that planning permission is granted subject to the specified materials being conditioned, as detailed in paragraph 7.9 of this report.

7.30 In conclusion, subject to the recommended condition regarding the specified materials, it is considered that the proposals would not harm the significance of the Ely Conservation Area. The proposals therefore comply with ECLP Policy ENV 11.

#### **Impact on parking provision**

7.31 ECLP Policy COM 8 (parking provision) seeks adequate levels of car parking in accordance with the Council's parking standards. This depends on the use and location of the site. The dwelling is outside the defined town centre therefore the parking standard is 2 car spaces.

7.32 Although the proposed garage conversion would result in the loss of one car space within the garage, off-street car parking provision would not fall below that required by ECLP Policy COM 8 given 3 car spaces would be maintained on the brick weave parking area to the front.

7.33 It is considered that the proposed development would have no material impact on the public highway as, although the proposal does incur the loss of a parking space within the garage, it appears that the driveway can facilitate 2-3 vehicles. It is pointed out that it is at the discretion of the Local Parking Authority to determine if this is sufficient parking provisions for a property of this size.

7.34 In conclusion, sufficient car parking provision would remain. Therefore, the proposals comply with ECLP Policy COM 8.

#### **Other matters**

7.35 Policy ENV 4 encourages proposals to aim for reduced or zero carbon development in accordance with the zero-carbon hierarchy. Although it is not detailed how energy efficiency would be maximised, the lack of such details would not in itself warrant refusal of the application.

#### **Conclusion**

7.36 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.37 The site lies within Ely's development envelope where the principle of development is acceptable, and it is considered that the proposal would have no significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area and all other material planning considerations are satisfied.

7.38 In conclusion, the proposals accord with the relevant policies of the development plan therefore the application is recommended for approval, subject to the conditions set out below.

#### **Human Rights Act**

7.39 The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority, such as East Cambridgeshire District Council, to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance. The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation set out below is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

#### **Equalities and Diversities**

7.40 In considering this planning application due regard has been had to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Account has been taken of the PSED and it is considered that the recommendation set out below would not undermine the objectives of the duty.

### **8.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Recommended Conditions

Appendix 2 - Plans

## APPENDIX 1 - Recommended Conditions

### Approved Plans

1 Development shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and documents listed below

Plan Reference  
SE-2397A PP1000

Version No

Date Received  
23rd October 2025

Reason: To define the scope and extent of this permission.

### Commencement of Development

2 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 3 years of the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

### Specified Materials

3 The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development shall be either:

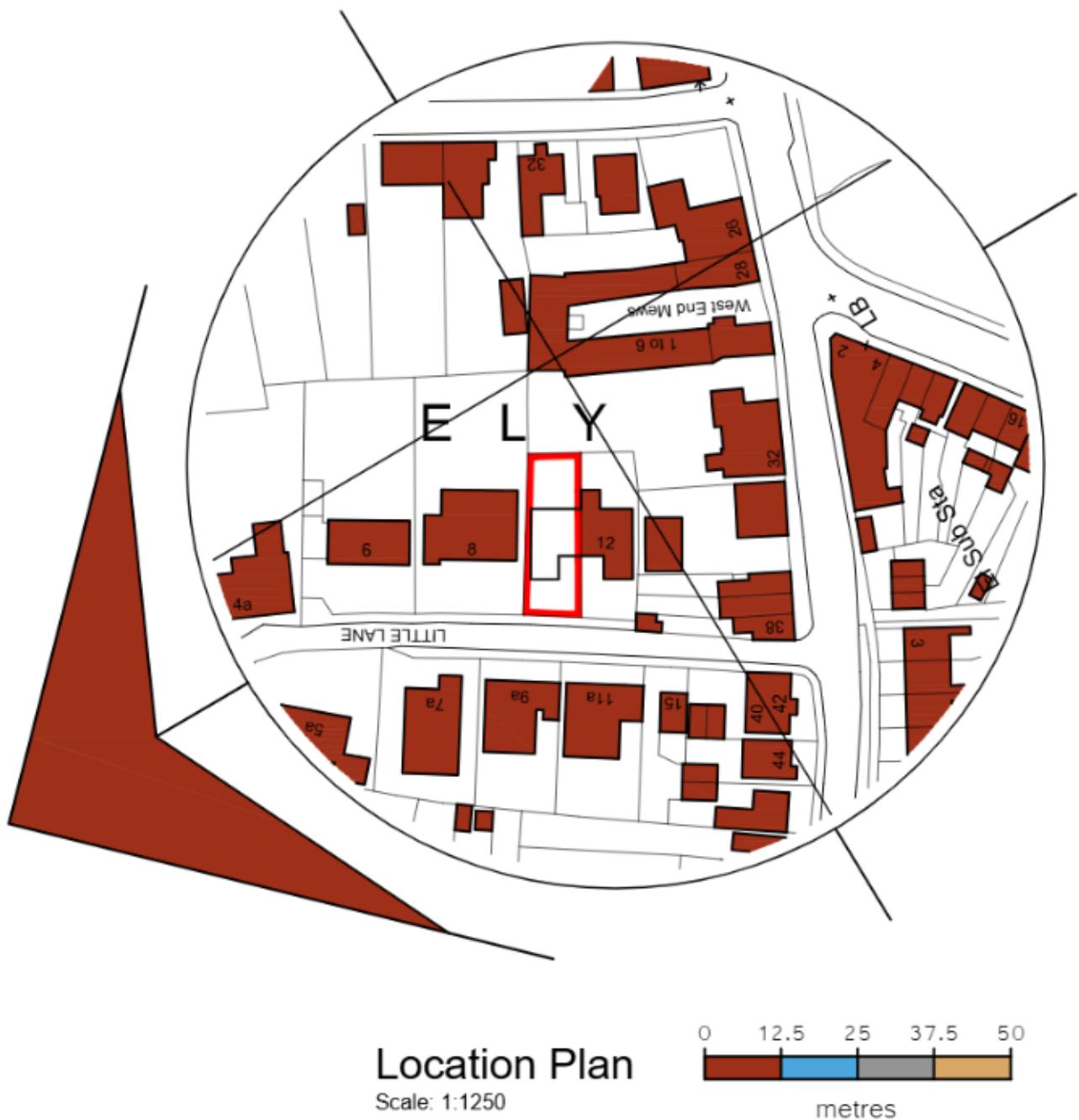
- As detailed on the application form and Dwg No. SE-2397A PP1000 received 23rd October 2025; or,
- Submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to their use in the construction of the development.

All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

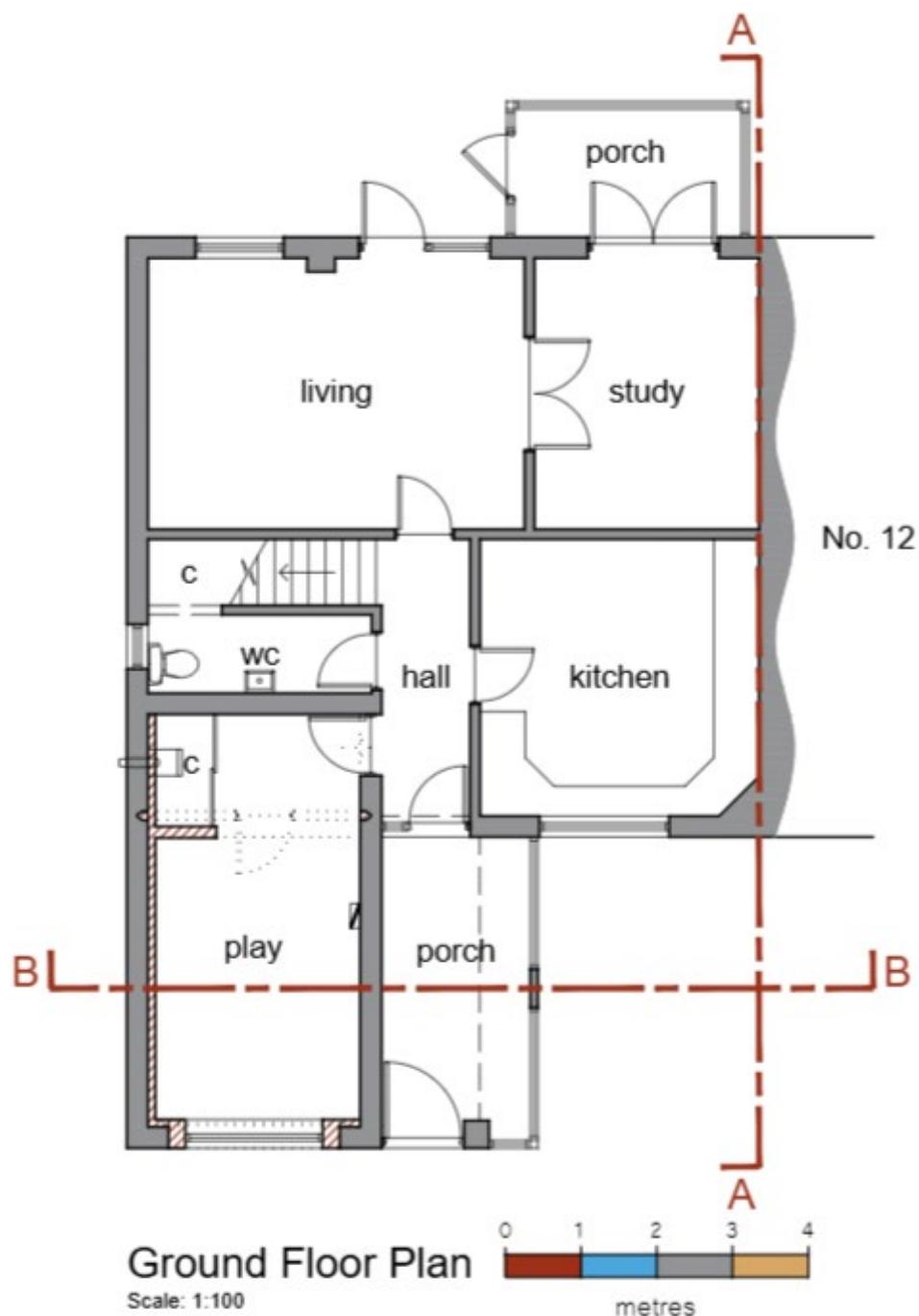
Reason: To safeguard the special architectural or historic interest, character and appearance and integrity of the Conservation Area, in accordance with policies ENV2 and ENV11 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023).

## APPENDIX 2 - Plans

The following plans are a selection of those submitted as part of the application and are provided to illustrate the proposed development. They may not be to scale. The full suite of plans can be found on the Council's website.





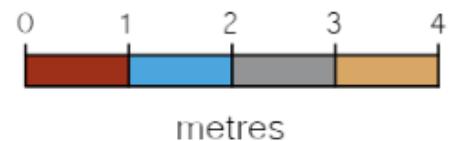


No. 10 No. 12



## Front Elevation (NW)

Scale: 1:100



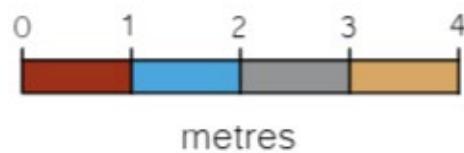
No. 10

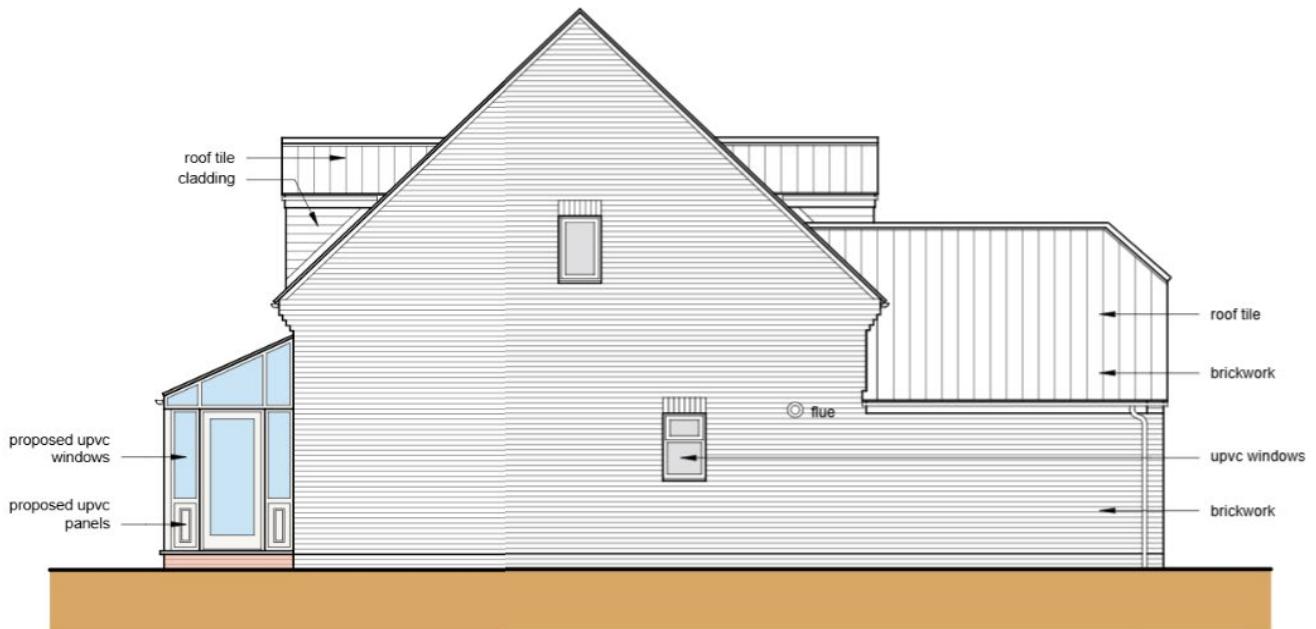
No. 12



## Section B-B

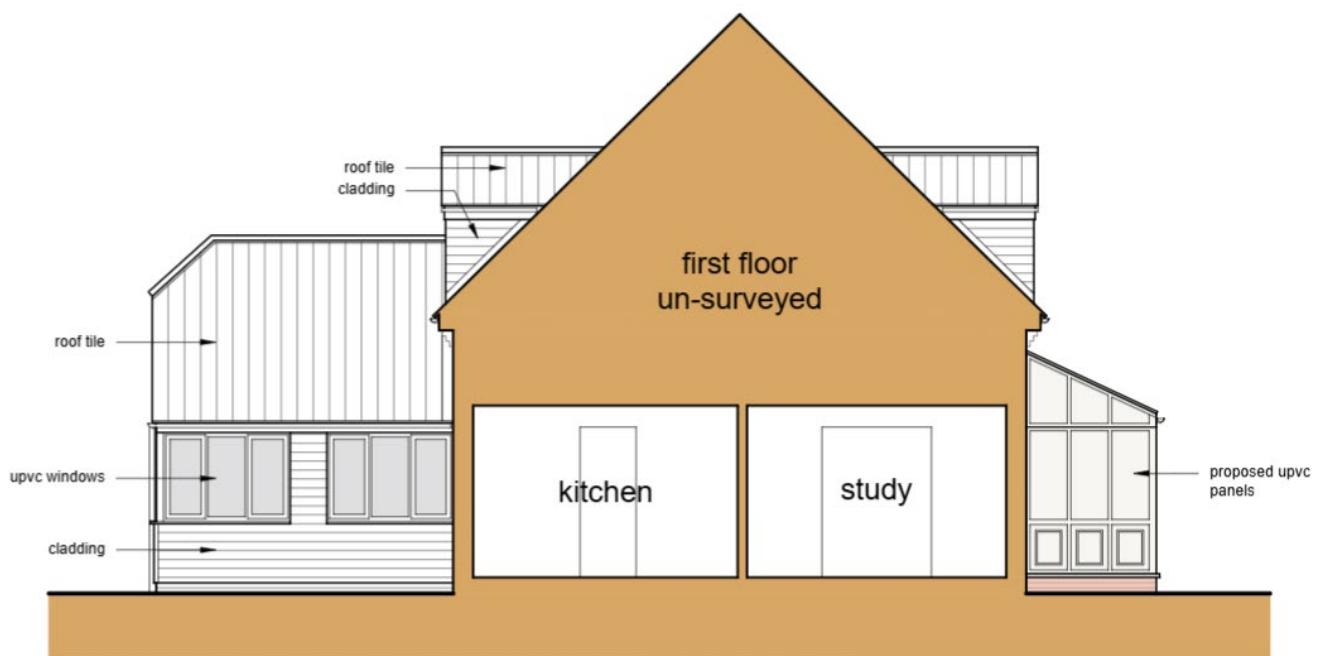
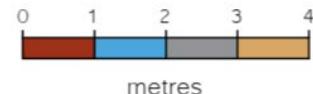
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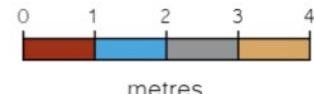
**Side Elevation (NE)**

Scale: 1:100



**Side Elevation/Section A-A (SW)**

Scale: 1:100

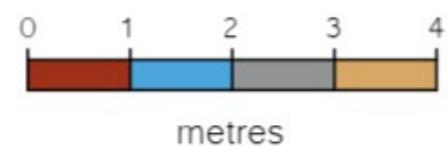


No. 12  No. 10 



## Rear Elevation (SE)

Scale: 1:100





**25/0309/LBC**

4 Main Street  
Little Thetford  
Ely  
CB6 3HA

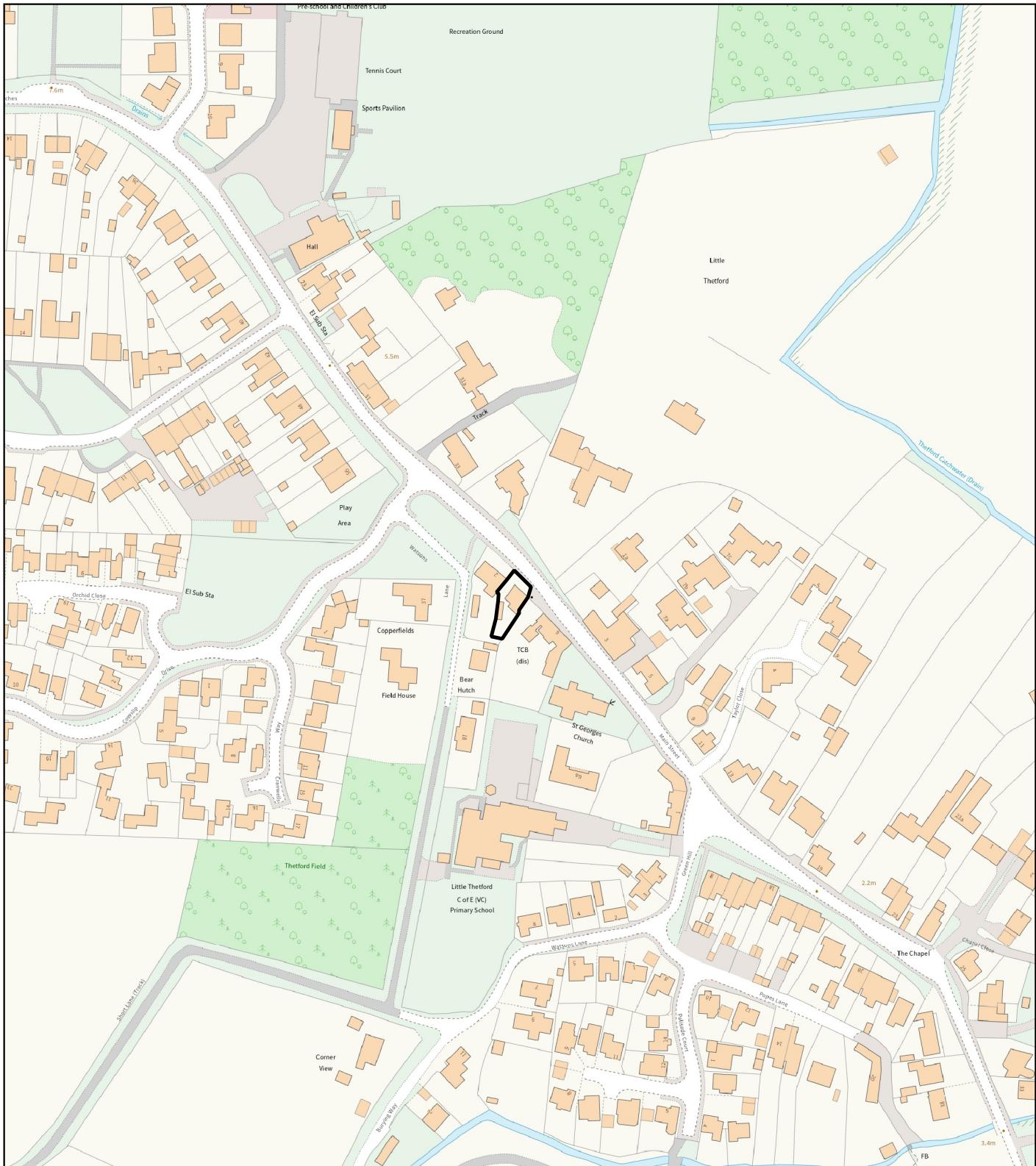
For a replacement window in north dormer.

To view all of the public access documents relating to this application please use the following web address or scan the QR code:

<http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=T4MT77GG0CS00>







25/00309/LBC



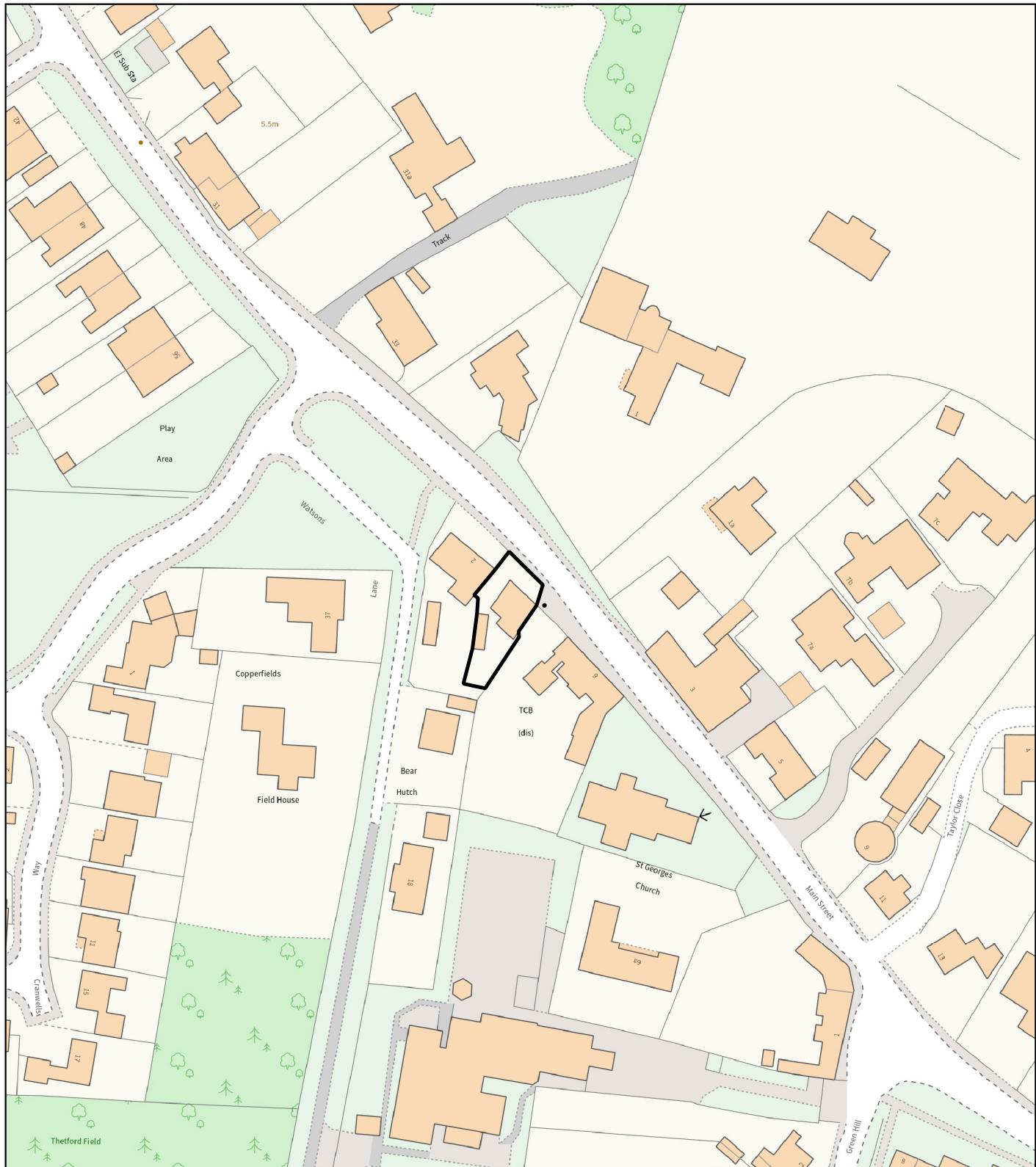
4 Main Street  
Little Thetford

# East Cambridgeshire District Council

Date: 23/12/2025  
Scale: 1:2,500



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25/00309/LBC



4 Main Street  
Little Thetford

East Cambridgeshire  
District Council

Date: 23/12/2025  
Scale: 1:1,250



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**TITLE:** 25/00309/LBC

Committee: Planning Committee

Date: 14 January 2026

Author: Conservation Officer

Report No: AA116

Contact Officer: Christopher Partrick, Conservation Officer  
christopher.partrick@eastcambs.gov.uk  
01353 616309  
Room No 011 The Grange Ely

**Site Address:** 4 Main Street, Little Thetford, Ely Cambridgeshire CB6 3HA

**Proposal:** Replacement window in north dormer

**Applicant:** Miss Anna Bailey

**Parish:** Little Thetford

**Ward:** Stretham

Ward Councillor/s: Bill Hunt  
Lee Denney

**Date Received:** 3 November 2025

**Expiry Date:** 29 December 2025

**1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Members are recommended to APPROVE the application subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The application is being heard by committee because it triggers the Council's Constitution in respect of the determination of applications involving Members' property.

**2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION**

- 2.1 The present application seeks listed building consent for the replacement of the casement in a dormer window of a Grade II listed house in Little Thetford.

2.2 The full listed building consent application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link [Simple Search](#).

### **3.0 PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1

#### **94/00563/FUL**

Extension to form porch and formation of new dormer window

**Approved**

8 September 1994

### **4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT**

4.1 The application site is National Heritage List for England ref 1392035 No 4 Main Street, Little Thetford, a Grade II former post office, now private house, listed in 2007. It is a 1½ storey C17 cottage in rendered timber frame with a plain tiled roof with dormer windows and a central porch. The northern front dormer which is the subject of this application was added in 1994 and all the windows are modern replacements.

### **5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES**

5.1 Standard consultation responses are summarised below.

**Parish** - No Comments Received

**Ward Councillors** - No Comments Received

5.2 A site notice was displayed near the site on 4 November 2025 and a press advert was published in the Cambridge Evening News on 13 November 2025.

5.3 **Neighbours** – three neighbouring properties were notified but no responses were received.

### **6.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 (as amended 2023)

ENV 12 Listed Buildings

6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Design Guide

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

16 Conserving & enhancing the historic environment

6.4 Historic England Technical Guidance

## **7.0 PLANNING MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND COMMENTS**

### **7.1 Planning Comments**

The main issue to consider in the determination of this application is the impact it may have on the character and significance of the listed building.

### **7.2 Historic Environment**

Policy ENV 12 states that proposals to extend, alter or change the use of a listed building will only be permitted where they would:

- Preserve or enhance the significance of the building and not involve substantial or total loss of historic fabric.
- Be compatible with the character, architectural integrity and setting of the listed building; and
- Facilitate the long-term preservation of the building.

7.3 NPPF paragraphs 212-213 state 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...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.

7.4 Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works 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.

7.5 Historic England's Advice Note 2 states: 'Doors and windows are frequently key to the significance of a building. Replacement is therefore generally advisable only where the original is beyond repair, it minimises the loss of historic fabric and matches the original in detail and material...'

7.6 No 4's existing timber windows date from 1994, prior to listing, when the porch and north dormer were added. The undivided 2-light casements in the dormers are not strictly historic configurations but still work with the overall character of the building, and maintaining their symmetry is the overriding consideration. Thus the net impact of replacing the decaying north dormer with an identical double glazed window, as proposed here, is architecturally-neutral.

## **Human Rights Act**

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority, such as East Cambridgeshire District Council, to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance. The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general interest and the recommendation set out below is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

## **Equalities and Diversities**

In considering this planning application due regard has been had to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to put an end to unlawful behaviour that is banned by the Equality Act, including discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not. Account has been taken of the PSED and it is considered that the recommendation set out below would not undermine the objectives of the duty.

### **7.7 Planning Balance**

7.8 The application proposal is considered to comply with the provisions of section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as supported by the objectives of Local Plan Policy ENV 12 and section 16 of the NPPF.

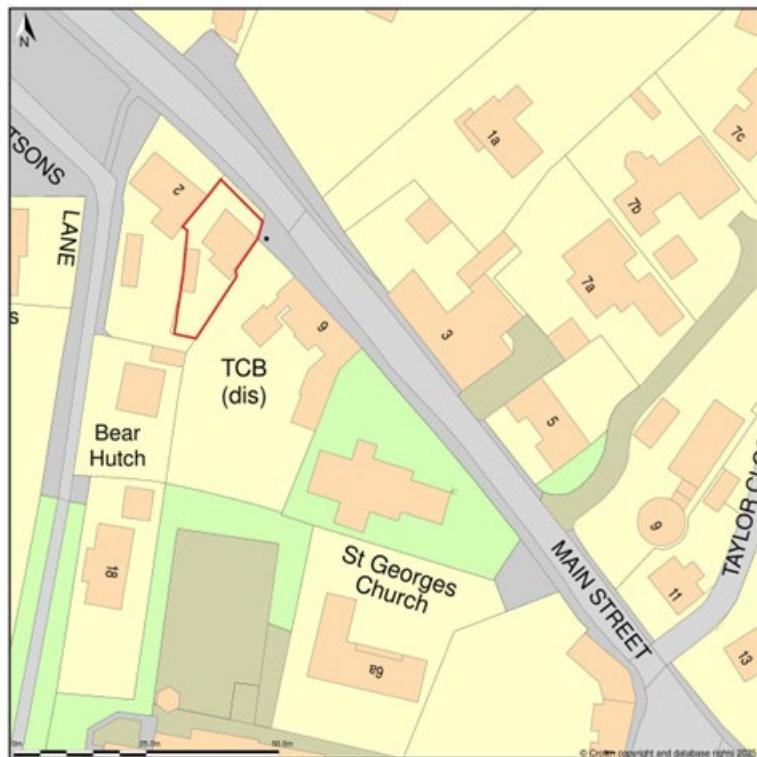
### **8.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Recommended conditions

### **PLANS**

The following plans are a selection of those submitted as part of the application and are provided to illustrate the proposed development. They may not be to scale. The full suite of plans can be found on the Council's website.

25/00309/LBC



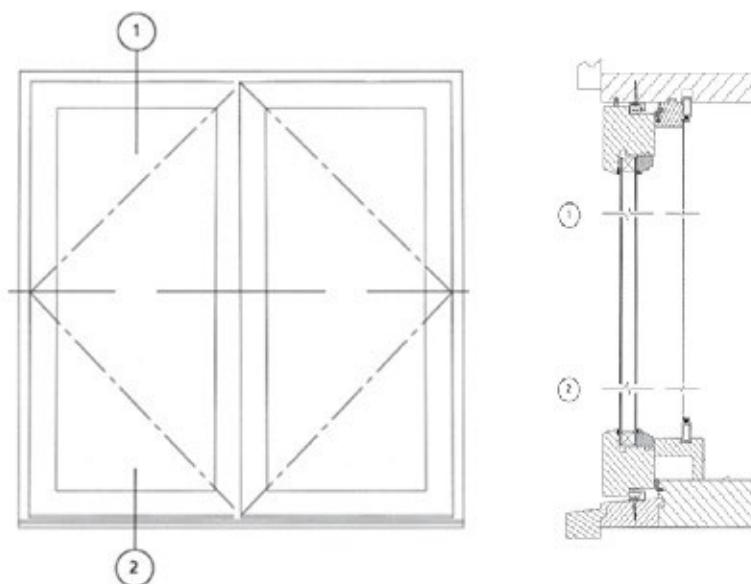
Location Plan



4 Main Street, Little Thetford – front (north-east) elevation



1994 north dormer – detail view



Dormer window – typical joinery details

## **APPENDIX 1 - 25/00309/LBC Conditions**

1 Development shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and documents listed below

| Plan Reference                  | Version No | Date Received     |
|---------------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 2-light Casement Window Details |            | 6th November 2025 |
| Location Plan                   |            | 24th October 2025 |
| Block Plan                      |            | 24th October 2025 |
| Heritage Statement              |            | 24th October 2025 |

1 Reason: To define the scope and extent of this permission.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 3 years of the date of this permission.

2 Reason: To comply with Section 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as amended.



**TITLE:** Sunnica Non-material change (NMC) application

Committee: Planning Committee

Date: 14 January 2026

Author: Major Projects Planning Officer

Report No: AA117

Contact Officer: Yole Medeiros, Major Projects Planning Officer  
[yole.medeiros@eastcambs.gov.uk](mailto:yole.medeiros@eastcambs.gov.uk)  
01353 616280  
Room No 011 The Grange Ely

**Proposal:** ECDC consultation response to the non-material change (NMC) proposed by Sunnica Limited to The Sunnica Energy Farm Order 2024 (the Development Consent Order, DCO), which came into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2024.

## **1.0 RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 The Planning Committee is recommended to:

- (a) Approve the draft response (Appendix 1), agreeing with the nature and scope of proposed changes as non-material to the DCO; and
- (b) Delegate authority to the Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager to submit the response on behalf of ECDC.

## **2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

2.1 Sunnica Limited (Sunnica) is applying to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to obtain a non-material change (NMC) to the The Sunnica Energy Farm Order 2024 (Development Consent Order, DCO), which came into force on 3rd August 2024.

2.2 The NMC proposes to amend the DCO red boundary, to include an extended area of approximately 2 hectares (4.94 acres) in size, located to the northwest and adjacent to the Burwell National Grid Substation (Burwell Substation). The extended area is currently being used for hardstanding and has been built on, following the application to the DCO. Sunnica is proposing to change the location for the cabling connection to the substation's new extended area and therefore is seeking to include this area in the DCO limits.

2.3 If the inclusion of the extended area is accepted, relevant plans and documents within Schedule 10 of the DCO will need to be amended accordingly, as set out in Appendix 3 – Proposed changes to the Order.

2.4 Sunnica has produced an Environmental Report in support of the application and part of the NMC submission. The report found that the proposed change would not give rise to any materially new or materially different environmental effects to those originally assessed as part of the application for the Order, nor would it have new or different effects on local residents or business or any additional implications in respect of habitats regulation assessment. The report also concludes that no further mitigations beyond those already secured by the Order are required.

2.5 In reviewing the information, officers are of the view that the proposed change in the red boundary affects primarily highways and drainage matters. The National Grid Electricity Transmission plc, Cambridgeshire County Council and Swaffham Internal Drainage Board will be consulted directly as part of the process to assess the proposals. ECDC's Ecology and Tree officers have been consulted and raised no objections to the non-material changes, and no further mitigations have been requested by officers.

2.6 The Committee is therefore recommended to approve ECDC's draft response as set out in Appendix 1, raising no objection to the changes and confirming that the nature and the scope of the changes are non-material, and would not give rise to any adverse effect beyond those previously identified.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

#### The Sunnica Energy Farm Order 2024

3.1 The Sunnica Energy Farm Order 2024 (Development Consent Order, DCO) came into force on 3rd August 2024, authorising the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of a generating station with a gross electrical output capacity of over 50 megawatts (MW), comprising ground mounted solar photovoltaic panel arrays; one or more battery energy storage systems with a gross storage capacity of over 50MW; connection to the UK electricity transmission system and other associated and ancillary development.

3.2 The Order granting development consent includes the detailed description of the 'authorised development' in Schedule 1 of the DCO (Appendix 4). The application which resulted in the DCO being made has been examined in accordance with the Infrastructure Planning (Examination Procedure) Rules 2010. The process also considered the report and recommendation of the Examining Authority, taking into account the environmental information in accordance with regulation 4 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and has had regard to the documents and matters referred to in the Planning Act 2008.

3.3 In summary, the authorised development fully described in Schedule 1 of the DCO (Appendix 4) consists of the following:

- Work No. 1 — a ground mounted solar photovoltaic generating station with a gross electrical output capacity of over 50 megawatts including
- Work No. 2 — an energy storage facility of up to 500 megawatts of power at the point of grid connection including

- Work No. 3 — onsite substations
- Work No. 4 — works to lay electrical cables and temporary construction laydown areas for the electrical cables
- Work No. 5 — (Not Used)
- Work No. 6 — works to create, enhance and maintain green infrastructure
- Work No. 7 — temporary construction laydown areas
- Work No. 8 — warehouse buildings and permanent compounds
- Work No. 9 — works to existing streets to facilitate access to Work Nos. 1 to 8
- Work No. 10 — works to create and maintain stone curlew reserve.

3.4 In connection with and in addition to Work Nos. 1 to 10 further associated development comprising such other works or operations as may be necessary or expedient for the purposes of or in connection with the authorised development, and which are within the Order limits and fall within the scope of the work assessed by the environmental statement, are also permitted by the Order, including:

- works within highways
- works for the provision of fencing and security measures such as CCTV, columns, lighting and communication boxes
- bunds, embankments, trenching and swales;
- boundary treatments, including means of enclosure and glint and glare boarding;
- laying out and surfacing of permissive paths;
- foundations for structures or buildings;
- works to the existing irrigation system;
- works to electrical, gas, water, foul water drainage and telecommunications infrastructure connections;
- works to non-navigable rivers, streams or watercourses;
- surface water drainage systems;
- site establishments and preparation works including site clearance;
- tunnelling, boring and drilling works; and
- landscaping and mitigation works.

## **4.0 MAIN ISSUES**

4.1 As set out above, the Order authorises the construction and operation of cabling to connect the authorised development to the national grid at the Burwell Substation. Following the application which resulted in the making of the Order, the substation was extended, to include the area shaded in yellow on the Non-Material Change Plan (Appendix 2). Sunnica is proposing to change the DCO limits (i.e. red boundary) so the cabling to connect the authorised development to the existing substation can be connected to the extended area.

4.2 The extended area is approximately 2 hectares (4.94 acres) in size and comprises previously developed land, made of hardstanding with energy infrastructure built on. The re-location of the cabling falls outside the extended area and will be within the current limits of the DCO, however the point of connection with the extended land is part of this proposal and will require a small extension to Work No. 4 (works to lay

electrical cables and temporary construction laydown areas for the electrical cables) of the DCO. There will be no change to the trench width, voltage or characteristics of the cable resulting from the proposed changes.

4.3 Applicants have submitted an Environmental Statement in support of the NMC application, concluding that the proposed change would not give rise to any materially new or materially different environmental effects to those originally assessed as part of the application for the Order, nor would it have new or different effects on local residents or business or any additional implications in respect of habitats regulation assessment. More specifically, the conclusions of this report are as follows:

- *“the NMC is non-material and does not result in any new, or changed, environmental effects (including those upon local people) established by the Environmental Statement;*
- *all previously identified effects and mitigation measures remain valid and applicable;*
- *the NMC does not result in the need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment or any new, or additional, licences in respect of European Protected Species; and*
- *whilst additional land not already included in the Order limits is proposed to facilitate the NMC, additional compulsory acquisition of land is not required.”*

4.4 Notwithstanding the previously developed land character of the extended area, an updated ecological walkover has been undertaken in order to provide an up-to-date appraisal of the baseline habitats relating to the extended area and the proposed non-material change. Findings indicate signs of water vole presence (latrines and burrows) within the ditch to be crossed by the cable route within the extended area. This however had been previously identified with the original DCO application, and the proposed change does not result in any new, or changed, effects previously established. As such, the mitigation measures set out in the DCO's Outline Landscape Ecological Management Plan, and the Framework Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) remain valid and applicable.

4.5 Further findings indicate a minor change in the potential drain crossing location and a section of Newnham Drove that was not included within the existing Order limits. These proposed changes will be subject of assessment by the Cambridgeshire County Council acting as local highway authority and lead local flood authority, as well as by the Swaffham Internal Drainage Board.

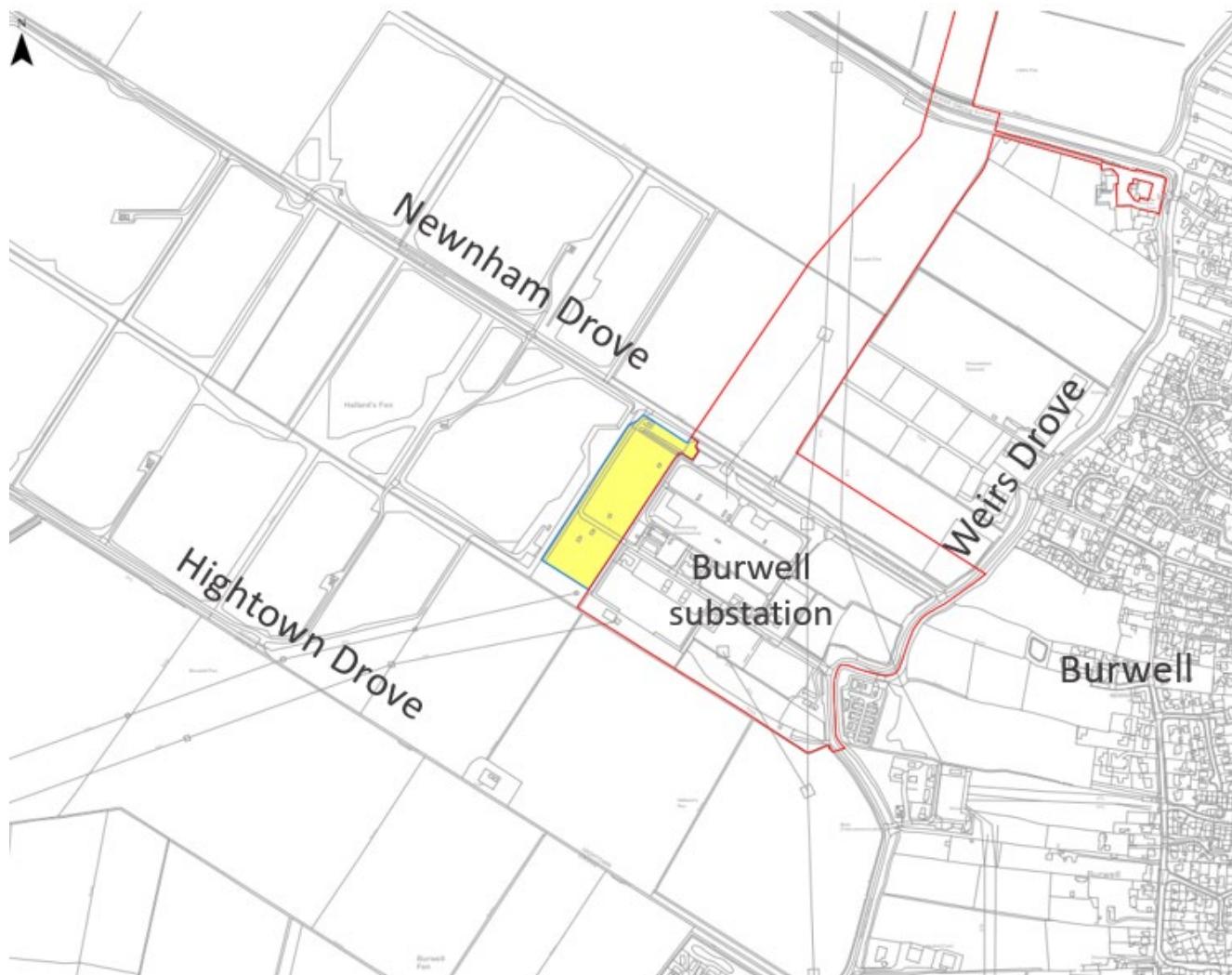
4.6 ECDC's Ecology and Tree officers have reviewed the documentation and have not raised any objection to the proposed non-material changes, in relation to the Council's scope of assessment and main issues affecting the district. The submission includes sufficient information and considering the mitigations already secured, the proposals would align with Policy ENV7 of the Local Plan and would not materially affect other policies in the Development Plan.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

5.1 Considering the above context and the non-material nature and scope of the proposed changes as discussed in this report, we recommend that the 'no objection' letter drafted (Appendix 1) is approved and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, as the Council's response to the consultation regarding the submitted NMC application.

## **6.0 APPENDICES**

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Draft ECDC consultation response
- 6.2 Appendix 2 – Non-Material Change Plan (extract below with location reference)
- 6.3 Appendix 3 – Proposed changes to the Order
- 6.4 Appendix 4 – Description of the 'authorised development' – Schedule 1 of the DCO



**Draft ECDC consultation response**  
(to be included in ECDC's headed letter)

**Sunnica Energy Farm Case Team - National Infrastructure**

The Planning Inspectorate  
C/O Quradient  
69 Buckingham Avenue  
Slough SL1 4PN

(via email only)

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Re: Application by Sunnica Limited (Submitted 3 December 2025) – Proposed Non-Material Changes to the Sunnica Energy Farm Order 2024 (as amended)**

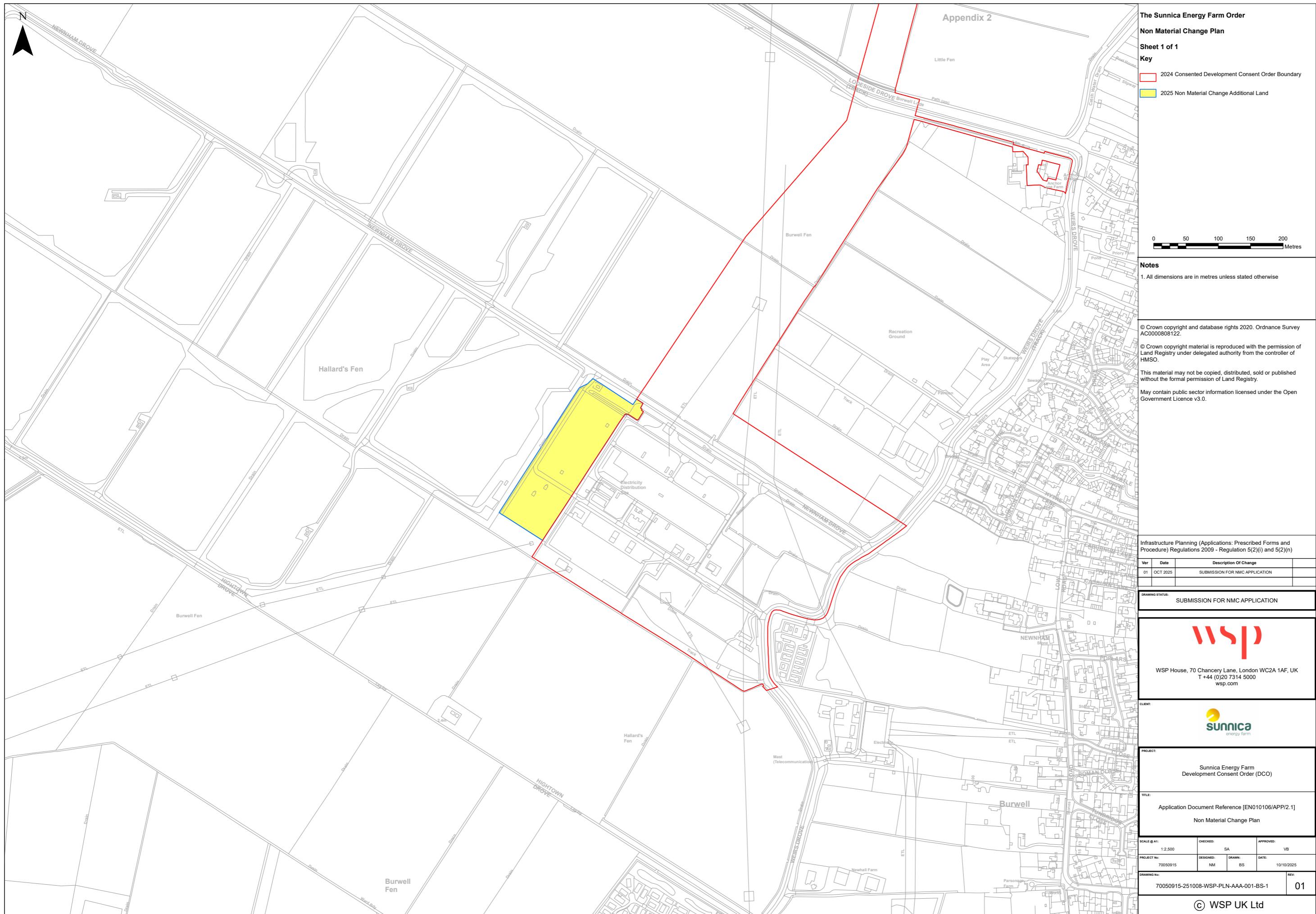
I am writing in relation to the application submitted by Sunnica Limited on 3 December 2025 seeking approval for non-material changes to the Sunnica Energy Farm Order 2024 (as amended).

Following a review of the submitted documents, including the accompanying Environmental Report, East Cambridgeshire District Council can confirm that it raises **no objections** to the proposed amendments. The Council is satisfied that the changes sought constitute non-material modifications and that they would not give rise to any adverse or unacceptable impacts.

Yours faithfully,

**David Morren**

Strategic Planning and Development Management Manager





## Proposed changes to the Order

| Article of the Order  | Proposed Change   |                        |                           |                        |             |                                |     |    |                          |                   |     |     |                          |   |     |   |            |                                      |     |   |            |   |     |    |                          |             |     |    |                          |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|-----|----|--------------------------|-------------------|-----|-----|--------------------------|---|-----|---|------------|--------------------------------------|-----|---|------------|---|-----|----|--------------------------|-------------|-----|----|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Schedule 10   | Amend the following rows of the table: <table border="1" data-bbox="371 512 1410 1473"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="371 512 632 646">(1)<br/>Document name</th><th data-bbox="632 512 892 646">(2)<br/>Document reference</th><th data-bbox="892 512 1152 646">(3)<br/>Revision number</th><th data-bbox="1152 512 1410 646">(4)<br/>Date</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 646 632 781">access and rights of way plans</td><td data-bbox="632 646 892 781">2.3</td><td data-bbox="892 646 1152 781">67</td><td data-bbox="1152 646 1410 781">24/03/2023<br/>27/11/2025</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 781 632 916">book of reference</td><td data-bbox="632 781 892 916">4.3</td><td data-bbox="892 781 1152 916">910</td><td data-bbox="1152 781 1410 916">30/08/2023<br/>27/11/2025</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 916 632 1073">land and Crown land plans – sheets 1-19 and 21-22</td><td data-bbox="632 916 892 1073">2.1</td><td data-bbox="892 916 1152 1073">6</td><td data-bbox="1152 916 1410 1073">30/01/2023</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1073 632 1208">land and Crown land plans – sheet 20</td><td data-bbox="632 1073 892 1208">2.1</td><td data-bbox="892 1073 1152 1208">7</td><td data-bbox="1152 1073 1410 1208">27/11/2025</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1208 632 1365">traffic regulation measures plans – temporary road closures</td><td data-bbox="632 1208 892 1365">2.4</td><td data-bbox="892 1208 1152 1365">34</td><td data-bbox="1152 1208 1410 1365">30/01/2023<br/>27/11/2025</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="371 1365 632 1473">works plans</td><td data-bbox="632 1365 892 1473">2.2</td><td data-bbox="892 1365 1152 1473">56</td><td data-bbox="1152 1365 1410 1473">03/03/2023<br/>27/11/2025</td></tr> </tbody> </table> | (1)<br>Document name   | (2)<br>Document reference | (3)<br>Revision number | (4)<br>Date | access and rights of way plans | 2.3 | 67 | 24/03/2023<br>27/11/2025 | book of reference | 4.3 | 910 | 30/08/2023<br>27/11/2025 | land and Crown land plans – sheets 1-19 and 21-22 | 2.1 | 6 | 30/01/2023 | land and Crown land plans – sheet 20 | 2.1 | 7 | 27/11/2025 | traffic regulation measures plans – temporary road closures | 2.4 | 34 | 30/01/2023<br>27/11/2025 | works plans | 2.2 | 56 | 03/03/2023<br>27/11/2025 |  |  |  |  |
| (1)<br>Document name  | (2)<br>Document reference   | (3)<br>Revision number | (4)<br>Date               |                        |             |                                |     |    |                          |                   |     |     |                          |   |     |   |            |                                      |     |   |            |   |     |    |                          |             |     |    |                          |  |  |  |  |
| access and rights of way plans                              | 2.3   | 67                     | 24/03/2023<br>27/11/2025  |                        |             |                                |     |    |                          |                   |     |     |                          |   |     |   |            |                                      |     |   |            |   |     |    |                          |             |     |    |                          |  |  |  |  |
| book of reference   | 4.3   | 910                    | 30/08/2023<br>27/11/2025  |                        |             |                                |     |    |                          |                   |     |     |                          |   |     |   |            |                                      |     |   |            |   |     |    |                          |             |     |    |                          |  |  |  |  |
| land and Crown land plans – sheets 1-19 and 21-22           | 2.1   | 6                      | 30/01/2023                |                        |             |                                |     |    |                          |                   |     |     |                          |   |     |   |            |                                      |     |   |            |   |     |    |                          |             |     |    |                          |  |  |  |  |
| land and Crown land plans – sheet 20                        | 2.1   | 7                      | 27/11/2025                |                        |             |                                |     |    |                          |                   |     |     |                          |   |     |   |            |                                      |     |   |            |   |     |    |                          |             |     |    |                          |  |  |  |  |
| traffic regulation measures plans – temporary road closures | 2.4   | 34                     | 30/01/2023<br>27/11/2025  |                        |             |                                |     |    |                          |                   |     |     |                          |   |     |   |            |                                      |     |   |            |   |     |    |                          |             |     |    |                          |  |  |  |  |
| works plans   | 2.2   | 56                     | 03/03/2023<br>27/11/2025  |                        |             |                                |     |    |                          |                   |     |     |                          |   |     |   |            |                                      |     |   |            |   |     |    |                          |             |     |    |                          |  |  |  |  |

### SCHEDULES

#### SCHEDULE 1 AUTHORISED DEVELOPMENT

Article 2

##### 1. In this Schedule—

“battery station” means a station comprising transformers, switchgear, power conversion system (PCS) or inverter, and other ancillary equipment with each component for each battery station either—

- (a) located outside, with a concrete foundation slab or concrete piling for each of the inverters and transformers and a levelling layer of thick sand with a concrete perimeter pavement for the switchgear; or
- (b) housed together within a container sitting on a concrete foundation slab or concrete piling;

“East A Site” means land that forms part of the authorised development located south of Isleham in Cambridgeshire and Suffolk as shown on the works plans;

“East B Site” means land that forms part of the authorised development located between Worlington and Freckenham in Suffolk as shown on the works plans;

“energy storage” means equipment used for the storage of electrical energy;

“existing substation” means the existing substation at Burwell, Weirs Drove, Burwell, Cambridge CB25 0BP, owned and operated by NGET;

“inverter” means electrical equipment required to convert direct current power generated to alternating current;

“mounting structure” means a frame or rack made of galvanised steel or other material designed to support the solar modules and mounted on piles driven into the ground by one of the following methods: piles rammed into a pre-drilled hole, a pillar attaching to a steel ground screw, pillars fixed to a concrete foundation, or a pillar set in concrete in a pre-made hole in the ground (micro piled);

“permissive paths” means new access tracks providing restricted public access within the Order limits along the route shown in Annex A to the outline landscape and ecology management plan;

“solar module” means a solar photovoltaic panel designed to convert solar irradiance to electrical energy fitted to mounting structures;

“solar station” means a station comprising inverters, transformers and switchgear with each component for each solar station either—

- (a) located outside, with a concrete foundation slab for each of the inverters, transformers and switchgear and a levelling layer of thick sand with a concrete perimeter pavement; or
- (b) housed together within a container sitting on a concrete foundation slab and a levelling layer of thick sand with a concrete perimeter pavement;

“substation” means a compound, containing electrical equipment required to switch, transform, convert electricity and provide reactive power compensation mounted on a reinforced foundation slab or piling;

“switchgear” means a combination of electrical disconnect switches, fuses or circuit breakers used to control, protect and isolate electrical equipment;

“transformer” means a structure containing an electrical device to transform electricity by increasing or reducing the voltage; and

“West A Site” means the land that forms part of authorised development located within the southern fields of the Chippenham Park Estate bordering the A11 and A14 corridor in Cambridgeshire as shown on the works plans.

**2.** In the Districts of West Suffolk and East Cambridgeshire in the Counties of Cambridgeshire and Suffolk a nationally significant infrastructure project as defined in sections 14 and 15 of the 2008 Act and associated development under section 115(1)(b) of the 2008 Act.

The nationally significant infrastructure project comprises up to one generating station with a gross electrical output capacity of over 50 megawatts comprising all or any of the work numbers in this Schedule or any part of any work number in this Schedule—

**Work No. 1**— a ground mounted solar photovoltaic generating station with a gross electrical output capacity of over 50 megawatts including—

- (a) **Work No. 1A**— works on the East A Site comprising—
  - (i) solar modules;
  - (ii) solar stations;
  - (iii) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work No. 3A;
  - (iv) monitoring and control systems housed within a control room building or container; and
  - (v) weather stations and direct current (DC) electrical boxes,
- (b) **Work No. 1B**— works on the East B Site comprising—
  - (i) solar modules;
  - (ii) solar stations;
  - (iii) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work No. 3B;
  - (iv) monitoring and control systems housed within a control room building or container; and
  - (v) weather stations and DC electrical boxes, and
- (c) **Work No. 1C**— works on the West A Site comprising—
  - (i) solar modules;
  - (ii) solar stations;
  - (iii) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work No. 3C;
  - (iv) monitoring and control systems housed within a control room building or container; and
  - (v) weather stations and DC electrical boxes.

and associated development within the meaning of section 115(2) of the 2008 Act including—

**Work No. 2**— an energy storage facility of up to 500 megawatts of power at the point of grid connection including—

- (a) **Work No. 2A**— a battery energy storage compound on the East A Site comprising—
  - (i) battery energy storage cells;
  - (ii) a structure protecting the battery energy storage cells comprised in Work No. 2A(i) and ancillary equipment, being either one container or multiple containers joined to each other, mounted on a reinforced concrete foundation slab or concrete piling;
  - (iii) heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) or liquid cooling systems either housed within the containers comprised in Work No. 2A(ii), attached to the side or top of each of the containers, or located separate from but near to each of the containers;
  - (iv) battery stations;

- (v) monitoring and control systems housed within a container with the HVAC or liquid cooling systems in Work No. 2A(iii) or located separately in its own container or control room;
- (vi) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work No. 3A;
- (vii) fire safety infrastructure comprising fire suppression system; and
- (viii) a water storage structure for the purposes of firefighting comprising fire water tanks and fire water containment.

(b) **Work No. 2B**— a battery energy storage compound on the East B Site comprising—

- (i) battery energy storage cells;
- (ii) a structure protecting the battery energy storage cells comprised in Work No. 2B(i) and ancillary equipment, being either one container or multiple containers joined to each other, mounted on a reinforced concrete foundation slab or concrete piling;
- (iii) heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) or liquid cooling systems either housed within the containers comprised in Work No. 2B(ii), attached to the side or top of each of the containers, or located separate from but near to each of the containers;
- (iv) battery stations;
- (v) monitoring and control systems housed within a container with the HVAC or liquid cooling systems in Work No. 2B(iii) or located separately in its own container or control room;
- (vi) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work No. 3B;
- (vii) fire safety infrastructure comprising fire suppression system; and
- (viii) a water storage structure for the purposes of firefighting comprising fire water tanks and fire water containment.

(c) **Work No. 2C**— a battery energy storage compound on the West A Site comprising—

- (i) battery energy storage cells;
- (ii) a structure protecting the battery energy storage cells comprised in Work No. 2C(i) and ancillary equipment, being either one container or multiple containers joined to each other, mounted on a reinforced concrete foundation slab or concrete piling;
- (iii) heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) or liquid cooling systems either housed within the containers comprised in Work No. 2C(ii), attached to the side or top of each of the containers, or located separate from but near to each of the containers;
- (iv) battery stations;
- (v) monitoring and control systems housed within a container with the HVAC or liquid cooling systems in Work No. 2C(iii) or located separately in its own container or control room;
- (vi) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work No. 3C;
- (vii) fire safety infrastructure comprising fire suppression system; and
- (viii) a water storage structure for the purposes of firefighting comprising fire water tanks and fire water containment.

**Work No. 3**— onsite substations including—

(a) **Work No. 3A**— works on the East A Site comprising—

- (i) substation;
- (ii) control building or container;
- (iii) welfare facilities;
- (iv) hardstanding areas; and
- (v) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work Nos. 1A, 2A and 4;

- (b) **Work No. 3B**— works on the East B Site comprising—
  - (i) substation;
  - (ii) shunt reactor;
  - (iii) control building or container;
  - (iv) welfare facilities;
  - (v) hardstanding areas; and
  - (vi) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work Nos. 1B, 2B and 4; and
- (c) **Work No. 3C**— works on the West A Site comprising—
  - (i) substation;
  - (ii) control building or container;
  - (iii) welfare facilities;
  - (iv) hardstanding and parking areas; and
  - (v) electrical cables including electrical cables connecting to Work Nos. 1C, 2C and 4.

**Work No. 4**— works to lay electrical cables and temporary construction laydown areas for the electrical cables including—

- (a) electrical cables connecting Work No. 3A to Work No. 3B;
- (b) electrical cables connecting Work No. 3B to Work No. 3C;
- (c) electrical cables connecting Work No. 3C to the existing substation; and
- (d) up to 15 temporary construction laydown areas comprising—
  - (i) areas of hardstanding, compacted ground or track matting;
  - (ii) car parking;
  - (iii) area to store materials and equipment;
  - (iv) site and welfare offices and workshops;
  - (v) security infrastructure, including cameras, perimeter fencing and lighting;
  - (vi) safety infrastructure to warn and manage traffic when crossing roads or other obstacles;
  - (vii) site drainage and waste management infrastructure (including sewerage); and
  - (viii) electricity, water, waste water and telecommunications connections.

**Work No. 5**— Not Used.

**Work No. 6**— works to create, enhance and maintain green infrastructure, including—

- (a) **Work No. 6A**— works on the East A Site comprising—
  - (i) soft landscaping including planting;
  - (ii) landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures;
  - (iii) earth works;
  - (iv) permissive paths;
  - (v) hard standing and hard landscaping;
  - (vi) drainage and irrigation infrastructure and improvements or extensions to existing irrigation systems;
  - (vii) fencing, gates, boundary treatment and other means of enclosure; and
  - (viii) improvement, maintenance and use of existing private tracks;
- (b) **Work No. 6B**—works on the East B Site comprising—
  - (i) soft landscaping including planting;

- (ii) landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures;
- (iii) earth works;
- (iv) permissive paths;
- (v) hard standing and hard landscaping;
- (vi) drainage and irrigation infrastructure and improvements or extensions to existing irrigation systems;
- (vii) fencing, gates, boundary treatment and other means of enclosure; and
- (viii) improvement, maintenance and use of existing private tracks; and

(c) **Work No. 6C**— works on the West A Site comprising—

- (i) soft landscaping including planting;
- (ii) landscape and biodiversity enhancement measures;
- (iii) earth works;
- (iv) hard standing and hard landscaping;
- (v) drainage and irrigation infrastructure and improvements or extensions to existing irrigation systems;
- (vi) fencing, gates, boundary treatment and other means of enclosure; and
- (vii) improvement, maintenance and use of existing private tracks.

**Work No. 7**— temporary construction laydown areas including—

- (a) **Work No. 7A**— a temporary construction laydown area on the East Site A comprising—
  - (i) areas of hardstanding;
  - (ii) car parking;
  - (iii) site and welfare offices and workshops;
  - (iv) security infrastructure, including cameras, perimeter fencing and lighting;
  - (v) site drainage and waste management infrastructure (including sewerage); and
  - (vi) electricity, water, waste water and telecommunications connections;
- (b) **Work No. 7B**— up to five temporary construction laydown areas on the East Site B comprising—
  - (i) areas of hardstanding;
  - (ii) car parking;
  - (iii) site and welfare offices and workshops;
  - (iv) security infrastructure, including cameras, perimeter fencing and lighting;
  - (v) site drainage and waste management infrastructure (including sewerage); and
  - (vi) electricity, water, waste water and telecommunications connections; and
- (c) **Work No. 7C**— up to three temporary construction laydown areas on the West Site A comprising—
  - (i) areas of hardstanding;
  - (ii) car parking;
  - (iii) security infrastructure, including cameras, perimeter fencing and lighting;
  - (iv) site drainage and waste management infrastructure (including sewerage); and
  - (v) electricity, water, waste water and telecommunications connections.

**Work No. 8**— warehouse buildings and permanent compounds comprising—

- (a) **Work No. 8A**— warehouse building and a permanent compound on the East Site A comprising—
  - (i) a warehouse building for the storage of spare parts and office and welfare facilities;

- (ii) a canteen either located within the warehouse building within Work No. 8A(i) or in a separate container or building;
- (iii) waste skips;
- (iv) parking areas; and
- (v) a permanent compound area; and

(b) **Work No. 8B**— warehouse building and a permanent compound area on the East Site B comprising—

- (i) a warehouse building for the storage of spare parts and office and welfare facilities;
- (ii) a canteen either located within the warehouse building within Work No. 8B(i) or in a separate container or building;
- (iii) waste skips;
- (iv) parking areas; and
- (v) a permanent compound area.

**Work No. 9**— works to existing streets to facilitate access to Work Nos. 1 to 8.

**Work No. 10**— works to create and maintain stone curlew reserve.

In connection with and in addition to Work Nos. 1 to 10 further associated development comprising such other works or operations as may be necessary or expedient for the purposes of or in connection with the authorised development, and which are within the Order limits and fall within the scope of the work assessed by the environmental statement, including—

- (a) works within highways, including—
  - (i) alteration of the layout of any street permanently or temporarily, including increasing or reducing the width of the carriageway of any street by increasing or reducing the width of any kerb, footway, cycleway, or verge within the street including removal of any vegetation; and altering the level or increasing the width of any such kerb, footway, cycleway or verge within the street including removal of any vegetation; and works for the strengthening, improvement, repair, maintenance or reconstruction of any street;
  - (ii) street works, including breaking up or opening a street, or any sewer, drain or tunnel under it, and tunnelling or boring under a street;
  - (iii) relocation, removal or provision of new road traffic signs, signals, street lighting, road restraints and carriageway lane markings;
  - (iv) works to place, alter, remove or maintain street furniture or apparatus (including statutory undertakers' apparatus) in, under or above a street, including mains, sewers, drains, pipes, cables, cofferdams, lights, fencing and other boundary treatments; and
  - (v) works to facilitate traffic management and to deliver information relating to the authorised development; and
- (b) other works and development including—
  - (i) works for the provision of fencing and security measures such as CCTV, columns, lighting and communication boxes;
  - (ii) laying down of internal access tracks, ramps, means of access, footpaths, roads and cycle routes;
  - (iii) bunds, embankments, trenching and swales;
  - (iv) boundary treatments, including means of enclosure;
  - (v) glint and glare boarding;
  - (vi) laying out and surfacing of permissive paths, including the laying and construction of drainage infrastructure, signage and information boards;
  - (vii) foundations for structures or buildings being piles driven into the ground, piles rammed into a pre-drilled hole, a pillar attaching to a steel ground screw, pillars

fixed to a concrete foundation, or a pillar set in concrete in a pre-made hole in the ground (micro piled);

- (viii) works to the existing irrigation system and works to alter the position and extent of such irrigation system;
- (ix) electrical, gas, water, foul water drainage and telecommunications infrastructure connections and works to, and works to alter the position of, such services and utilities connections;
- (x) works to alter the course of, or otherwise interfere with, non-navigable rivers, streams or watercourses;
- (xi) surface water drainage systems, storm water attenuation systems including storage basins, oil water separators, including channelling and culverting and works to existing drainage systems;
- (xii) site establishments and preparation works including site clearance (including vegetation removal, demolition of existing buildings and structures); earthworks (including soil stripping and storage and site levelling) and excavations; the alteration of the position of services and utilities; and works for the protection of buildings and land;
- (xiii) tunnelling, boring and drilling works; and
- (xiv) landscaping and mitigation works.

## Planning Performance – November 2025

Planning will report a summary of performance. This will be for the month before last month, as this allows for all applications to be validated and gives a true representation.

All figures include all types of planning applications.

### Determinations

|                               | Total      | Major                               | Minor                              | Householder                        | Other                               | DIS /NMA                           | Trees                                | Pre App   |
|-------------------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Determinations</b>         | <b>131</b> | <b>0</b>                            | <b>17</b>                          | <b>28</b>                          | <b>11</b>                           | <b>28</b>                          | <b>47</b>                            | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Determined on time (%)</b> |            | <b>N/A</b><br>(90% within 13 weeks) | <b>95%</b><br>(80% within 8 weeks) | <b>93%</b><br>(90% within 8 weeks) | <b>100%</b><br>(90% within 8 weeks) | <b>83%</b><br>(80% within 8 weeks) | <b>100%</b><br>(100% within 8 weeks) | n/a       |
| <b>Approved</b>               | <b>120</b> | <b>0</b>                            | <b>15</b>                          | <b>27</b>                          | <b>5</b>                            | <b>27</b>                          | <b>46</b>                            | n/a       |
| <b>Refused</b>                | <b>11</b>  | <b>0</b>                            | <b>2</b>                           | <b>1</b>                           | <b>6</b>                            | <b>1</b>                           | <b>1</b>                             | n/a       |

### Validations – 95% validated within 5 working days (ECDC target is 85%)¶

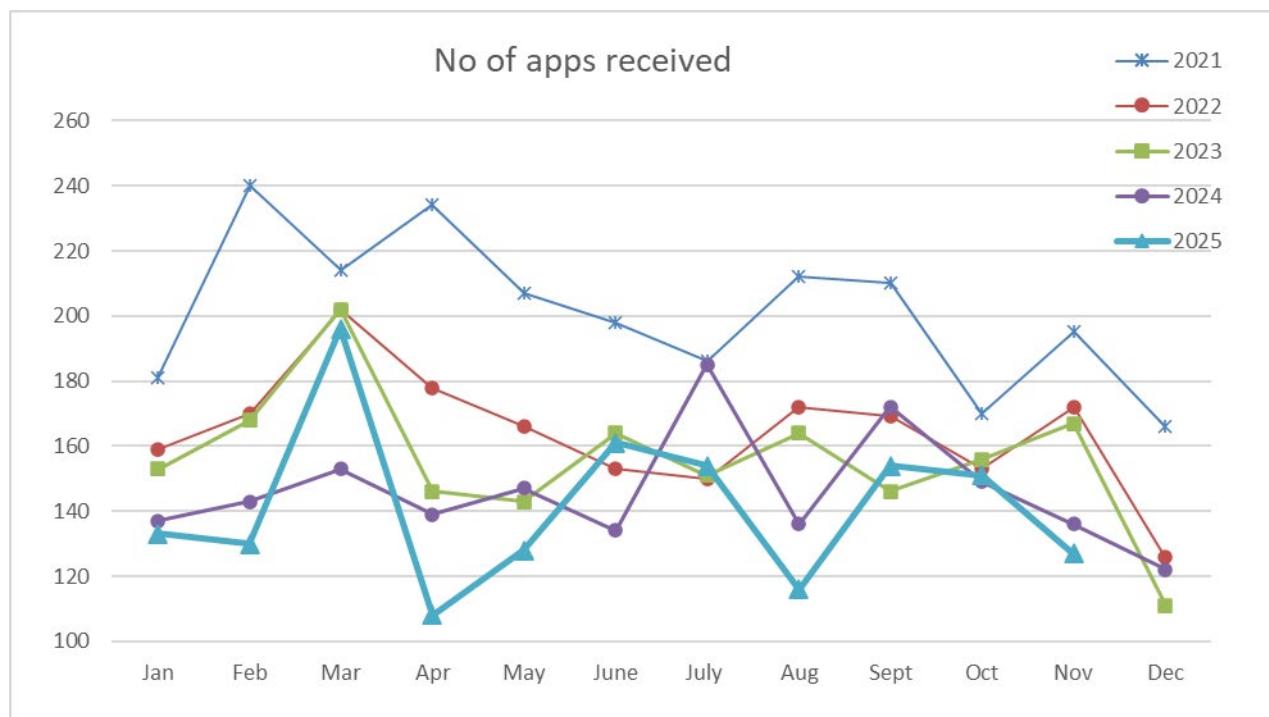
|                    | Total      | Major    | Minor     | Householder | Other     | DIS /NMA  | Trees     | Pre App  |
|--------------------|------------|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| <b>Validations</b> | <b>111</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>24</b>   | <b>26</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>24</b> | <b>8</b> |

### Open Cases by Team (as at 24/12/2025)

|                           | Total      | Major     | Minor     | Householder | Other     | DIS /NMA  | Trees     | Pre App   |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Team North (5 FTE)</b> | <b>142</b> | <b>13</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>26</b>   | <b>23</b> | <b>39</b> | <b>0</b>  | <b>18</b> |
| <b>Team South (6 FTE)</b> | <b>121</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>13</b>   | <b>34</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>0</b>  | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>No Team (3 FTE)</b>    | <b>34</b>  | <b>0</b>  | <b>0</b>  | <b>2</b>    | <b>5</b>  | <b>1</b>  | <b>26</b> | <b>0</b>  |

(No Team includes – Trees Officer and Conservation Officer)

The Planning department received a total of 127 applications during November which is a 6% decrease of the number received during November 2024 (136) and a 18% decrease to the number received during October 2025 (151).



**Valid Planning Appeals received during October, currently with The Planning Inspectorate for decision– 2**

| Appeal reference | Site address                             | Decision Level * |
|------------------|--|------------------|
| 25/00033/REFAPP  | 82 Isleham Road Fordham                  | DEL              |
| 25/00032/REFAPP  | Woodditton View Woodditton Road Kirtling | DEL              |

**Appeals decided – 3**

| Appeal reference | Site address                                   | Decision * |
|------------------|--|------------|
| 25/00029/REFAPP  | Witchford Baptist Church Main Street Witchford | APPWIT     |

**Upcoming Hearing dates – 1**

25/00030/REFAPP Possenhofen, 21D Cannon Street, Little Downham 10/02/2026

**Enforcement**

New Complaints registered – 18 (0 Proactive)

Cases closed – 24 (2 Proactive)

Open cases per Officer (2.6fte) – 134 (16 Proactive)/2.6fte = 48 FTE

**Notices served – 0**

**Comparison of Enforcement complaints received during November**

| Code          | Description   | 2024      | 2025      |
|---------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| <b>ADVERT</b> | Reports of unauthorised adverts   | 1         | 1         |
| <b>COND</b>   | Reports of breaches of planning conditions  | 2         | 3         |
| <b>CONSRV</b> | Reports of unauthorised works in a Conservation Area  | 1         |           |
| <b>DEM</b>    | Reports of unauthorised demolition in a Conservation Area   |           |           |
| <b>HEDGE</b>  | High Hedge complaints dealt with under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act  |           |           |
| <b>LEGOB</b>  | Legal Obligation monitoring   |           |           |
| <b>LEGOR</b>  | Legal Obligation report   |           |           |
| <b>LISTED</b> | Reports of unauthorised works to a Listed Building  | 1         |           |
| <b>MON</b>    | Compliance Monitoring   |           | 1         |
| <b>OP</b>     | Reports of operational development, such as building or engineering works   | 2         | 4         |
| <b>OTHER</b>  | Reports of activities that may not constitute development, such as the siting of a mobile home                                  |           | 1         |
| <b>PLAN</b>   | Reports that a development is not being built in accordance with approved plans   | 2         | 2         |
| <b>PRO</b>    | Proactive cases opened by the Enforcement Team, most commonly for unauthorised advertisements and expired temporary permissions |           |           |
| <b>TRECON</b> | No notice of tree works in a Conservation area  | 1         |           |
| <b>TREHDG</b> | Hedgerow Regulations breach   |           |           |
| <b>TRETPO</b> | Unauthorised works to TPO tree  |           |           |
| <b>UNTIDY</b> | Reports of untidy land or buildings harming the visual amenity  |           | 2         |
| <b>USE</b>    | Reports of the change of use of land or buildings   | 1         | 4         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  |   | <b>11</b> | <b>18</b> |

\* Code descriptions:

|             |                        |                |                              |
|-------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|
| <b>DIS</b>  | Discharge of Condition | <b>DISMISS</b> | Appeal Dismissed             |
| <b>NMA</b>  | Non material Amendment | <b>ALLOW</b>   | Appeal Allowed               |
| <b>COMM</b> | Committee Decision     | <b>NONDET</b>  | Appeal for non determination |
| <b>DEL</b>  | Delegated Decision     | <b>APPWIT</b>  | Appeal withdrawn             |