OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/01208/PIP Permission in Principle

Proposal: Permission in principle for the erection of 1no. self-build bungalow following demolition of existing double garage and stable

Location: Land West Of 2 Spring Cottage Leighton Road Old Weston

Applicant: Mrs Jayne Geldard

Grid Ref: 509935 277167

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is as area of land associated with 2 Spring Cottage to the south-west of Leighton Road, Old Weston. It lies outside of the built-up area (BUA) of the village and is better related to the surrounding countryside.

The site measures approx. 577m², has its own access from Leighton Road and is previously developed land within the ownership of 2 Spring Cottage. The site hosts a timber double garage and stables (both on concrete bases) with gravel frontage. There is no physical boundary with the remainder of the land associated with the cottage. Built development in this location is limited to No's. 1 & 2 Spring Cottage with their associated land with the remainder open countryside. There is a boundary formed of mature trees/ hedgerows to the north-west where beyond this there is further agricultural land which forms a buffer with the developed area of the village and which is separated from the village by dense trees and hedgerows.

In terms of constraints, part of the site lies within Flood Zone 3 (including the access) as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data (though the dwelling itself would lie outside of the flood zone). The site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no Listed Buildings or trees subject to Preservation Orders in the immediate vicinity.

The current proposal is the first part of a permission in principle application, which only assesses the principal issues namely location, use, and amount of development proposed and establishes whether a site is suitable in principle. Should this application be successful, the applicant will have to submit a Full Technical Details Consent (FULTDC) application covering all other detailed material planning considerations. Permission in Principle is sought for 1 self-build dwelling on the site following the demolition of the existing buildings.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

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

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

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

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

For full details visit the government website: https://www.gov.uk

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019

LP1: Amount of Development
LP2: Strategy for Development
LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
LP5: Flood Risk
LP6: Waste Water Management
LP9: Small Settlements
LP10: The Countryside
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP16: Sustainable Travel
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP25: Housing Mix
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP33: Rural Buildings
LP37: Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017)
Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2024)
Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
Land Availability Assessments (2024)
The National Design Guide (2021)

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

None relevant.

CONSULTATIONS

Old Weston Parish Council were unable to convene to provide comments and therefore advised that they would not be commenting.

*CCC Highways - No objections.

*HDC Environmental Health - No objections.

*HDC Landscapes Team - No representations received at the time of determination.

*Environment Agency - No objections in principle, further detail would be needed with a FULTDC application.

REPRESENTATIONS

One representation has been received from No.2 Spring Cottage. This is in support of the application but contains no reasons for the support.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

This application is made pursuant to the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended) (PIP regulations) that provides opportunity for an applicant to apply as to whether permission in principle is acceptable for a site, having regard to specific legislative requirements and, in accordance with ref. 58-012-20180615 of the NPPG, as to whether the location, land use and amount of development proposed is acceptable. The permission in principle (PIP) consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development.

The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. PIP establishes that a particular scale of housing-led development on a defined site is acceptable. The aim is for a PIP to minimise the upfront and at-risk work of applicants.

The report addresses the principal, important and controversial issues which are in this case:

1. Location
2. Land Use
3. Amount of Development
4. Other Matters

1. Location

NPPF paragraph 78 requires the Council to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against our housing requirement. A substantially revised methodology for calculating local housing need and the reimposition of this as a mandatory approach for establishing housing requirements was introduced on 12th December 2024 in the revised NPPF and associated NPPG (the standard method).

As Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is now over 5 years old it is necessary to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS) based on the housing requirement set using the standard method. NPPF paragraph 78 also requires provision of a buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. As Huntingdonshire has successfully exceeded the requirements of the Housing Delivery Test a 5% buffer is required here. The 5-year housing land requirement including a 5% buffer is 5,501 homes. The current 5YHLS is 4,430 homes equivalent to 3.94 years' supply.

As a result of this, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied for decision-taking in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) and footnote 8 of the NPPF in relation to

applications involving the provision of housing. This is generally referred to as 'the titled balance'. While no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.

In assessing this site, whilst Policies LP9 (small settlements) and LP10 (the countryside) are out of date (and so afforded less weight in the determination of this application) they are not to be entirely disregarded.

Old Weston is defined as a small settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan which states that these settlements can support proposals within the built-up area (BUA) of the settlement subject to tests relating to the sustainability of the settlement (levels of infrastructure, accessing services by sustainable travel methods and so on) as well as the impact on the settlement as a whole. The Local Plan defines a BUA as a distinct group of buildings that include 30 or more homes. It also states that land which relates more to the group of buildings rather than to the surrounding countryside is also considered to form part of the BUA.

The Local Plan goes on to state that the BUA will exclude isolated properties or areas of ribbon or fragmented development which are physically and visually detached from the main built form as well as large curtilages with grounds stretching away from the rest of the BUA in order to prevent sub-division of a plot. It recognises that elements of the grounds which relate closely to the to the buildings such as formal gardens, ancillary parking and tennis courts would be included but not those with a more natural rural character.

In this case, the site does not form part of a distinct group of 30 or more homes and, given the clear separation to the BUA of the village and the surrounding built form would be considered ribbon development. Whilst it is noted that the land has been previously developed (and the uses are discussed in greater detail later in this report) there does not appear to be any planning history available in relation to this. The section of land in question benefits from its own access from Leighton Road and appears visually separated from 2 Spring Cottage which has the majority of its residential garden to the rear. When viewed from the road, Spring Cottage has a gated access to its north-west, this provides access to a gravel driveway which extends to the north-east of the double garage, a further gate separates this section of land from the stables to the south-west of the site. There is a patio area to the side of the cottage with some small metal fencing and a hedgerow which separates the patio/garden area from the section of driveway leading to the stables. When viewed from within the site, the sense is that the driveway associated with the cottage would be directly opposite the gate and linear with what is considered the residential curtilage of the cottage terminating to the south-eastern elevation of the garage building. As referenced above, there is also a separate access from Leighton Road to the right of a hedgerow to the south-eastern boundary. This is opposite the garage (and the site of the proposed dwelling). In effect, the submitted block plan (whilst indicative) provides indication as to what Officers consider would be the residential curtilage of 2 Spring Cottage.

Given the relatively isolated location, the character and layout of the site as set out above, alongside the limited boundary treatments to the north-west and the characteristics of the land further to the north-west, the site feels better related to the countryside than to the cottages. As such, for the purposes of this assessment it is considered that the site is within the countryside and Policy LP10 (The Countryside) is the correct policy for assessment.

LP10 seeks to limit development in the countryside unless allowed through other opportunities provided for within the Local Plan. LP10 states that all development in the countryside must:

a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:

i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and

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

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

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

In this case the land is defined as grade 2 agricultural land (and so not land of the highest grading), however, the BUA of the village is also entirely located on grade 2 land and it must be recognised that if housing is to be provided within this rural district some loss of agricultural land will be required. On this basis, particularly given the current character of the land (which is not in use for agricultural purposes) there is no objection to development on this basis.

In terms of part b, a permission in principle application is not required to provide full details of a proposal. These, in the event of an approval shall be dealt with under a later FULTDC application. It is acknowledged that an indicative layout has been provided but this is purely indicative and is not an approved plan. This scheme relates to a development of a single dwelling (a self-build bungalow as per the description), but at present, there is no guarantee as to the size, scale or layout. Therefore, the matter for consideration here is if the introduction of any built form on this land would be harmful.

The application site lies approx. 110m from the south-eastern access to Old Weston (via Leighton Road) which has the character of a typical rural village. Built form in this location is very sparse and, in the immediate vicinity is limited to No.'s 1 & 2 Spring Cottages which are semi-detached cottages (albeit with wide frontages) which appear to have been extended over time. They are traditional in appearance with small front gardens and outbuildings. Land to the north-east is agricultural and which is visible through the sporadic natural boundary treatments.

As referenced in the preceding sections of this report, the site does benefit from an existing access from Leighton Road and given the limited boundary treatments is visible from the road and the surrounding land. The building on the land at present (the garage and stables) are constructed of timber, the garage with a pitched tiled roof and the stables a flat roof. They have a rural character and assimilate well to the surroundings. Whilst Officers do consider the site to be better related to the countryside, it cannot be considered a tranquil rural environment because as established, there are examples (albeit limited) of residential development in the vicinity, and this is situated along a route into the village and so experiences some degree of vehicular movements.

That said, despite the previously developed nature of the land (which are read as ancillary buildings) the LPA are of the view that the introduction of residential development on this site would result in the erosion of the buffer land which creates separation between the cottages which extend from the developed area of the village and the countryside beyond. The site is detached from the main settlement (the built form of the village lying approx. 110m north-west) and is considered to relate much more to the countryside than to the settlement and so would fail to recognise the character and beauty of the countryside by the introduction of alien features.

Turning attention to part c, some residential development will always give rise to some factors such as noise, light pollution and so on. However, the site is of a sufficient size to ensure a layout which minimises as much as possible the impact of factors such as noise, light pollution etc on neighbouring dwellings and surroundings. Furthermore, the surrounding development and vehicle movements in the vicinity as referenced above means that these are not alien features in an otherwise unspoilt location. As such, a refusal solely on these grounds would not be justified.

Overall, whilst having regard to the requirement to apply tilted balance to this decision, matters which the LPA are permitted to consider under a permission in principle application and the assessment above, it is considered that allowing this development outside of the built-up area of Old Weston would result in encroachment and expansion of a small settlement into the countryside. The applicant has not demonstrated that the development would fall within a category which would allow for the relaxation of these policies and it is therefore concluded that it would fail to comply with Policy LP10(b) of the Local Plan to 2036.

Whilst the site is considered to lie outside of the BUA (and so Policy LP9 need not be applied under normal circumstances), given that tilted balance is engaged, an assessment has been conducted as to if the site was within the BUA of the settlement. These tests relate to the sustainability of a location when services within it are considered, opportunities for users to access everyday services and facilities and general impact upon the character.

Old Weston is a small settlement and is considered to be a less sustainable location for development when settlement hierarchies are considered. As per the submitted Planning Statement, there is a public house and village hall but no other services meaning that villagers would likely be reliant on a private motor vehicle to access everyday services and facilities such as shops, education, healthcare and so on. In this case, Old Weston is located close to a number of other small settlements such as Leighton Bromswold, Brington and Winwick and so opportunities to access services safely via sustainable travel methods are unlikely to be possible. There is a bus service Monday to Friday which provides access to Huntingdon but this is very limited. However, it is also acknowledged that this scheme relates to the provision of a single dwelling, Para. 110 of the NPPF 2024 recognises that whilst significant development should be directed to locations which are or which can be made sustainable opportunities for maximisation of such methods vary between urban and rural areas and that this should be considered in plan and decision making. As such, on balance, it is not considered that this would be an entirely unsustainable form of development and there would be no further detriment to the future occupants in comparison to existing occupants of the village. It should however be noted that each application is assessed upon its own merits and directing larger-scale development or permitting a number of individual sites resulting in a number of additional dwellings in the village would be unlikely to be supported both to maintain its rural character and to ensure that the development remains sustainable.

In this case, the overarching concern is access to the site (from the village) and options for the occupants of the development to be able to access the (limited) services in a safe and convenient manner.

Part b of LP9 requires consideration of opportunities for users of a development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. This is echoed within Para. 117 of the NPPF (2024) which references the hierarchy of priority to pedestrian and cycle movements and then facilitating public transport. In this case, the site is not served by a public footpath. There is a grass verge on either side of the road with the first connection with a public footpath connection being approx. 103m from the application site south of 'Springfields' at the junction with Main Street. A footpath continues along the eastern section of Main Street terminating at 'The Pines' whereupon pedestrians would cross to the west of Main Street where the footpath continues. Both the village hall and public house are located on Main Street and accessible by this footpath.

Access to the site is approx. 65m within the 30mph zone (where it changes from 40mph) and this section of the road is not served by any street lighting and there is a slight bend in the road. Whilst no objections have been raised by CCC Highways on highways safety grounds (a matter discussed later in this report). It is acknowledged that the site is within the 30mph limit of the village, however, this is naturally reliant on vehicles obeying this, whilst there is no evidence to the contrary it is reasonable to consider that vehicles may begin to speed up or still be slowing down at this access to the village. There is no footpath and so anyone wishing to access the services would

need to navigate the grass verges in order to access the footpath on Main Street. Whilst in practice the risk may not be severe this could vary dependent on the time of day or year when factors such as weather, daylight etc could affect conditions.

Officers accept that the lack of footpath is not wholly uncharacteristic of the surroundings and some other dwellings in the village may experience similar issues (though for the most part it seems that there is a suitable footpath on at least one side of the road), however, this does not mean allowing further development whatever its quantum is acceptable.

On this basis, it is concluded that the scheme would fail to accord with part b of LP9(b), M2 of the National Design Guide (2021) and the provisions of Para. 117 of the NPPF (2024).

In terms of part c, the impact on the character and beauty of the countryside (and therefore the character of the locality and settlement) has been addressed in the preceding sections of this report. However, it is repeated here that the LPA are of the opinion that the introduction of further residential development in this location would result in the erosion of the natural buffer between the cottages and the main built form of the village. This would result in harm to the rural character of the area and therefore fail to comply with Policy LP9(c) of the Local Plan to 2036.

Overall, whilst as required by titled balance reduced weight has been applied to Policies LP9 and LP10 of the Local Plan to 2036 it is considered that the site by virtue of its location outside of the BUA and lack of safe and convenient access to the services and facilities within the village would cause harm to the rural character of the area and present a hazard to future occupants of the development regardless of the quantum of development proposed. Whilst the social, economic and environmental aspects of the proposal with the obvious being contributing to the 5YHLS, as well as minor expansion of a rural village thus supporting local business and contributing to other trades such as builders and suppliers etc have been considered it is not considered that this would outweigh the harm identified as set out above. The proposal would be contrary to Policy LP9 (parts b and c) and LP10 (part b) of the Local Plan to 2036, parts C1, I1 and M2 of the National Design Guide (2021) and the provisions of Paras.117, 129, 135 and 187 of the NPPF (2024) and should therefore be refused.

It should be acknowledged that given that the site is already developed Officers have given consideration to Policy LP33 of the Local Plan to 2036 (Rural Buildings). This Policy is referenced in the submission but recognises that until a FULTC application is submitted a full assessment against the policy cannot be undertaken. However, given that this provides a basis for establishing the principle of development in a rural location (notwithstanding the requirement for a development to enhance the setting) it is important to assess at this stage.

LP33 allows for the replacement of buildings in the countryside where the building is:
*Redundant or disused;

*Of permanent and substantial construction;

*Not in such a state of dereliction or disrepair that significant reconstruction would be required.

In this case the Planning Statement details that the buildings have formerly been used as stables as well as an ancillary dog grooming business within the double garage but these uses have now ceased. Officers have sought further clarity on this matter from the agent who has provided photographs of the interior of the buildings. It shows that the stable is mainly being used for storage for typical garden and household items (characteristic of a shed). In terms of the garage, part of this again seems to be for storage, shelving is in place and there is a domestic freezer etc. Part of it has been converted for dog grooming and appears well equipped and does not appear redundant. There are white goods, a water supply, grooming table and tools and (in the photos provided) evidence that dog grooming is still taking place (though it is accepted that this could be for the applicants own pets).

There does not appear to be any planning history related to either the provision of these buildings or their uses. However, the key point here is if the buildings are redundant or disused as required by part a(i) of LP33. Para 8.33 of LP33 also states that a building is only considered to be redundant or disused where it has not been made vacant for the sole purpose of complying with the policy. In this case, the buildings (being used as ancillary or other purposes) cannot reasonably be considered to be redundant or disused and so fail to comply with part a(i) of LP33.

In terms of part a (ii & iii) Officers are satisfied that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction, they are both of timber construction, on concrete bases with the garage having a tiled roof. Both are in good, well-maintained condition and so not in a state of dereliction or disrepair and thus compliant with LP33 a (ii &iii).

As referenced above, a full assessment against LP33 cannot be completed as there are no specific details in respect of design (to confirm that the scheme would enhancement of the setting) nor whether there would be any increase in floorspace. However, irrespective of this, given the failure against part a (i) of LP33 the scheme would not be supported in principle on this basis.

2. Land use

The proposed dwelling is located in Flood Zone 1 but a section of the site (including the access) lies within Flood Zone 3. The NPPF (2024) requires that inappropriate development in areas at high risk of flooding (a dwelling would be classed as more vulnerable under the NPPD definitions) should be avoided by directing development away from areas at high risk of flooding.

In this case, it is acknowledged that limited information is available under a permission in principle application to enable a thorough assessment. However, Officers are satisfied that the dwelling itself can be located in an area of low risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1). The Environment Agency have been consulted and raise no objections observing that the dwelling can be located outside of Flood Zones 2 and 3 but that a Flood Risk Assessment should accompany a FULTDC application.

Officers have given careful consideration to this matter and the comments but have concerns regarding the access being within an area at high risk of flooding which could mean that in a flood emergency the occupant may no be able to leave the property/site to an area of refuge or to obtain supplies etc. The Planning Statement notes that there is potential for the existing access to No.2 (in Flood Zone 1) to be utilised thus solving this issue. Whilst Officers would support this (on the basis of flood risk) and so do not consider this an insurmountable barrier to development) this land is not included within the red line as submitted and so cannot be considered under this submission.

Overall, based upon the information as presented, whilst Officers accept that the dwelling can be located in an area at low risk of flooding, there is insufficient detail provided to ensure that the site in its entirety would be safe for occupation during a flood emergency (having regard to the access) and therefore fails to comply with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036.

In terms of other matters surrounding water, no details have been provided as to how surface water and sewerage will be managed (and these will form part of an application for FULTDC in the event of a successful appeal). However, it is not considered that the quantum of development proposed would place undue pressure on waste water disposal and, given the existing buildings on site and degree of hardstanding it is unlikely that there would be significant surface water run-off impacts.

Policy LP14 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of a proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings.

The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017 states when considering residential development there are three key issues that need to be addressed which are loss of privacy, reducing the level of daylight and being overbearing in size and layout.

Officers need to be satisfied at this stage that the site is capable of accommodating the quantum of development proposed without having a detrimental impact on neighbour's amenity and the amenity of the proposed occupiers.

HDC's Environmental Health Team have been consulted and raise no objections in terms of noise, odour or contaminated land.

For the purposes of this assessment it is considered that the site is capable of accommodating the quantum of development proposed and could be arranged to limit negative impacts on occupants of the adjacent dwelling and land and future occupants of the proposed dwellings and this could be dealt with under a FULTDC application in the event of a successful appeal.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Team have been consulted as part of this process and raise no objections in principle and have not stated that any additional detail would be needed as part of a FULTDC application given the current access and arrangement of the site.

Overall, notwithstanding the concerns surrounding flood risk, it is considered that the scheme could be realised in accordance with Policies LP15, LP14, LP17 and LP37 of the Local Plan to 2036.

3. Amount of Development

Local Policy LP12 states new development will be expected to be well designed based upon a thorough understanding of the constraints and appraisal of the site's context, delivering attractive, usable and long-lasting buildings and spaces. A proposal will be supported where it can demonstrate that it contributes positively to the areas character and identity, successfully integrates with adjoining buildings, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography and landscape.

In this case, whilst having regard to the existing building and comparison with the comfortable residential curtilage of No.2 Spring Cottage the site could accommodate some development, as assessed in the preceding sections of this report it is considered that permitting residential development on this land would harm the rural character of the area and diminish the buffer between the built form and the village contrary to LP12 (a & b).

4. Other Matters

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that the scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development as assessed above. In the event of a successful appeal the applicant would need to also receive a grant of technical details consent before the development can proceed.

*Ecology

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and that a proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type and location of development.

Further to the above (and separate from the requirements of LP30) the development will be subject to Biodiversity Net Gain legislation pursuant to the Environment Act 2021. This means that a 10% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) would be required with any FULTDC application, following

the hierarchy of onsite provision; mixture of on-site and off-site provision; and the last resort of statutory biodiversity credits unless it can be demonstrated that the development would be exempt. The Planning Statement indicates that the development will be self-build and may therefore be exempt. This would need to be demonstrated at FULTDC stage in the event of a successful appeal.

*Impact on Trees

There are some mature trees south-west of the site (outside of the red line) with some hedgerows/trees forming the north-western boundary with the agricultural land. The indicative site plan advises that the hedgerow will be retained. None of these trees/hedgerows are afforded formal protection and that to the north-west appears of limited scale and not particularly good quality. Whilst suitable screening by virtue of soft landscaping (as part of a FULTDC following an acceptable appeal or secured by condition) would be important in this location it is not considered that any specific details would need to be submitted in relation to trees or hedgerows as part of any future submission and the development could commence in accordance with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Water Efficiency

Any future application for technical details consent would need to confirm compliance with the optional Building Regulation requirement for water efficiency in Approved Document G, as set out in criteria j. of Policy LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036. This is referenced in the submitted Planning Statement.

*Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 requires all new dwellings to comply with optional Building Regulation requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable homes', unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this impractical or unviable. Any future application for technical details consent would need to confirm compliance with this policy. This is referenced in the submitted Planning Statement.

*Developer Contributions

Any subsequent Technical Details application should be accompanied by a signed Unilateral Undertaking for the provision of wheeled bins in accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD (2011).

*Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

As the proposed development is for new residential dwellings, the development would be CIL liable in accordance with the Council's adopted charging schedule; CIL payments will cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning and education.

*Conclusion

Section 38(6) TCPA 2004 states that "if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise".
The proposed development is contrary to the development plan being residential development in the countryside in the rural policy area outside the built-up area of Old Weston which does not meet any development plan policy exceptions.

Whilst reduced weight has been given to the relevant policies given the situation with the Council's five-year housing land supply and application of tilted balance, the proposal represents

unacceptable development outside of the built-up area of Old Weston which would result in encroachment and expansion of a small settlement into the countryside. The applicant has not demonstrated that the development would fall within a category which would allow for the relaxation of these policies.

Furthermore, when consideration of the provision of safe and convenient access to the site is taken into account, users of the development would be required to navigate an unlit section of the highway with no footpath for a distance of approx. 103m in order to reach a footpath in order to access the limited services within the village centre and public transport links into the larger settlements. The location is therefore considered to be unsustainable in relation to these constraints.

It is therefore considered that the social, economic and environmental aspects of the proposal such as contribution to the 5YHLS, the impact on local business through expansion of a rural village and contribution to other trades such as builders and suppliers would not outweigh the significant and demonstrable harm which would result from the provision of a single self-build bungalow in this location and the development would be contrary to Policies LP9 (b & c), LP10 (b) and LP12 (a & b) of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, parts C1, I1 and M2 of the National Design Guide (2021) and the provisions of Paras.117, 129, 135 and 187 of the NPPF (2024). Furthermore, the buildings (which do not appear to be redundant or disused) would fail to meet the requirements of Policy LP33 part a(i).

As well as the above, the access to the site lies within Flood Zone 3. Whilst there has been a suggestion from the agent as to how this could be managed, the alternative proposal for access would lie outside of the red line as submitted. Therefore, insufficient detail has been provided and the development also fails to comply with Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
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