OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00607/PIP Permission in Principle

Proposal: Residential development for 1 dwelling

Location: Land South Of Manor Farm Loop Road Keyston

Applicant:

Grid Ref: 504237 275366

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

This application relates to land south of Manor Farm, Loop Road, Keyston. The site is approximately 0.08 hectares with existing residential properties to the north and south, the Keyton Village Hall to the east and open countryside to the west. The submitted Planning Statement states that the land is used as a paddock and is bordered by a wooden fence to the front of the site and hedge and wooden fence to the rear. The parcel of land is outside, but adjacent to the Keyston Conservation Area and is in close proximity to the Grade II Listed Building of Manor Farm.

The site is located within Flood Zone 1 based on the Council's 2024 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning.

The current proposal is the first part of permission in principle application; which only assess the principal issues, namely (1) location, (2) use and (3) 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 Technical Details application covering all other detailed material planning considerations.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

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

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.

Sections 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, 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
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
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings

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

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

- Huntingdonshire's Design Guide SPD 2017 - Compatibility Statement (2021)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Developer Contributions: Updates Costs 2019/2020
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2022)
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2024
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply 2024

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

PLANNING HISTORY

9401338FUL - Erection of two dwellings and garage - Land South of Manor Farm, Loop Road, Keyston - Refused and Appeal dismissed.

CONSULTATIONS

Bythorn and Keyston Parish Council - Object for the following reasons:

1. This land is specifically identified in the Keyston Conservation Area Statement as being an "important wide view" into "important green open space" (see map on page 13).
2. On page 20, the essential characteristics of the Keyston Conservation Area are set out. These include item viii - the wide panoramic views afforded out over the surrounding undulating open countryside" and item vi " the glimpses of open countryside gained between developed land in many parts of the Conservation Area", all of which combine to give the village its sense of place. These factors are identified as being fundamental. The statement concludes with "Protecting the special character of the Keyston Conservation Area will be of benefit to local residents, visitors and future generations of society."

3. Development is contrary to LP10 of the Local Plan given the loss of agricultural land and adverse affect on the enjoyment of the countryside.
4. The history of the site includes a refusal for development, even after appeal: see 94/01338/REFUSL.
5. Development will have an adverse impact on the dwellings in the former model dairy, properties which adjoin the curtilage of a Listed Building.

Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Authority - No objections, subject to the imposition of conditions on any permission granted.

Huntingdonshire District Council Environmental Health - No objections to the proposal.

REPRESENTATIONS

Four letters of objection were received during the course of the application. The concerns raised have been summarised below:

- Contrary to Policy LP9 of the Local Plan;
- Unsustainable location;
- Impact on the village character and landscape (including loss of open character);
- Impact on heritage assets;
- Access and highways concerns;
- Environmental impacts - loss of hedgerows and habitats;
- Limited information provided.

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 4.03 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.

The site is located within the settlement of Keyston, which the adopted Local Plan identifies as a 'Small Settlement' and therefore Policy LP9 is considered relevant in this instance.

Initially, consideration should be given as to whether the site forms part of the built-up area of Keyston. The adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan defines the built-up area as a distinct group of buildings that includes 30 or more homes. Land which relates more to the group of buildings rather than to the surrounding countryside is also considered to form part of the built-up area.

Given the number of buildings in close proximity and the site being situated between two residential dwellings, the Local Planning Authority are satisfied that the site relates more to the group of buildings than to the surrounding countryside and is therefore classified as forming part of the built-up area of Keyston.

Policy LP9 is within the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and is therefore considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications for residential development. LP9 states that a proposal that is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where the amount and location of development proposed is sustainable in relation to

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

The settlement of Keyston offers limited services and facilities of a day-to-day nature, including a public house (with restaurant), a church and a village hall. Given the proposal seeks approval in principle for the erection of one residential dwelling, it is considered to be sustainable in relation to the level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement of Keyston. It is noted that there is no bus service that travels through Keyston and given the limited services and facilities of a day-to-day nature, there would be a reliance on the use of private motor vehicles for any future owner/occupier of the dwelling to access neighbouring settlements such as Raunds and Thrapston. However, on balance, given the provision of one open market dwelling in a built-up area of a small settlement which would contribute to the 5YHLS, the harm of reliance on private motor vehicles is not considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits in this instance.

With regard to criteria (c), as discussed in the following sections of this report, the Local Planning Authority consider that a proposal could be brought forward at Technical Details Stage that would

be acceptable in terms of its effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole.

It is considered that the development of one dwelling on the site is acceptable in this location and the proposed land use and amount of development are acceptable in principle. The proposal would constitute a sustainable form of development in accordance with the NPPF (2024) and in terms of the planning balance, the positive aspects of the proposal outlined above, including the provision of housing, demonstrably outweigh the material planning considerations weighing against the development proposal.

2. LAND USE

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data. The Council has also produced an updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in 2024, which also defines Hail Weston as being within Flood Zone 1.

Flood Zone 1 is defined as having the lowest risk of flooding in the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) seeks to direct inappropriate development away from areas at the highest risk of flooding (whether existing or future). Therefore, this site is appropriate and drainage of the site can be considered further at details stage.

The development is therefore considered acceptable with regard to flood risk and broadly accords with Policies LP5 and LP15 of the Local Plan to 2036.

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 amount of development proposed without having a detrimental impact on neighbour's amenity and the amenity of the proposed occupiers.

Given the size of the plot, the development is for one dwelling only and there are no objections from the Council's Environmental Health Team, it is considered that housing could be achieved here, subject to specific details at Technical Details stage, including consideration to scale of dwelling, proximity to neighbouring properties amenities and any first-floor windows.

The Local Highway Authority have raised no objections in principle and state that any application at Technical Details stage will need to indicate the access location, visibility splays and appropriate parking and turning in accordance with local guidance.

It should be noted that CCC Highways have suggested conditions which are similar to those imposed on an application for full planning permission. It is not considered reasonable to attach these to a permission in principle permission (having regard to the matters which can be considered) but the applicant may wish to review the published comments as this will assist in a future application for technical details consent.

Overall, Officers are satisfied at this stage that the dwelling could be achieved subject to its scale and siting, without causing significant harm, the final details of the dwelling will be assessed at the technical details stage where impacts of any residential properties amenities will be fully assessed.

Therefore, the proposal is in accordance with Policies LP5, LP6, LP14, LP15 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036.

3. AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

The Local Planning Authority is required to ensure that special regard is given to preserving the listed buildings and their settings in relation to Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Local Planning Authority is also required to ensure that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, through the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 at Section 72. This is also reflected in Policy LP34 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape. This is also reflected in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024).

The site is directly adjacent to the Keyston Conservation Area and is in close proximity to the Grade II Listed Building of Manor Farm (which is approx. 40m away).

The Parish Council have raised that the site is specifically identified in the Keyston Conservation Area Statement as being an "important wide view" into "important green open space". However, the rear of the site is currently screened by hedgerow which separates it from the countryside beyond and restricts any views.

As there are no details as to design and layout at this stage it cannot be assessed if the dwelling will be viewed in context with the heritage asset and what impact the proposal will have on the countryside views. However, it is considered that the site is wide enough that a dwelling can be designed to maintain glimpses of the countryside beyond. HDC's Conservation Team are likely to be consulted on any future FULTDC application and it is recommended that a Heritage Statement be submitted in support of the proposals at Technical Details Stage.

These details will be considered at Technical Details Stage and will need to be sympathetic to the local character, the Conservation Area and neighbouring properties, taking consideration of design, appearance, any land level changes and views towards the countryside. The design should be informed by the Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017 and the Keyston Conservation Area Character Statement.

The proposed density of the site with one dwelling is considered to be acceptable in principle with the plot size similar to those directly south and the applicant has confirmed that landscape features will be included in any proposal to reduce the visual impact of the dwelling.

In this case, the LPA are satisfied that the density of development can be accommodated on the site and matters of scale, design and massing are not matters for consideration at permission in principle stage. It is therefore considered that some form of residential development in accordance with that proposed could be achieved on site in broad accordance with Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34 of the Local Plan to 2036, the National Design Guide (2021) and the provisions of the NPPF (2024).

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. Following grant of permission in principle, the site must receive a grant of technical details consent before development can proceed. The granting of technical details consent has the effect of granting planning permission for the development. Other statutory requirements may apply at this stage such as those relating to protected species or listed buildings. The following other matters will be considered at Technical details stage.

*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.

In regard to ecology, no ecology information was submitted as part of the application. It is not considered there are likely to be ecological issues which would make it inappropriate to determine this application as a permission in principle application. Any ecological impacts would need to be addressed at Technical Details stage and any application should be accompanied by a preliminary ecological appraisal in accordance with Policy LP30.

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 future 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.

*Impact on Trees

There are no significant trees to the site and if there were they would be able to be considered at Technical Details stage. Details of hard and soft landscaping again can be supplied at the detailed stage in accordance with LP31.

*Water Efficiency

Any future application for Technical Details Consent for a dwelling at the site 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.

*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.

*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

Although a previous application in 1994 was refused and dismissed at appeal on this site, the policy context of the 5YHLS has changed since these decisions. Thus, an alternative conclusion has been reached.

It is concluded that there is no identified harm that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when considering all the positives and negatives of the proposal into account. Taking national and local planning policies into account and material considerations, the principle of the proposed development, is, on balance, considered acceptable and therefore recommended that Permission in Principle be granted subject to approval of outstanding details at Technical Details stage.

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