OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00936/PIP Permission in Principle

Proposal: Permission in principle for the erection of 4 to 5 dwellings

Location: Land West Of Village Hall Thurning Road Winwick

Applicant: Mr R Angood

Grid Ref: 510387 280829

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is a section of land to the north-west of Winwick Village Hall on Thurning Road.

The site measures approx. 0.4ha extending north-west from the retained land at the rear of the village hall with access from Thurning Road. Built development is not an unfamiliar feature in the locality with dwellings (of varying age and scale) to the north of Thurning Road. There are some detached dwellings (including the Manor House) situated in generous plots as well as some mid-20th Century Local Authority housing which forms the terminus of this section of the village on this side of the road.

The site is mainly laid to grass and the submitted Planning Statement details that it has historically been paddock land but more recently in use as residential amenity land associated with Penfold House. This does not appear to have been regularised in planning terms. Generally, the site is partially screened by trees and hedgerows.

The site is not within a Conservation Area but there are some Listed Buildings in the (though not the immediate) vicinity. There is also a Tree Preservation Order on the adjacent land. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and has no risk of flooding from other sources as per the most recent Environment Agency (EA) Flood Risk Maps and Data.

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 the erection of 4 to 5 dwellings on the site. The submitted site plan is indicative at this stage and therefore not approved. This report should be read with the understanding that no site plan has been approved.

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

It should be noted that the adopted Scheme of Delegation states that all applications for permission in principle are delegated unless the proposal is recommended for approval and contrary to the adopted and draft development plan. In this case, as detailed in the proceeding sections of this report, the relevant Local Plan policies no longer accord with national guidance and the Local Plan is therefore considered to be out of date. As such, this decision is delegated.

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
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP34: Heritage Assets and their Settings
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

Winwick Parish Meeting recommend refusal. Their comments are available to view on HDC's Public Access Site but broadly relate to the following concerns:

*Concerns about the expansion of the village in recent years and lack of amenities/infrastructure (both within the village and surrounding settlements) such as transport links, education, medical, recreation, shopping and leisure.

*Concerns about the approved use of the site (agricultural vs residential).

*Query over the donation of the land to the rear of the village hall to the Parish Meeting.

*Concerns about suggested unsubstantiated claims within the submission.

*Concerns about transport and amenity access as well as highway safety concerns.

*Lack of employment opportunities in the vicinity.

*Impact on Trees.

*Impact on wildlife (biodiversity).

*Access and connection to adequate facilities.

Officer comments:

It is noted that there are some concerns regarding the established use of the site (as at present) and some claims made within the submission. An assessment on the principles of the use of the land (and its value) is covered in the proceeding sections of this report. The LPA consider that there is sufficient detail to determine the application. It is also acknowledged that there is some query over the suggested transfer of land to the Parish Meeting. This is land outside of the red line and any transfer of ownership will be a civil matter between the applicant and the Parish Meeting and is not a consideration within this application. All other matters will be discussed later in this report.

HDC Arboricultural Officer - No representations received at the time of determination.

HDC Environmental Health Team - No objections.

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

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Team - No objections - LPA to consider if this is an appropriate location for development. Outstanding matters can be dealt with at technical details consent stage.

Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team - No objections in principle - further details will be required at the technical details consent stage.

REPRESENTATIONS

Ten objections have been received, and these are available to view on HDC's Public Access Site. Of these ten, two originate from the same dwelling. As such, objections are from nine properties in total. They are summarised below for completeness:

*Other active redevelopments in the area at present and no provision for storm water/drainage. Concerns that the sewage system could be used for storm water.

*Additional housing unsustainable.

*Site should remain a livestock field due to lack of services in the village.

*Disagreement that the site forms part of the built-up area (disagrees with the call for sites assessment and not included within previous definitions of village boundaries).

*Development would be dominant given that the site is elevated in relation to opposite land and form and massing would be overpowering to that part of the village.

*Impact on the surrounding countryside and character of the village.

*Development would be overly substantial for a village the size of Winwick.

*Concerns about statements within the submission (transfer of land to the Parish Meeting for example).

*Impact on Trees/hedgerows/ecology impacts and neglect of current trees/hedgerows.

*Concerns about limited infrastructure within the village (public transport, education, shops, leisure, jobs etc) and the surrounding settlements balanced against the degree of development proposed.

*Sustainability appraisal, (including housing land supply) not considering other approved development and those presently under consideration. Brownfield sites (as per other approvals) more appropriate.

*Green infrastructure impact concerns.

*Impact on amenities enjoyed by existing properties opposite the site.

*Increased traffic flows as well as concerns as to impact during course of development (heavy vehicles, waste etc) and limited footpaths.

*Strain on resources and limits on sustainable working practices during the course of development.

*Suggestion that the current five-year housing land supply issue is not a consideration given that the village does not have a development boundary and that this development would not be consistent with the NPPF (2024). Local Plan call for sites should not be a factor in determination.

Officer comments:

As detailed in the response to the Parish Meeting comments earlier in this report, it is considered that the application is accompanied by sufficient detail to determine it. The matter regarding the transfer of land to the Parish Meeting cannot be addressed as part of this application.

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'. As 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 Local Plan is undergoing a review/update, and the Land Availability Assessments (LAA) consider this site (inclusive of the land shown within the blue line on the submitted location plan). At the time, the promoter considered this suitable for provision of 5 homes. The site progressed to the sustainability appraisal stage with the outcome of the Land Availability Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal concluding that the site could support 6 homes and considering that it:

*Has potential to provide development of a scale that could be integrated into the existing place.

*Is of a size that could contribute to the housing needs of the district.

*Would require retention of trees and hedgerows where possible.

*Requires flood mitigation.

*Would require an assessment to determine impact on nearby heritage assets.

*The development has the potential to be effectively masterplanned into the existing community by considering the wider townscape. Key considerations would be retention a pond, trees and hedgerow and impact on nearby residential properties.

It is acknowledged that this does not mean that the development suggested above will take place, simply that the site has not been discounted and therefore progresses to the next stages of consideration as part of the local plan update. Concerns about the weight given to this (and the way that the assessment was completed) are noted. It is recognised that this has not been adopted as part of the local plan update and so is not given full weight in the determination of this application. It should however be given some weight given that the site has not been discounted at these stages especially given the current tilted balance situation. Each application must be assessed upon its own merits but some consideration must be given to the fact that this site has reached this stage of assessment and is therefore more favourable when considered against another site within the village or other settlement which has not been subject to this level of scrutiny.

As required, this decision is taking by carrying out an assessment on the planning balance and by considering the full suite of local and national planning policies. In the assessment below the merits of the application are discussed and weight is given to each element. Under this consideration, Para 11d (ii) of the NPPF (2024) refers to directing development to sustainable locations (and so considering a settlement hierarchy). This is replicated within Local Plan Policy LP9. However, Para 11d (ii) also requires that the harm of a proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when considering the framework as a whole.

In this case, given the site and its history, Policies LP9 (Small Settlements) and LP10 (The Countryside) of the Local Plan are the correct policies for assessment though they are afforded reduced weight given the lack of five-year housing land supply and engagement of tilted balance.

Winwick 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 open spaces which are not well defined by strong boundary features or which primarily relate to the countryside in their use form or character as well as agricultural land, woodland, meadow, areas of water and natural habitats that penetrate the built form. It also states that whilst some greenfield uses can form an integral part of the built-up areas these should have buildings on at least two sides and have a clear physical and visual relationship with the built-up area rather than any adjoining countryside.

In this case despite arguments put forward in the submitted Planning Statement Officers consider that the above applies to this site. Whilst there are boundary treatments defined by sporadic trees and hedgerows these cannot be regarded as ‘strong’ boundary features. (The Local Plan definition specifically references a tree belt or substantial stone or brick wall). The surroundings are undeveloped to the south-west (what appears to be a deep residential garden) and the north-west, with only the village hall to the south-east. The character is ‘open’, located on the edge of the village and so there is not the sense that the site is well contained within the BUA. When viewed from any direction, the absence of built development (despite the relationship with the village) is clearly better related to the countryside as opposed to the BUA.

Development in such locations would generally be restricted (unless permitted via other local plan policies).

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 3 agricultural land (the same grading applies to much of the BUA of Winwick), and it is noted that concerns regarding the loss of this land and its current use have been raised. However, it is considered that the loss of agricultural land is largely inevitable if housing is to be provided within this rural district and as such has to be considered in the planning balance. For the purposes of this assessment and in respect of tilted balance the LPA cannot object to the loss of this small section of land when balanced against the merits of the scheme, especially given that it has not been discounted within the land availability assessments for this reason. It is indicated that there may be some private arrangement as to the use of the land but this does not appear to have been regularised via a planning application and so the land is considered to remain agricultural for the purposes of this assessment.

Comments have been received highlighting other developments (as well as those still under consideration) which make use of brownfield sites within the village and which are considered more favourable. It should be highlighted that regardless of the type of land developed this still naturally results in pressure on infrastructure. A review of the recent planning history in Winwick does not lead Officers to be of the view that cumulatively (having regard to other approvals) this would result in an unsustainable degree of growth for the village.

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. This scheme relates to a development of up to four to five dwellings, there is no indication 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.

Thurning Road has the character of a typical rural village. The village hall, a single storey building is located with its frontage onto Main Street and has a generous degree of green space surrounding it. A section of land to its north-west is mainly grassed with a pond and sporadic planting. The north-eastern side is more developed with detached dwellings, a farm and some mid-20th Century Local Authority houses forming the streetscene. Further north-west are some agricultural style buildings with some of these buildings and the associated land subject to an appeal against the refusal of 23/00396/CLED (Lawful Development Certificate for use for industrial processes (B2) as well as a further single dwelling (Dalkeith Lodge).

The application site is partially visible given the condition of the hedgerow forming the boundary and there are mature trees (though not protected) within and surrounding the site. Whilst Officers do consider this site to be better related to the countryside, it cannot be considered a tranquil rural environment because as established, there are examples of residential development in the immediate vicinity, a main route leading to other settlements lies 50m south-east as well as the route to Thurning to its north. Whilst afforded limited weight in this determination it should also be noted that the sustainability appraisal for the site considered that the proposed density of development

would be in keeping with the village and the site is not of a size or scale which would impact the form or character of the local area. As such, given that this is an application for permission in principle (with no details considered or approved as to the design, scale or layout at this stage), there is no reason to conclude that the development of this land would be contrary to part b of Policy LP10.

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, it is adjacent to a main route to another settlement from the village and so cannot be considered to be an intrinsically tranquil rural location.

Overall, having regard to the requirement to apply tilted balance to this decision, and the assessment above, the LPA cannot demonstrate that the introduction of the quantum of development proposed would result in overdevelopment or significant and demonstrable harm as required by Para. 11d (ii) of the NPPF (2024) and therefore cannot defend a refusal given the limited weight that can be afforded to Policy LP10 at this time.

Given that, effectively, based upon the above the location of the development is accepted it falls to be considered under Policy LP9 as if it were within the BUA of the settlement. LP9 has three tests relating to the level of infrastructure within the settlement, opportunities for access to everyday services and facilities by utilising sustainable travel methods and the impact on the character of the settlement. The last point has largely been addressed above and so overall, this is a decision on the sustainability of the location for housing which is a matter which has been raised in many of the objections.

Officers accept that there are very limited services and employment opportunities within Winwick and that it is very likely that there will be reliance on a private motor vehicle. This is not unusual in a rural setting. Public transport is extremely limited and the facilities within the village are limited to the village hall and church (both of which are within walking distance of the site). The NPPF (2024) requires Local Planning Authorities to direct development to sustainable locations. However, as previously referenced, adverse impacts would need to be significant and demonstrable to sustain a refusal. This is when an assessment is required upon:

*Cumulative impacts of development in the settlement.

*Quantum of development proposed.

A review has been completed of planning history from May 2019 (the date that the current Local Plan was adopted) to the present date. There are three applications (two approved and one under consideration) which relate to housing (as below):

*19/01276/REM relating to reserved matters for three dwellings following a 2016 outline permission.

*20/01987/FUL relating to the replacement of a barn with one dwelling.

*24/02305/FUL relating to the conversion of existing buildings at Manor Farm to provide four dwellings (this remains under consideration at this time).

As such, even with the approval of the latter this would result only in the provision of 6 dwellings over a six-year period. It is acknowledged that there may be some others under construction which may have been approved prior to this date but which are extant as development has commenced.

The current proposal is for 4 to 5 dwellings (so 11 as the maximum) cumulatively. As such, it cannot be reasonably considered that this would place such a degree of pressure on the village that would cause the significant and demonstrable harm referred to in the NPPF. Furthermore, whilst the NPPF seeks to direct development to sustainable locations it also recognises at Para. 83 that "to promote

sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities."

Part of enabling communities to achieve this vitality is the introduction of new housing in order to allow new people to join these rural communities as well as the economic benefits of providing development. Again, whilst the sustainability appraisal recognised the limited services available it also considered the site was of a scale which could provide development which could be integrated into the existing place and which could effectively be masterplanned into the existing community.

Careful consideration has been given to the lack of footpaths (which is a characteristic of the village) and if safe and convenient access could be achieved. The site access is however on a 30mph road which (whilst unlit) does afford access to the 'village centre' and access to the (albeit limited) public transport links. As detailed in the preceding sections of this report, it has to be accepted that there will be some reliance on a private motor vehicle but this harm does not outweigh the benefits of boosting the local housing supply within a rural location when assessed against titled balance requirements.

Overall, having regard to if significant and demonstrable harm can be identified the LPA have to conclude that the scheme is broadly compliant with Policy LP9 of the Local Plan and 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.

At this stage, attention is again drawn to the fact that the LPA is in tilted balance, which has been given great weight in the determination of this application. In order to support the NPPF's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes it is considered this site needs to come forward sooner than the standard 3 years usually allowed for PIP applications. Therefore, the timescale for the submission of Technical Details in this instance is amended 2 years.

2. Land use

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data. However, the 2024 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment does not identify any other sources of flooding within the site. Reference to flood mitigation within the sustainability appraisal included the section of land to the rear of the village hall including the pond which is not within the red line for this application.

Flood Zone 1 is defined as having the lowest risk of flooding in the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and development of this nature is acceptable within Flood Zone 1.

It is noted that concerns have been raised regarding sewage disposal, however the quantum of development would not significantly exacerbate this issue. Overall, the site is appropriate in respect of flood risk and surface water and drainage of the site (including sewage/wastewater) could be considered at the FULTDC stage. At present for example, there are no details as to how sewage/wastewater will be dealt with and so this cannot be assessed.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Historic Environment Team have also been consulted and raise no objections in principle. They will be consulted again at the FULTDC stage when the layout of the site is presented for consideration. Consideration has also been given to the Listed Buildings in the vicinity, the Grade ll Listed Westward Farm and Grade ll* Listed All Saints Church. These are approx. 60m and 100m away respectively. As there are no details as to design and layout at this stage it cannot be assessed if the dwellings will even be viewed in context with these heritage assets. HDC's Conservation Team and Historic England will be consulted on any future FULTDC application.

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 and concerns have been raised regarding potential impacts.

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 or odour impacting neighbours nor future occupants of the dwellings nor raise any concerns in respect of contaminated land or pollution.

As detailed above, permission in principle applications do not provide details of layouts, house types and so on. Therefore, an application for 4 to 5 dwellings may only result in 4 under a FULTDC application. They may be single storey etc and so there is no way to thoroughly assess impacts such as loss of light or overbearing impacts (though these will be thoroughly assessed under any subsequent FULTDC application). Whilst concerns about impacts on the amenity of the occupants of dwellings to the north-east of the site are noted, for this reason these cannot be quantified at this stage. For the purposes of this assessment, the LPA consider that the site is large enough to accommodate the quantum of development proposed without resulting in harm.

It is also considered that a high level of residential amenity could be achieved for future occupants of the site. It is not possible to address concerns regarding disturbance during the construction phases, all development will result in some degree of disruption. In some cases (for larger scale development) it may be necessary to secure details of a management plan, but the Council's Environmental Health Team have not raised this as a concern. This however does not absolve the applicant or their appointed contractors of their responsibilities for responsible working practices and any concerns can be highlighted to Environmental Health where needed.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Team have been consulted as part of this process and raise no objections in principle but do note that further details of the access and visibility splays would be required and these would need to be considered at FULTDC stage. One objection notes concerns about the location of the access but again, this is a matter for the FULTDC stage. CCC do advise the LPA to consider the suitability of the site for housing and this has already been assessed in the preceding sections of this report. As per Para. 116 of the NPPF (2024) "development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios."

Given the lack of objection from technical consultees and the relatively small scale of development, whilst the concerns raised are noted it is not considered that significant harm would be caused in terms of highway safety as a result of this scheme.

Overall, it is considered that the scheme could be realised in accordance with Policies LP5, LP15, LP14, LP17, LP34 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, 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. Given the earlier assessments it is considered that some form of residential development in accordance with that proposed could be achieved on site in broad accordance with Policies LP11 and LP12 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. The applicant would need to also receive a grant of technical details consent before the 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.

*Impact on Trees

There are a number of mature trees within and surrounding the site which whilst not afforded formal protection do make a positive contribution to the character of the area. Concerns have been raised regarding the impact on trees/hedgerows. HDC's Arboricultural Officer has been consulted but no representations have been received at the time of determination. Given that as detailed in the preceding sections of this report there are currently no details as to layout or density of development the impact on trees/hedgerows cannot be fully assessed. These should however form an integral part of the consideration under an application for FULTDC in order to comply with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*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 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.

The presence of grassland, hedging and trees within, surrounding, and immediately adjacent to the site means that a preliminary ecological survey and any additional species-specific surveys would be required as part of any FULTDC application to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and appropriate mitigated. Details of how a 10% BNG will be achieved in accordance with the legislation would also be required. Whilst objections are noted, these matters cannot be considered at the permission in principle stage.

Further consideration should be given to the location of the site within the Northern Wolds Landscape Character Area and the potential impacts on green infrastructure. The Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022) details that development proposals should:

*Protect key views towards the distinctive skyline of ridge tops, church towers and woodland.

*Protect and enhance historic settlement character through careful siting and design of new buildings.

*Improve the nature conservation value of the streams and immediate valley sides.

*Conserve both designated and non-designated heritage assets with improved public access and interpretation where appropriate.

*Conserve or where appropriate enhance the significance of the heritage assets including any contribution made to significance by their settings.

*Conserve the archaeological heritage dispersed throughout the landscape.

*Protect and enhance the distinctive characters of the valley and plateau landscapes through maintenance of field patterns and long distance views from the upland areas and protection of ancient hedgerows and oak trees within the valleys.

*Protect the parkland setting to Kimbolton village and School.

Whilst it is clear that not all of the above matters are wholly relevant in this instance (and cannot be appropriately assessed at the permission in principle stage) there are some aspects which could be carried through to the FULTDC stage in order to ensure that the development assimilates itself comfortable into the landscape setting.

*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.

*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

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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