Environment Agency

Kevin Simpson
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House St. Marys Street
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 3TN

Our ref: AC/2025/132753/02-L01
Your ref: 25/00654/FUL

Date: 20 June 2025

Dear Kevin,

CHANGE OF USE OF SHEPHERDS HUT (CURRENTLY ANCILLARY USE) FOR USE AS AIRBNB/SHORT TERM HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATION IN CONNECTION WITH THE MAIN DWELLING

WILD CROFT HOLYWELL FRONT HOLYWELL ST IVES PE27 4TG

Thank you for your consultation dated 02 May 2025. We have reviewed the documents as submitted and we have no objection to this planning application. Please find information on flood risk and water resources in the sections below.

Flood Risk

The development site is situated in flood zone 3 but the proposed development itself is situated within flood zone 1. An FRA has now been submitted that allows us to remove our objection. While we have no objection to the proposed development, given that site access/egress is via flood zone 3 we strongly recommend that the owners sign up for flood warnings and that an emergency flood plan for the site is developed.

With regard to the second part of the Exception Test, your Authority must be satisfied with regards to the safety of people (including those with restricted mobility), the ability of people to reach places of safety, and the ability of the emergency services to access buildings to rescue and evacuate people.

Paragraph 43 of the flood risk and coastal change section of the Planning Practice Guidance states that one of the key considerations to ensure that any new development is safe, including where there is a residual risk of flooding for flood risk management infrastructure, is whether adequate flood warnings would be available to people using the development. An emergency plan will be needed wherever emergency response is an important component of making a development safe. We do not normally comment on or approve the adequacy of flood emergency response procedures accompanying development proposals, as we do not carry out these roles during a flood. Our involvement with this development during an emergency will be limited to delivering flood warnings to occupants/users covered by our flood warning network.

In all circumstances where flood warning and emergency response is fundamental to

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managing flood risk, we expect local planning authorities to formally consider the emergency planning and rescue implications of new development in making their decisions. As such, we recommend you refer to 'Flood risk emergency plans for new development' and undertake appropriate consultation with your Emergency Planners and the emergency services to determine whether the proposals are safe, in accordance with paragraph 181 (footnote 63) of the NPPF and the guiding principles of the Planning Practice Guidance.

We have not made an assessment of the safety of the route of access/egress from the site in a flood event or any requirements in relation to signage, underwater hazards or any other particular requirements, as this is a matter for the local planning authority. We are not the competent authority on matters of evacuation or rescue, and therefore are unable to assess the suitability of evacuation arrangements. Your Emergency Planners should be consulted on evacuation arrangements.

We have no objection to the proposed development on flood risk safety grounds however, we are not the competent authority on matters of evacuation or rescue, and therefore are unable to assess evacuation plans or emergency flood plans. Your emergency planners will need to review the adequacy of the emergency flood plan. If you are not satisfied with the emergency flood plan, then we would recommend you consider refusing the application on the grounds of safety during a flood event, as users would be exposed to flood hazards within the buildings.

Advice for the Applicant

The Flood Risk Assessment will need to demonstrate that safe access and escape to and from the development is available in the event of flooding and should include a flood warning and evacuation plan. The evacuation plan (including the potential for rescue) and assessment of the availability of safe access and egress must consider the expected depths, velocities and onset of flood waters, as well as the duration of inundation. The level of hazard and the methods taken to reduce the risks to people at this development must be acceptable to the Local Planning Authority, advised by their Emergency Planner.

The Environment Agency operates a flood warning system for existing properties currently at risk of flooding to enable householders to protect life or take action to manage the effect of flooding on property. Flood Warnings Service (F.W.S.) is a national system run by the Environment Agency for broadcasting flood warnings. Receiving the flood warnings is free; you can choose to receive your flood warning as a telephone message, email, fax or text message. To register your contact details, please call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or visit https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings

Registration to receive flood warnings is not sufficient on its own to act as an evacuation plan. We are unable to comment on evacuation and rescue for developments. Advice should be sought from the Emergency Services and the Local Planning Authority's Emergency Planners when producing a flood evacuation plan.

Environment Agency
Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, PE28 4NE.
Customer services line: 03708 506 506
www.gov.uk/environment-agency
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Water Resources

The location of this development is in an area of serious water stress (as identified in our report Water stressed areas – 2021 classification) and has the potential to increase abstraction from groundwater sources. We therefore encourage all developments to be as water efficient as possible. This can be achieved through the following measures developments should meet a water efficiency target of 110l/h/d. We recommend this as a minimum, but strongly support going beyond this level. The Environment Agency and the WRMP also recommend the installation of smart meters and efficient fittings in new developments to assist meeting the water efficiency targets.

We trust that this advice is useful.

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

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