OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02206/FUL **Full Planning Application**

Proposal: **Proposed residential development for the erection of 15 dwellings along with access, landscaping, garages, roads and all ancillary works.**

Location: **Land East Of 66 Thrapston Road Brampton**

Applicant: **Mr Josh Twigden**

Grid Ref: **521194 271134**

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is Land to the East of 66 Thrapston Road, Brampton. An area of undeveloped land located between two sets of dwellings and opposite the memorial Centre, Play Area and Skate Park. To the north-east are some relatively new dwellings extending beyond the developed edge of the road and a day nursery. The access road to this and the farm beyond is adjacent to the east of the site. The site is mainly rough grassland with sporadic planting and dense hedgerows/trees to the south meaning that the site is barely visible from the road.

The site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no Listed Buildings or trees subject to Preservation Orders in the immediate vicinity. It does however sit within a green infrastructure priority area as defined under Local Plan Policy LP3. It lies within Flood Zone 1 and has no risk of surface water flooding as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data.

This application seeks permission for the provision of 15 dwellings (including 6 affordable dwellings) along with open space, associated parking and landscaping.

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

During the lifetime of the application and following advice from Officers revised plans have been provided. Where appropriate, further re-consultation (including with neighbours and the Parish Council) has been carried out.

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
LP3: Green infrastructure
LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
LP5: Flood Risk
LP6: Waste Water Management
LP7: Spatial Planning Areas
LP10: The Countryside
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP16: Sustainable Travel
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP24: Affordable Housing Provision
LP25: Housing Mix
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
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)

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

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

16/01255/OUT - Proposed residential development involving the erection of 63 dwellings a land off and to the north of 66-100 Thrapston Road (Refused)

17/01161/OUT - Proposed rural exceptions residential development involving the erection of 63 Dwellings, proposed access arrangements and associated works (Withdrawn)

18/01489/OUT - Residential development involving the erection of 14 dwellings, proposed access Arrangements and associated works (Withdrawn)

18/02569/OUT - Proposed residential development involving the erection of 16 dwellings at land east of No. 66 Thrapston Road (Approved)

21/00605/REM - Application for approval of reserved matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout, scale following outline approval reference 18/02569/OUT for the erection of 16 dwellings, garages and ancillary works (Withdrawn)

21/01791/FUL - Proposed residential development for the erection of 16 dwellings along with access, landscaping, garages, roads and all ancillary works (Disposed)

CONSULTATIONS

Brampton Parish Council (consulted twice) - Recommend approval but further clarification on the entrance and access to the site required as well as assurance that hedgerow will be retained. The later consultation again raised queries on the access as well as renewable energy measures.

Officer comments: No indication was given that the Parish Council did not wish to support the application nor were material planning reasons provided to the contrary. From the Energy Statement submitted, Air Source Heat Pumps are proposed but no Solar PV. It is not within the gift of the LPA (as there is no policy in place) to secure these. The access matters are addressed in the proceeding sections of this report.

HDC Environmental Health Team (informal) - No objections - no evidence of land contamination on the site but updated Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to be secured by condition.

HDC Housing Policy Team - No objections - revised plans acceptable.

HDC Urban Design Team - No objections - revised plans acceptable.

HDC Economic Development Team - No representations received at the time of determination.

HDC Arboricultural Officer - No objections subject to compliance with Tree Protection Plan.

HDC Landscapes Officer - No objections - minors queries/corrections resolved by revised plans and can be secured by condition.

HDC Ecology Officer - No objections - biodiversity net gain (BNG) to be secured by Section 106 agreement.

HDC Operations (Waste) - No representations received at the time of determination.

Environment Agency - No representations received at the time of determination.

Anglian Water - No objections - informative note to be added to any consent.

CCC Highways - No objections subject to conditions.

CCC Lead Local Flood Authority - No objections subject to conditions.

Bedford Group of Drainage Boards - No representations received at the time of determination.

Alconbury and Ellington Internal Drainage Board - No objections in principle - informative note to be added to any consent.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary - No objections - recommendations for enhancements.

Cadent - No objections - informative note to be added to any consent.

REPRESENTATIONS

Four objections have been received, and these are available to view on HDC's Public Access Site. Following revisions neighbours were re-consulted which only generated one further objection (included within the four). Given that no comments to the contrary have been provided this decision is based upon the assumption that the objections remain regardless of the revised plans. They broadly relate to the following matters:

*Concerns surrounding the accuracy of the plans and the labelling and drawings of existing dwellings shown on these. Pedestrian island also omitted.

*Car parking and highway safety concerns (including, speeding, vehicles and pedestrians) - request for additional mitigation measures to be provided.

*Strain on local services and infrastructure (education etc).

*Concerns about increased parking during construction especially when the memorial field is in use.

*General concerns about timing of construction for traffic and general disruption.

*Development contrary to design policies due to scale and layout on the edge of the settlement.

*Intensification of on-site parking which disrupts the consistent building line along Thrapston Road.

*Concerns about the proposed boundary treatments.

*Flood risk and drainage concerns (levels)

*Concerns regarding overlooking, loss of privacy, overshadowing and loss of light.

*Impact on trees/hedgerows.

*Ecological concerns and suggestion that new tree planting should be subject to protection upon maturity and that any new landscaping should be secured.

*No details of construction storage areas have been provided.

*Concerns regarding the location of heat pumps/noise emitted from these.

Officer comments: Whilst the concerns surrounding the accuracy of the plans are noted, given that a site visit has been completed alongside aerial imagery and planning history (relating to the site and surrounding land) available to the LPA, Officers are satisfied that there is sufficient detail to determine the application. All other matters shall be addressed in the proceeding sections of this report.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

When determining planning applications, it is necessary to establish what weight should be given to each plan's policies in order to come to a decision. The following legislation, government policy and guidance outline how this should be done.

As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 48

of the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan consists of a number of adopted neighbourhood plans, however, there is not an adopted neighbourhood plan in place for Brampton. Therefore, in this case no neighbourhood plans are given weight in the determination of this application.

The statutory term 'material considerations' has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of the land: Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, paragraph 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

The main issues to consider are:

*The principle of development
*Affordable housing
*Sustainability
*Design, visual amenity and impact on the countryside
*Residential amenity
*Parking provision and highway safety considerations
*Flood risk
*Biodiversity
*Impact on Trees
*Other matters

*The principle of the development (including impact on the countryside)

This report should be read with the knowledge that 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.

The application site is located within the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area (Local Plan Policy LP7) which extends into parts of Brampton. LP7 supports residential development where it is appropriately located within the BUA of an identified spatial planning area settlement. The Local Plan defines a BUA as a distinct group of buildings that includes 30 or more homes and excludes

areas of ribbon and fragmented development which are physically and visually detached from the main built form.

In this case, the site is an area of land located to the north of Thrapston Road between some (mainly semi-detached) dwellings to the east and west. Cumulatively these equate to less than 30 dwellings. The land is separated from the dwellings to the east by an access road leading to residential and commercial development which is to the north-east of the site and shares a boundary to the west with number 66 Thrapston Road. The southern boundary (to Thrapston Road) is formed of relatively dense hedgerows/trees and there are no clearly defined boundaries to the north with views across the undeveloped agricultural land beyond. As such, the site is considered to be better related to the countryside rather than the bult form and lies outside of (though well related to) the built-up area (BUA) of the settlement when considered against the Local Plan definitions. This is the same conclusion as was reached under application reference number 18/02569/OUT. Whilst this scheme does provide some affordable housing, the numbers and tenure would not mean that this would be considered a rural exceptions site (Local Plan Policy LP28), and so development of this nature would generally be resisted in this location unless specifically permitted via other Local Plan Policies.

Given that the site lies outside of the BUA Policy LP10 (the countryside) is the starting point for assessment. LP10 seeks to limit development in the countryside unless it is permitted under other Local Plan Policies and seek to avoid the loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land, recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and ensure that development does not give rise to factors such as noise and odour which could adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

In this case, the land in question is grade 3 land and so not land of the highest value. It also does not appear that it is currently in active use for agricultural purposes. Whilst the loss of the land is regrettable it remains that some loss is inevitable if housing is to be provided within this rural district. The previous approval on the site (discussed in further detail below) must also be considered when this and LP10 in its entirety is considered.

In terms of other matters relating to countryside impact, whilst this will result in the introduction of built development on previously undeveloped land, the scheme has been carefully designed (in conjunction with Urban Design advice and this is detailed further in the proceeding sections of this report). For the purposes of this assessment, it cannot be considered that it would result in development which would be incongruous or uncharacteristic of the locality. Furthermore, the introduction of additional residential use at this scale in an area characterised by this and adjacent to the main road through Brampton (and leading to the A14) is unlikely to give significant rise to factors such as noise or odour or introduce these to a currently undeveloped area.

As well as the above, the site also lies within the Great Ouse Valley Landscape Character Area as defined with the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022). The SPD states that development proposals should:

*Enrich the area by reinforcing its special qualities and acknowledging its distinct local character. Use appropriate building materials to retain the distinctive local character of villages.

*Maintain or enhance water quality and quantity and not lead to any adverse impact on flood risk or flood defences.

*Protect and enhance the strategic green corridor formed by the river valley, particularly where it passes through settlements.

*Minimise the environmental impacts of recreational activities.

*Protect and enhance the ecological value of the river, its margins and the valley floor.

*Promote opportunities for wildlife and conservation initiatives to support and enhance the area's biodiversity.

*Protect the setting of historic structure such as bridges and mill buildings.

*Encourage public access along the Great Ouse Valley through.

In this case, it is acknowledged that not all of the matters above are relevant to a development of this scale or nature. However, those which are applicable, such as materials, flooding, biodiversity etc are all considered to have been carefully thought through and can be achieved and secured by suitable conditions. These elements are discussed in further detail in the proceeding sections of this report but for the purposes of this assessment are not considered contrary to the SPD guidance and therefore compliant with Policy LP3 of the Local Plan to 2036.

This above assessment in full has been undertaken with consideration to previous permission 18/02569/OUT which did give permission for 16 dwellings to be provided on the site relatively recently. Subsequent reserved matters applications were unable to be determined positively and as such the permission has lapsed. Previous planning decisions are a material consideration in the determination of a planning application and as such, significant weight is given to the fact that the principle of residential development on this site has previously been agreed even though the permission has lapsed.

Further to the above, Officers refer back to the position of tilted balance which as referenced in the preceding sections of this report means that reduced weight can be given to Policies LP7 and LP10 (those relevant in this instance) and that Para. 11d(ii) of the NPPF (2024) requires that the impacts of approving such development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. In this case, the scheme has been subjected to a rigorous assessment by Officers (including Urban Design Officers) and the proposals now reflect their advice. Given the character of the surrounding as well as the planning history, it cannot reasonably be considered that the development of this site would result in significant and demonstrable harm (in terms of its location) when balanced against the benefit of providing 15 additional dwellings which include 6 affordable units.

On balance therefore, the development is considered to be acceptable in principle subject to compliance with all other materials planning considerations and conditions.

*Affordable housing provision

Policy LP24 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where:

a. it delivers a target of 40% affordable housing on a site where 11 homes or 1,001m2 residential floorspace (gross internal area) or more are proposed;

b. it provides approximately 70% of the new affordable housing units as social or affordable rented properties with the balance made up of other affordable tenures;

c. affordable housing is dispersed across the development in small clusters of dwellings; and

d. it ensures that the appearance of affordable housing units is externally indistinguishable from that of open market housing.

In this case, 15 dwellings are proposed with 6 affordable units comprising 2x 3-bed and 4x 2-bed units thus the 40% is achieved. These shall be social or affordable rented and this shall be secured by a Section 106 agreement. The 6 units are located in a cluster to the east of the site and are not distinguishable from the private units located elsewhere within the site. HDC's Housing Policy

Team has been consulted and, following amendments made on their advice with regard to layout and compliance with nationally described spaces standards (NDSS) raise no objections to the scheme. It therefore accords with Policy LP24 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Sustainability

Whilst considered to lie outside of the BUA of the settlement this largely relates to the characteristics of the site and it cannot be considered that it is not well-related to it. In considering settlement hierarchies, Brampton (forming part of the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area) is considered to be one of the larger settlements which can support some development. It provides facilities for education, places of worship, retail, healthcare and recreation and also has safe and convenient links to Huntingdon town centre whether this be on foot, by bicycle or other sustainable travel methods such as use of the regular bus service which has multiple stops within walking distance of the application site. There is a continuous public footpath from the site towards Huntingdon.

It is acknowledged that there are concerns regarding pressure on local infrastructure. However, development and growth does have to be supported where it is appropriately located. When this location is considered in regard to the settlement hierarchy it is a more favourable location than others in terms of services provided and accessibility to these. Each application must be assessed upon its own merits and an application can only resolve its own issues. More generally, the LPA cannot control the level of funding allocated to providing additional services outside of standard Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 contributions. On balance, it cannot reasonably be considered that a development of this scale within a sustainable location would be unacceptable when measured against the infrastructure within the settlement and adjacent accessible settlements.

*Design and visual amenity

Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan state, amongst other matters, that proposals will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including natural, historic and built environment, contributes positively to the character and identity of the area and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography and landscape.

Thrapston Road is one of the main routes through Brampton and features development of varying age, scale and design along its length. As such there is no overarching theme in terms of general design. In the immediate vicinity of the application site development is generally linear with examples of semi-detached mid-20th Century housing with gable projections to the east and hipped roof semi-detached dwellings to the west. These are however punctuated with some more modern detached dwellings but these do not significantly alter the prevailing character. Dwellings are also set back within the plots which are screened from the road by generous tree and hedge planting.

In this case, the proposals involve the provision of 15 dwellings comprising detached and semi-detached units some with integral garages and others with detached garages (located to the rear). Associated parking and landscaping is also provided as well as a maintained access route to the agricultural land to the rear. There is a varied design proposed with hipped and gable features with some projections forward of the principal elevations. Ridge heights vary slightly across the development, but this adds interest and does not interrupt the theme. The pattern of development is generally linear and set back beyond retained planting to mirror the arrangement of the adjacent dwellings.

As referenced in the preceding sections of this report, the proposals have been subject to an assessment by the Council's Urban Design Team and changes in respect of design and layout

have been made following their advice (with relevant re-consultations completed). Overall, Urban Design Officers are supportive of the scheme noting that the revised elevations adopt a more traditional architectural style which incorporate interesting and varied design features such as brick banding, corbelling and quoin detailing. Submitted plans shows a variance in material finish which appears 'busy' and there is concern that this could result in a negative impact upon the character of the area. As such, this shall be secured by condition along with architectural details. In terms of layout, greater separation has been provided between units allowing for sky gaps and a less dominant form of development at the northern edge of the settlement. Those which host projections are subservient to the main dwelling and don't overwhelm the plots in any way. Urban Design Officers did indicate a preference for chimneys to be added to ensure a greater level of consistency with surrounding developments, however, on balance (and having regard to tilted balance) the harm of not including these is not significant and demonstrable particularly given the arrangement of the roofs and this matter will not be pursued.

In terms of outside space, each plot has allocated defensible space to the rear and makes provision for parking and cycle storage. The latter is discussed in further detail in the proceeding sections of this report but in terms of arrangement this is not considered harmful. It is noted that some concerns were raised regarding the potential for parking to result in intensification at the front of the site and this was certainly a concern with the first iteration of the plans (particularly with regard to the parking for dwellings to the east of the site). This has been resolved with the revised layout. HDC's Landscape's Team have been consulted and, aside from clarification on some minor points (which have been addressed) raise no objections. The existing trees and vegetation to the front is to be retained (aside from the proposed access) which was a key concern of the Parish Council with additional planting provided throughout. Hard surfacing and boundary treatments are broadly acceptable and consistent with development of this nature. An objection referenced the boundary treatments with concern that they would be out of keeping with the rural character. However, it is noted that the plans show a 1.5m, post and rail fence to both the northern garden boundaries as well as to the landscaped area beyond. As such, this will not appear as a harsh boundary treatment in a rural location and is considered to be acceptable. These shall all be secured by condition.

Overall, having regard to the above assessment alongside the favourable comments from specialists and matters which can be secured by condition, the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to design and visual amenity and therefore accords with Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Residential amenity

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

Some of the main concerns raised in the objections relate to overshadowing, loss of light overlooking and loss of privacy.

Given the separation to all other existing adjacent dwellings and land it is considered reasonable to focus this assessment on No's. 66 and 36 Thrapston Road given their relationship with Plots 1 and 15 respectively. Taking each point in turn:

In terms of No. 66 there is a separation distance of approx. 7.3m between the eastern elevation of No.66 (not including the side lean-to) and the western elevation of plot 1. Officers have carried out a site visit to No.66 and note that below the lean-to there is an obscure glazed window a glazed door (upper section) and 2 plain windows at ground floor level with two obscure windows and a plain window at first floor level. Given the location of the upper floor windows alongside the separation to plot 1 and its height (5m to eaves and 9.5m to ridge of hipped roof) (approx.) there is no concern on the impact to the first-floor windows as there would be no breach of the 25-degree

test as detailed within the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD. Furthermore, the obscure glazed windows (likely serving a bathroom) would not be required to be assessed as they serve non-habitable rooms. It is understood that the clear first floor window serves a landing but, even if this were a habitable room there is unlikely to be a significant impact as it does not fail the test. Secondary windows/glazed doors to rooms also do not apply.

Turning attention to the ground floor windows, the door and obscure glazed window do not require assessment (for the reasons given above). The smaller clear glazed window set towards the front of No.66 appears to serve a hallway and, given its scale would be unlikely to be the sole window serving a habitable room. The other window serves a kitchen and there would be a failure of the 25-degree test at ridge height (but not at eaves level) but regardless of the pitch of the roof this would still be considered an unacceptable relationship. It should be noted that whilst presented as part of concerns regarding flood risk the suggested difference in levels between the two sites has been considered in this assessment.

Whilst there is a failure of this window, a visit to No.66 reveals this to be a secondary window to the habitable room. There is a (larger) window in the north elevation of No.66 which provides daylight to the room. As such, whilst it is acknowledged that this will result in massing opposite this window (approx. 7.3m away) given the secondary light source this would not be overly harmful nor a justifiable reason for refusal.

In terms of the 45-degree test, plot 1 is set forward in its plot and so there is no projection beyond the rear elevation of or adjacent to the main defensible space for No.66. There is some projection to the front but this is mainly single storey projecting approx. 12m beyond the front elevation of No.66. This would result in a failure on plan but not on elevation (again having regard to the estimate variance in levels). The proposal would need to fail on plan and elevation in order to require further daylight and sunlight assessment. The single storey element would extend approx. 4.8m from the boundary line with No.66, however there is a pitched roof garage (serving No.66) adjacent to the common boundary. The increased massing adjacent to the east elevation (approx. 4.6m from the boundary line) will result in some impact to the space afforded to No.66. However, from the site visit this did not appear to be an area of 'usable space'. E.g. there was a lean-to providing storage and its main function appeared to be access to the functional space (the patio directly outside the patio door and main area of garden) as opposed to valuable defensible space. This is especially so given the amount of outside space which No.66 benefits from. Overall, it is concluded that there will be no impacts on the garden area or defensible space associated with No.66.

There are considered to be no concerns with regard to overbearing impacts, overshadowing or loss of light to the occupants of No. 36 Thrapston Road given the separation distance of approx. 27m (dwelling to dwelling) and the fact that plot 15 is set back within its plot.

Overall, given the above assessment, the arrangement of the site and its relationship with all other existing dwellings and land there are considered to be no concerns with regard to overbearing impacts, overshadowing and loss of light.

In terms of overlooking and loss of privacy, again, the main focus lies with No.66 and 36 Thrapston Road (an assessment on the units themselves follows below).

The windows in the side (east) elevation of No.66 have been discussed above, there are 2 windows and a rooflight in the side (west) elevation of plot 1. Upper floor windows serve a bathroom and en-suite - these are obscure glazed (as shown on the plans) and will be conditioned as such. The rooflight may offer some views towards the driveway and side return of No.66 but these would be limited at best and those to the site frontage would be obscured by the large, pitched roof garage serving No.66. The ground floor windows given their siting and the proposed boundary treatments will not cause harm.

No.36 is the opposite side of an access driveway to residential and commercial development to the north-east. It is a modern dwelling with a pitched roof side projection. There are some windows to the side (west) elevation of this dwelling but this was partially obscured (at the time of the visit) by boundary planting. This did not appear to be in the control of the occupant and given that no protection is afforded this could be removed at any time. However, it should be noted that whilst there are windows serving habitable rooms in the east elevation of plot 15 (at ground and first floor) there is approx. 27m between the two dwellings and, given the setback of plot 15, any views towards the side of the dwelling would be oblique. There is approx. 23m to the boundary and so there may be some increased views of the rear garden of No.36. It should however be acknowledged that recognised distances for back-to-back development is accepted at 21m (dwelling to dwelling) and this is considered to provide an acceptable degree of privacy. As such, given the arrangement detailed above alongside these separation distances, significant harm cannot be identified.

In terms of the dwellings to the rear, (No. 36a) being the closest, it is noted that these are not on the location plan. These are located to the north-east of a farm track which separates the site from these dwellings and there is a close boarded fence to the south-west of these dwellings. A review of the approved plans for these dwellings (which includes 36c) ref 19/01135/FUL includes the indicative layout approved under 18/02569/OUT. Whilst indicative (with other matters to be considered under a reserved matters application) it does provide a good basis for assessment of the relationship between 36a and plot 15 as they are similar to that proposed under this scheme in relation to their distance from the highway edge. Plot 15 is closer to the eastern boundary in comparison to the outline but is sufficient to assist with determination. Main concern is if any overlooking (of either plot) would be caused by the layout and relationship. Plot 15 has windows serving habitable rooms in the first floor which look north. 36a is not linear with the access track and is set at an angle. Plans for this property show no windows in the side (south-west) elevation of this property and its main defensible space is set to the north-west. There is approx. 19m to the boundary of 36a (oblique) at the closest point and further separation to the dwelling itself. As such, given the degree of separation, the layout (of both sites) and the lack of windows in this elevation there is considered to be no harm.

Overall, given the above assessment and matters which can be controlled by condition, there are no concerns with overlooking or loss of privacy to adjacent dwellings and land.

In terms of the dwellings themselves, the location of windows and relationship between the plots means that there will be no concerns with regard to overbearing impacts, overshadowing or loss of light. Furthermore, there are no issues with overlooking or loss of privacy. The window-to-window relationship between plots 6 and 7 has been carefully considered as there is approx. 9.7m between the two units. The first-floor landing windows could therefore provide views towards the lounge and dining area of the opposite unit. However, this is a characteristic of some mews type developments and for front-to-front relationships is considered broadly acceptable. As above, the scheme has also been subject to Urban Design assessment who raise no objections. The scheme has been designed in accordance with nationally described space standards and Housing Policy Officers are satisfied with the provision. There is a suitable degree of outside space associated with each dwelling as well as the open space provision. Furthermore, given the sustainable location there are wide ranging opportunities for recreation and leisure which are accessible.

In terms of other matters, it is noted that concerns have been raised regarding disruption during the construction phases (traffic matters are discussed later in this report) as well as the provision of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP's). HDC's Environmental Health Team have been consulted and whilst they raise no objections they do note that the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) whilst broadly acceptable indicates that further detail is needed. This matter can be secured by condition. Furthermore, as there is no technical data in respect of the ASHP's these shall also be secured by condition to prevent harm arising from noise. No objections have been raised in respect of contaminated land.

It is acknowledged that there are general concerns surrounding disruption during the development stages, increased movements, storage etc. However, all development is likely to be accompanied by some form of disruption which cannot be entirely mitigated. For a scheme of this size, it is considered that an updated CEMP (secured by condition) is an acceptable solution to this.

Cambridgeshire Constabulary were also consulted and whilst they raised no in principle objections they did make some recommendation as to how to improve the overall security/safety of the scheme. Whilst their comments are not disregarded, it is challenging to achieve all requirements especially where there is conflict in other areas. Their comments are available to view on the public file as guidance. An informative note regarding the secured by design scheme will be added to the permission.

Overall, taking all of the above matters into consideration, subject to conditions, the development accords with Policies LP14 and LP37 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Highway safety

The proposed access breaks through the existing boundary hedgerow slightly 'off centre'. Access to the agricultural land to the rear is required to be retained and this is provided between plots 6 and 7 as well as providing access to the parking spaces/garages serving these plots. There are two pedestrian islands on Thrapston Road outside the site which is on a 30mph stretch of road. It is noted that Brampton Parish Council have raised some concerns regarding the location of the access considering that it would be better placed opposite the existing access to the playing fields and memorial centre with a mini roundabout introduced which in their view would heighted highway safety for both vehicle users and pedestrians.

Whilst these comments are noted, it is not within the remit of the LPA to require a developer to include such works when there are no objections from the Local Highways Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council - CCC). In this case, CCC have been consulted. They observed that the access is the same as that proposed under application ref 21/01791/FUL which was subsequently withdrawn but with the reduction of one dwelling. It is noted that comments from the Parish Council dated 21st of September 2021 on this application raised no objections to this and noted that the access was 'significantly improved'.

CCC have raised no objections to this scheme. They note that if there are any further delays in the development being brought forward that the safety audits (completed for previous applications) will expire as they were carried out in November 2021 and have a shelf life of 5 years. However, at this present time they are satisfied that subject to conditions the effect of the development on the public highway will be mitigated.

It is acknowledged that concerns have been raised regarding other aspects such as speeding of vehicles etc and pedestrian safety, but, as discussed in the preceding sections of this report, a development can only manage its own issues. This development is relatively minor providing 15 dwellings, there are good pedestrian links to services adjacent to a 30mph road and a crossover of the access set back from the highway edge. At present, the vehicle speeds along this section of Thrapston Road may exceed 30mph, however, this is not likely to be heightened by this development alone and is a matter for law enforcement, not an issue which can be controlled by the LPA.

In terms of safety during the construction phases, the CEMP has been provided, and, whilst it does provide some details as to how impacts will be managed it references some documents/plans which have not been provided. These details shall therefore be secured as a pre-commencement condition. Again, the LPA cannot control parking levels on Thrapston Road but there is of course the reliance that vehicles will park within the law or be subject to enforcement action from the enforcing authority.

Overall, having regard to the above matters, subject to conditions the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on highway safety and would not have a significantly detrimental impact.

In terms of other matters, aside from plots 11-15, on plot parking is provided with plots 1-5 being integral garages and 6 and 7 being detached garages. These broadly accord with the guidance set out within the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD for provision of both vehicle and cycle storage. Additional parking (for visitors etc) is provided on the site frontage but set back behind soft landscaping. Plots 8-15 which do not benefit from garages will have cycle sheds in the rear gardens, separate details of these have been provided and Urban Design Officers are satisfied with this solution. In all cases the provision of cycle storage will be secured by condition.

Tracking information has also been provided to show how the agricultural access will operate safely and is considered acceptable. A revised plan has also been provided which shows combined refuse collection points established (within the site) for plots 1-6 and 7-15. HDC's Operations (Waste) Team were consulted but no representations have been received at the time of determination. Refuse collection is often a matter dealt with directly with the developer following the planning process (should any amendments be required for operational purposes) but for the purposes of this assessment is acceptable in planning terms.

Overall, the development is considered acceptable with regards to its approach to highway safety and sustainable travel and broadly accords with Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Flood risk

The application site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 and does not present any risk of surface water flooding as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data. Development of this nature is acceptable within Flood Zone 1 and neither it, nor the scale of the site requires the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment as per the NPPF (2024).

Concerns have been raised regarding the levels between the site and surrounding sites which could then lead to a slope (towards dwellings to the west) thereby causing surface water discharge towards these properties. This might be as a result of works completed by a future occupier of the property. There is a dispute raised in the objections regarding the actual levels of the two sites on the sectional drawings provided.

The LPA are not experts in such matters and so consult Cambridgeshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). A Surface Water Drainage Strategy prepared by MTC Engineering has been provided and the LLFA have been consulted three times and raise no objections in principle stating that the submitted documents demonstrate that surface water from the proposed development can be managed through the use of infiltration/soakaways and is also supportive of the use of permeable surfacing. They recommend that conditions are added to the consent. It should be acknowledged that Officers have sought clarity from the LLFA as there was a query on the conditions (which appeared repetitive) and reference to the September 2024 (as opposed to the April 2025) document. The LLFA have confirmed that it is acceptable to refer to the later document.

In addition to the above, the Alconbury and Ellington Internal Drainage Board (IDB) have also been consulted and raise no objections. They observe that if the proposed method of surface water disposal is found not to be acceptable and requires discharge into a watercourse within the jurisdiction of the board that additional permission from them (irrespective of planning permission) may be required. In this case, such matters would require further consideration via the LPA as the applicant would be unable to discharge the conditions suggested by the LLFA. Further approval of the surface water drainage scheme is required via a discharge of condition.

Anglian Water as the authority responsible for foul water has also been consulted and again raises no objections. They observe that there is capacity at the Brampton Water Recycling Centre to accommodate the flows from a development of this scale and that surface water (as per the submission) will not require connection to their assets. This is an LLFA matter (which has been addressed above) Overall, subject to addition of an informative note regarding Anglian Water assets, the development is considered acceptable with regard to waste water management.

Taking the above assessment into account, alongside the comments and lack of objection from specialists, the development is considered to be acceptable in terms of flood risk, surface water and waste water management. Whilst the concerns raised regarding the levels are acknowledged there is not a significant difference between the two sites. Furthermore, impacts such as those referenced could arise by works completed on a site which would not require planning permission. Boundary treatments, landscaping works and so on. It is not considered that such a significant degree of harm would occur (especially given the location of the site in an area which has a low risk of flooding) which would render the development unacceptable.

Overall, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies LP5, LP6 and LP15 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Biodiversity

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan requires a development to ensure no net loss of biodiversity and achieve a net gain where possible.

As well as the above (and separate from the requirements of LP30) qualifying new development is subject to Biodiversity Net Gain legislation pursuant to the Environment Act 2021. This means that a 10% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is required 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.

In this case the application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment (EIA) dated November 2024 which concludes that overall the site is of low ecological value and that subject to the implementation and mitigation measures detailed within the EIA that the development will have a minor positive impact on biodiversity. These shall be secured by condition. A District Level License for Great Crested Newts (GCN) as identified within the EIA has also been provided.

In terms of BNG the submitted metric and BNG details state that a 10% BNG can be achieved by off-site provision. HDC's Ecology Officer has been consulted and is broadly supportive of the proposals. The BNG shall be secured by a Section 106 agreement which has been produced in collaboration with the Council's Ecology Officer.

Concerns have been raised regarding the impact on biodiversity, however, as can be established by the EIA provided and the advice of specialists there will be no harm. New planting as proposed in the landscaping plan (and approved by the Council's Landscapes Officer) shall be secured by condition. The condition also has a caveat that any planting lost or removed within a specified period shall be replaced.

Overall, having regard to the above matters, and subject to condition and S106 the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to biodiversity impacts and accords with Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Impact on Trees

The main trees/hedgerow are those to the front (south) and some minor planting to the west. None of these are subject to Preservation Orders and, given that these are not within the Conservation Area these are not afforded formal protection. The southern trees/hedgerow to add to the verdant

character of the area and the submitted Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) proposes retention (aside from the access and includes a Tree Protection Plan. HDC's Arboricultural Officer has been consulted and raises no objections to the scheme. Initially he requested a condition to secure a Tree Protection Plan but an informal review of that provided in the AIA has since been undertaken and he is satisfied that a compliance condition will suffice in this instance.

Some concerns have been raised in objections relating to impact on trees and hedgerows. However, subject to the protection measures as well as the proposed planting (which will be secured by condition), the development is acceptable and there is no justifiable reason for refusal solely on this basis.

Overall, subject to condition, the development is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on trees and therefore accords with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036.

*Other matters

*Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Policy LP25 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals that include housing to meet the optional Building Regulation requirement M4(2)" Accessible and adaptable dwellings" unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this unachievable. Compliance is detailed within the submitted design and Access Statement, and as stated above, HDC's Housing Policy Team have worked with the applicants to ensure that the layouts and scales accord with this requirement. This shall be secured by condition.

*Water Efficiency Policy

LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals that include housing to comply with the optional building regulation for water efficiency, as set out in Approved Document G. The proposed development will be conditioned to be in accordance with and will be built in accordance with the LP12 (j) standards.

*Developer contributions (CIL)

The development will 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. CIL forms have been provided as part of the application and these shall be dealt with by the Council's Implementation Team.

The proposal is considered to accord with the requirements of Policy LP4 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contribution SPD in this regard.

Developer contributions (Wheeled Bins)

The application is accompanied by a Unilateral Undertaking Form for the provision of wheeled bins which is signed and dated 14th of January 2025. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the requirements of Policy LP4 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the Developer Contribution SPD in this regard.

*Conclusion

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it is acceptable in principle, would be visually acceptable and would not be harmful in terms of residential amenity, highway safety, flood risk, ecology or impact on trees.

Having regard to all relevant material considerations the proposed development is considered to comply with Policies LP2, LP3, LP4, LP5, LP6, LP10, LP11, LP12, LP14, LP15, LP16, LP17, LP24, LP30, LP31 and LP37 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and consequently, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388424 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to **Kevin Simpson**