OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 24/02052/OUT **Outline Application**

Proposal: Erection of two residential dwellings

Location: Land Adjacent Pig And Whistle Yard Station Road Holme

Applicant: Mrs & Mr J & R Ayres

Grid Ref: 519364 287543

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The 0.28-hectare application site comprises an area of hardstand which forms the site entrance and courtyard parking area and large area of bare ground with scattered vegetation on the edge of the settlement of Holme. The site is situated between residential dwellings No 6 and 6a Station Road. These dwellings are within the applicant's ownership but are not associated within this application. The site is accessed off a private drive off Station Road. The main settlement of Holme is northwest of Station Road.

The site is within Flood Zone 1 and has an overall low risk of flooding as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data. There are no listed buildings within or in the immediate vicinity of the site. The site is not within a conservation area. An area to the northeast of the access track is also within the applicant's control and is protected by a tree preservation order.

This application seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the erection of two residential dwellings. Details of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are 'Reserved Matters' to be considered at a future date (should outline permission be granted).

It is noted the site obtained outline planning permission for the erection of two dwellings on the 01.11.2021. This application seeks to renew the permission on the site.

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

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

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

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

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

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

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Adopted 15/05/2019)

- LP1: Amount of Development
- LP2: Strategy for Development
- LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP9: Small Settlements
- LP11: Design Context
- LP12: Design Implementation
- LP14: Amenity
- LP16: Sustainable Travel
- LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP25: Housing Mix
- LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows

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

Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance

- Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017)
- Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2007)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
- Huntingdonshire Tree Guidance Note 3
- Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply.

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

PLANNING HISTORY

20/00989/OUT- The erection of two dwellings. All matters reserved.- Permitted 01.11.2021.

CONSULTATIONS

Home Parish Council- No objection. The Parish Council recommend approval subject to the imposition of a condition to install a pedestrian footpath and crossing in the interest of pedestrian safety. The site is brownfield and the buildings within it are redundant and unattractive. The site is serviced by an existing access and is acceptable.

The Parish raise concerns over pedestrian safety along Station Road given it is unlit, experiences high traffic levels and speeding. This matter is addressed in a latter section of this report.

Local Highway Authority-No objection. The access design will be brought forward at reserved matters stage. The Officer recommends the imposition off several conditions to mitigate the effect of the proposed development on the public highway.

Environmental Health Officer- No objection. Our records show that this site was previously a coal yard. If minded to approve the application, then a land contamination risk assessment (and if necessary a remediation strategy) would be recommended for approval by the LPA prior to the commencement of development. Where it has been necessary to carry out land contamination remediation work, a remediation and verification report should be submitted to and agreed by the LPA prior to occupation of the site.

Ecology Officer-No comment at the time of determination.

REPRESENTATIONS
No third-party representations received in support or objection to the proposal at the time of determination.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES
The report addresses the principle, important and controversial issues which are in this case:
- The Principle of the Development
- Design, Visual Amenity and the Impact upon the Character of the Area
- Access, Highway Safety and Parking Provision
- Residential Amenity
- Biodiversity and Impact on Trees
- Flood Risk
- Development Obligations
- Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings
- Water Efficiency

*The Principle of the Development
Planning history indicates outline planning permission (application ref 20/00989/OUT) for the erection of two dwellings on the site was permitted on the 01.11.2021.

The principle of residential development on the site was established as the site was considered to be within the built-up area of the village of Holme. Holme is defined as a Small Settlement within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and whereby Policy LP9 is applicable to this application. Within the built-up areas of Small Settlements, residential development shall be supported where it is appropriately located within the built-up area.

The village of Holme is serviced with a village hall, preschool, public house and church. Whilst public transport is not presently available from the application site, the quantum of development proposed is considered sustainable for the level of service and infrastructure provision within the settlement. Details of secure cycle storage imposed by condition on any consent would encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel.

Local Plan Policy LP 9 part c states a proposal that is located within a built-up area of a Small Settlement will be supported where it has a positive effect on the character of the immediate locality and the settlement as a whole. This is considered in the following section of this report and is considered acceptable.

Given the above, the principle of development is acceptable and accords with the NPPF and policies LP2 and LP9 of the Local Plan to 2036, subject to compliance with other relevant policies and material considerations.

*Design, Visual Amenity and Impact Upon the Character of the Area
Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 state that developments should respond positively to their context, draw inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.

Whilst the application is in outline form, consideration shall be made to determine whether the proposed amount of development can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site.

The site is situated on the edge of the village of Holme and adjacent to the open countryside to the west. Whilst the site is a generous plot at 0.28-hectare area for two dwellings, it is recognised the site is an irregular shape which would be a constraint to any future design and layout. Whilst indicative site plans do not accompany this application, planning history on the site indicates the LPA considered three units would have formed a cramped arrangement and over development of the site and as a result only two dwellings could be satisfactorily accommodated within the site.

At present the site is visible from the countryside as post and wire fencing is located on the western boundary. A subsequent landscaping reserved matter(s) application, should development be permitted, should include a soft landscaping boundary treatment on the western boundary of the site to screen the development from the countryside.

The adjacent dwellings to the site are single and two stories in nature and given the site is adjacent to the open countryside, the scale of the dwellings should be carefully considered in detail as part of the relevant reserved matters submission. Should this application be permitted, it is considered reasonable and necessary to add a levels condition to the planning permission to ensure the visual amenity can be controlled in the future.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable with regards to the impact upon visual amenity and the character of the area. Whilst a future reserved matters application would be submitted assessing further details such as scale, layout, materials and landscaping, subject to the above, the proposal is therefore considered to accord with Policies LP 9 part c, LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017), the National Design Guide and the NPPF (2024) in this regard.

*Access, Highway Safety and Parking Provision
Paragraph 116 of the NPPF (2024) states 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 would be severe.

Policy LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

This application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of two residential dwellings on the site off Station Road, Holme. Whilst access and layout are reserved matters and are not for consideration at this stage, Officers need to be satisfied that that a safe access can be achieved. As such Cambridgeshire County Council and the Local Highways Authority (LHA) have been consulted as part of the application. The LHA raised no objection to the proposal subject to conditions.

Whilst the application is not accompanied with an indicative site plan and matters relating to parking would form part of a later reserved matters application, Officers are satisfied that sufficient parking can be accommodated within the two sizable residential plots proposed and that vehicles would be able to enter and exit the site in a forward gear.

It is acknowledged that the Parish Council raise concerns in regard to pedestrian safety along Station Road given it is unlit, experiences high traffic levels and speeding. It is also noted that the accompanying Planning Justification Statement states the access design would incorporate a pedestrian crossing point to the north side of Station Road. Given the Parish determined that development on the site can be made acceptable by the applicant/developer installing a controlled pedestrian crossing over the B660, a Grampian condition can be imposed to ensure the off-site highways improvements proposed have been fully implemented.

In terms of other matters, under a subsequent reserved matters application it should be demonstrated that cycle storage will be provided within the site (which is considered large enough) to accommodate storage for one cycle per bedroom in order to accord with the requirements of Policy LP17 of the Local Plan.

Overall, taking the above matters into consideration the proposal is considered acceptable with regard to parking provision and highway safety and therefore complies with Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF (2024) in this regard.

*Residential Amenity

Paragraph 135 of the NPPF 2024 states planning decisions should ensure that developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. In line with the NPPF, Local Plan Policy LP14 states 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.

This application seeks outline permission with all matters reserved. In considering this application the LPA need to be satisfied at this stage that the site is capable of accommodating the amount of development proposed without having a significantly detrimental impact on neighbouring amenity.

The closest residential dwellings to the application site are No.6 and 6a Station Road, Holme. Given the application was not accompanied with an indicative site layout, Officers cannot comment fully in regard to residential amenity impacts at this stage given the proposal seeks outline permission with all matters reserved.

The reserved matters application(s) will fully assess the impacts of matters such as overlooking, overshadowing and loss of privacy, both in relation to the dwellings proposed and the impact upon neighbouring properties.

Notwithstanding the above, planning history on the site indicates the LPA considered three units on the site to form a cramped arrangement, over development and may have posed unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing and loss of privacy impacts to adjacent neighbours. The site is however considered sufficient to accommodate two residential units without posing significant harm to residential amenity.

Given the above, the quantum of development sought could be accommodated by the application site without significant harm to residential amenity. The proposal is considered to accord with Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide, the National Design Guide and the NPPF (2024) in this regard.

*Biodiversity and Impact on Trees
Paragraph 187 of the NPPF 2024 states planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and ensure no net loss in biodiversity and where possible provide a net gain. Additionally, Policy LP31 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to investigate adverse impacts to existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerows and supports proposals which conserve and enhance tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerows.

Given the site is within 250 metres of a pond whereby the presents of protected species would need to be investigated, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) conducted by Arbtech and dated the 26th November 2024 accompanies this application. The report concludes that the site has limited ecological value as it primarily comprises a hard surface and bare ground with the occasional scattered vegetation. The PEA found the proposal to have limited impact on protected species and habitats and any further ecological surveys to be disproportionate. The report details recommendations to mitigate against any potential impacts to protected species and habitats. Should the development be permitted a condition seeking a Biodiversity Method Statement detailing how the recommendations contained in the PEA will be carried out can be imposed.

As stated in preceding sections of this report, an area to the northeast of the access track is also within the applicant's control and is protected by a tree preservation order and one Deodar Ceder tree is in the southeastern corner of the site. Whilst at this outline stage it is unknown whether the layout and design of the proposal would result in the loss of trees, it is recommended any future reserved matters application should be accompanied with Arboricultural Survey, Tree Constraints Plan and Arboricultural Impact Assessment to detail how existing trees within and adjacent to the

site are to be protected. These details can be secured by condition should outline permission be granted.

As of the 2nd April 2024, mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG) is applicable on small sites as per paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)). The submitted application states the development is BNG exempt given the proposal impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. less than a 5m by 5m square) of onsite habitat with a biodiversity value greater than zero and on less than 5 metres of onsite linear habitat (such as a hedgerow). The submitted PEA states that the development proposed would result in the loss of 400m2 of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surfaces. Nevertheless, this has an onsite habitat baseline of zero and the ornamental hedgerow on site, extending beyond the site boundary but within the applicant's control, is less than 5m in length (according to Appendix 3 of the submitted PEA). Whilst details of tree and hedgerow removal would be detailed in a future reserved matter(s) application, Officers are satisfied that the development would not impact on any onsite priority habitat and the agreed baseline biodiversity value of the site is zero and therefore the proposal accords with the de minimis exemption for BNG.

Overall, Officers are satisfied with the PEA and subject to the imposition of conditions to secure a Biodiversity Method Statement and the biodiversity enhancement measures, the proposal is considered to accord with the objectives of Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024). The development is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on trees, subject to conditions and therefore accords with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Flood Risk
National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 174-181 of the NPPF (2024).

The application site is within Flood Zone 1 (at low risk from river and sea flooding), based on Environment Agency Floods Maps and at low risk of ground water flooding per the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2024. Given this and the site is less than 1 hectare in size, the submission of a flood risk assessment, sequential and exceptions tests for flooding are considered unnecessary in accordance with the NPPF and NPPG.

The submitted application form states surface water would be disposed of through sustainable drainage systems. As the proposed development is minor and is at a low risk of flooding, Officers are satisfied that drainage details can be secured as part of building regulations and other relevant legislative requirements.

The development therefore accords with Policies LP5 and LP15 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Development Obligations
The application is accompanied with a Unilateral Undertaking for the provision of wheeled bins dated the 23rd January 2025. The application therefore accords with part H of the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2011) and Policy LP4 of the Local Plan to 2036 in this regard.

*Community Infrastructure Levy (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.

*Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Policy LP25 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals for 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.

A condition could be imposed upon any consent to ensure that the development is built in accordance with these standards and maintained for the life of the development.

*Water Efficiency
Policy LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals for housing to comply with the optional building regulation for water efficiency, as set out in Approved Document G.

A condition could be imposed upon any consent to ensure that the development is built in accordance with these standards and that they are maintained for the life of the development.

*Conclusion
In this instance, a proposal for the erection of two dwellings in the built up-area of Holme is not considered to cause significant and demonstrable harm that would outweigh the economic, social and environmental benefits of the proposal and the proposed development is considered to be compliant with relevant national and local planning policy as:

*The principle of residential development within the built-up area of a sustainable settlement is acceptable.
*The quantum of development could be accommodated and would not have a significantly adverse impact on the overall character of the area.
*The quantum of development could be accommodated and could be designed to satisfactorily safeguard the amenities of neighbouring dwellings.
*There are no overriding highway safety issues.
*The proposal will not impact on existing ecology and would be able to enhance biodiversity.
*Is acceptable in regard to flood risk and surface water drainage.
*It would not be harmful to protected trees in the locality.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that outline 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 **Charlotte Dew**