HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

24/02259/FUL

OFFICER REPORT

Case No: **24/02259/FUL** **Full Planning Application**

Proposal: **The erection of 52 homes, access, open space and associated infrastructure.**

Location: **Land At West Newlands St Ives Road Somersham**

Applicant: **Bellway Homes Limited (Eastern Counties)**

Grid Ref: **535291 277989**

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1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

Site and Surroundings

1.1 The application site is located to the west of Somersham, positioned between the West Newlands Industrial Estate to the east and College Farm, an access track, and Fosgrove House to the west. To the south lies sporadic residential development, while the northern boundary adjoins agricultural land and open countryside. The site comprises an agricultural field, roughly rectangular in shape, extending to approximately 1.62 hectares. It is enclosed by field drains, post and rail fencing, and intermittent hedgerow along the eastern, northern, and southern boundaries. A row of mature trees defines the site frontage along St Ives Road and partially screens the western boundary adjacent to College Farm. The topography of the site falls gently from northwest to southeast towards St Ives Road.

1.2 To the east of the West Newlands Industrial estate lies the Local Plan allocation site SM2: Newlands, St Ives Road Somersham. This site was subject to applications 15/00917/OUT,19/02220/REM and 19/02289/REM for the erection of 45 dwellings together with a 70-bed care home and is currently under construction.

1.3 The site is allocated for residential development in Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (Policy SM1) for approximately 55 homes.

1.4 The entirety of the application site is within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's Flood Maps for Planning and Huntingdonshire's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024). The SFRA 2024 shows the southern boundary of the site and some isolated areas being at risk of surface water flooding.

1.5 The site does not contain or fall within the setting of any designated heritage assets and is not located within a Conservation Area.

Proposal

1.6 The proposed development is a full planning application for the erection of 52 homes, access, open space and associated infrastructure. The proposed development comprises a mix of detached and semi-detached two-storey dwellings – 31 are proposed for private sale and 21 would be delivered as affordable housing.

1.7 This application has been accompanied by the following supporting documentation:

- Location Plan

- Elevations, floor plans, street scenes
- Site Plan
- Materials Plan
- Tenure Plan
- Boundary Treatment Plan & Boundary Treatment Details
- Visitor Parking Plan
- Housetype Key Plan
- Parking Strategy Plan
- Refuse Collection Plan
- Adoptable Roads and Footpaths Plan
- Design & Access Statement
- Landscape Masterplan & Detailed Landscape Proposals
- Planning Statement
- Transport Statement
- Ecological Appraisal
- Biodiversity Metric & Biodiversity Net Gain Plan
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment Report and Drainage Strategy Technical Note
- Environmental Noise Assessment
- Health Impact Assessment
- Sustainability Statement

1.8 The proposed development has been amended during consideration of the planning application following receipt of consultee comments.

1.9 With regard to the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 the development does not meet the criteria to require a detailed screening opinion, as the application proposes less than 150 dwellings and the site area is under 5 hectares. It is therefore not anticipated that the project would have significant environmental effects and is therefore not considered to be EIA development.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 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).'

2.2 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.

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

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

3. PLANNING POLICIES

3.1 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019

*Allocation SM1 – College Farm, West Newlands Industrial Estate, Somersham
*Policy LP1 - Amount of Development
*Policy LP2 – Strategy for Development
*Policy LP3 – Green Infrastructure
*Policy LP4 – Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
*Policy LP5 – Flood Risk
*Policy LP6 – Waste Water Management
*Policy LP8 – Key Service Centre
*Policy LP11 – Design Context
*Policy LP12 – Design Implementation
*Policy LP14 – Amenity
*Policy LP15 – Surface Water
*Policy LP16 – Sustainable Travel
*Policy LP17 – Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
*Policy LP24 – Affordable Housing
*Policy LP25 – Housing Mix
*Policy LP26 – Specialist Housing
*Policy LP30 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity
*Policy LP31 – Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerow
*Policy LP34 – Heritage Assets and their Settings
*Policy LP37 – Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution

3.2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:
*Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD (2017)
*Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment (2022)
*Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2024)
*Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
*Developer Contributions: Updated Costs 2025/26
*Annual Monitoring Report

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

4. PLANNING HISTORY

4.1 There is no relevant planning history for the site.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 **Somersham Parish Council** – Support.

5.2 **Local Lead Flood Authority (Cambridgeshire County Council)** – No objection in principle subject to conditions.

5.3 **Highways Development Management (Cambridgeshire County Council)** – No objection subject to conditions.

5.4 **Transport Assessment Team (Cambridgeshire County Council)** – No comments received.

5.5 **Historic Environment Team (Cambridgeshire County Council)** – The submitted archaeological evaluation report details evidence for medieval ridge and furrow cultivation (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference. ECB7396). The report has been approved and we are working with the applicants archaeological contractor over any remaining archive requirements. No further mitigation works are required, therefore the condition advised previously is no longer advised. We would have no further comment of objection to the application.

5.6 **HDC Environmental Health** – Previous concerns regarding noise have been addressed through the submitted Environmental Noise Assessment. The proposed mitigation measures are considered acceptable given the site context. Conditions are recommended to secure details of acoustic barriers, internal sound insulation and ventilation, a verification report, and a resident welcome pack. Contamination and CEMP conditions are also advised.

5.7 **HDC Urban Design** – The applicant has responded positively to earlier feedback, particularly regarding housing mix, frontage treatments, and removal of the affordable housing parking court. However, key concerns remain around open space provision, corner-turning units, and overall compliance with Local Plan Policies LP11, LP12(a–c), LP17, and the SM1 allocation. Minor design matters—such as boundary treatments, materials, parking layout, and cycle storage—can be addressed via planning conditions. Further amendments are recommended to resolve outstanding issues.

5.8 **HDC Arboricultural Officer** – Although the proposal may require some pruning/removal to facilitate access, and locate homes, generally in favour of the application. T34 Sycamore is quite visually important and should be retained if possible. The encroachment into T28's RPA would not be acceptable as the encroachment is not essential, and it is significant in size. The fencing could be put around the RPA and the pond shape adapted to reflect this. The loss of T26 is also of concern, but the design would require major changes to accommodate a home near this location and retain the tree.

5.9 **HDC Policy and Enabling Officer** – No objection subject to tenure swap between the one bed shared ownership and two bed affordable rent and provision of level access showers for the two affordable bungalows. Condition required to demonstrate compliance with m4(3).

5.10 **Environment Agency** – The site falls within the catchment of Somersham Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW), which is currently operating above its permitted discharge limits. The WWTW has exceeded both Q80 and Q90 thresholds in recent years, contributing to water quality issues in the receiving waterbody, which is failing to meet 'good' ecological status. The WWTW is not currently included in Anglian Water's AMP8 investment plan, and AWS has requested Ofwat's Final Determination be referred to the CMA. Until future capacity and investment plans are confirmed, the Environment Agency is unable to comment on the impact of the proposed development on the water environment. The LPA is advised to consult AWS to ensure growth can be delivered without harm to water quality.

5.11 **Anglian Water** (27th December 2024, 13th January 2025 and 25th March 2025) – objects to the proposed development due to the intended connection to the public foul drainage network. The site is located within the catchment of the Somersham Water Recycling Centre which currently lacks capacity to accommodate the additional flows that would be generated by the proposed development. Anglian Water has determined that the site is unsustainable due to the associated environmental risk and the increased discharge rates, which could lead to a deterioration in water quality and an unacceptable risk of breaching environmental legislation. Recommend planning permission be refused on the grounds of insufficient infrastructure capacity and to prevent environmental harm. The sewerage system at present has available capacity for used water flows. However any connection to the foul network will contribute to pollution and deterioration of the watercourse via the WRC. If the LPA is minded to grant approval despite the WRC objection, the developer will need to give notice under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991.

Updated comments (16th December 2025) – the Somersham WRC is already operating above its permitted Dry Weather Flow limit and therefore cannot accommodate additional foul flows from the proposed development. The scheme would add around 19.67m³/day, worsening the

exceedance and increasing environmental risk to the River Great Ouse and the upstream Ouse Washes SSSI, which is already in an unfavourable condition due to nutrient pressures.

5.12 **Natural England** – the application could have potential significant effects on Ouse Washes SPA, SAC and Ramsar and a Habitat Regulations Assessment is required because the 2017 Local Plan HRA relied on is now out of date. Note that Anglian Water has advised a lack of capacity at Somersham WRC, meaning the proposal is currently unsustainable due to potential risk of deterioration in water quality. Until a project-specific HRA and Appropriate Assessment are provided, Natural England may need to object.

6. REPRESENTATIONS

6.1 No representations received.

7. PLANNING ASSESSMENT

7.1 The main issues to consider in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of development
- Housing Mix including Affordable Housing
- Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on the Surrounding Area
- Residential Amenity
- Transport and Highway Matters
- Foul Drainage
- Flood Risk and Drainage
- Biodiversity/Ecology
- Impact on Trees
- Planning obligations

Principle of development

Housing Land Supply

7.2 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.

7.3 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 12 December 2024 in the revised NPPF and associated NPPG (the standard method).

7.4 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 the provision of a buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land.

7.5 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 5,907 homes. The current 5YHLS is 4,345 homes, equivalent to 3.68 years' supply.

7.6 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'.

7.7 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. Where an application is situated within a parish with a made Neighbourhood Plan NPPF paragraph 14 should also be taken into account.

Location and suitability of the site

7.8 Policy LP1 sets out the amount of development the Local Plan seeks to address having regard to the objectively assessed need for development in Huntingdonshire. Paragraph 4.4 of the Local Plan confirms that allocated sites are included to promote the deliverability of the strategy.

7.9 Somersham is classified in policies LP2 and LP8 as a Key Service Centre and thus is one of the district's sustainable centres which can accommodate growth. Policy LP2 explains that approximately one quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing and limited employment and retail growth will be focussed in Key Service Centres and Small Settlements. Paragraph 4.98 in the supporting text to Policy LP8 notes that Key service Centres have a role in meeting the development needs of the district and supporting the economic vitality of these settlements through a series of allocations for new development.

7.10 Policies LP2 and LP8 are within the Development Strategy chapter of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, and are therefore considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications for residential development. Notwithstanding this, weight should still be given to Policies LP2 and LP8 given that they direct development in locations which provide, or have the potential to provide, the most comprehensive range of services and facilities which is consistent with the NPPF 2024.

7.11 The application site is allocated for residential development under site-specific allocation policy SM1:

1.8ha of land at College Farm, West of Newlands Industrial Estate, Somersham is allocated for residential development of approximately 55 homes. Successful development of the site will require:

1. provision of a suitable means of vehicular access.
This is assessed in section titled 'Transport and Highway Matters' below.

2. provision of a footway to link the site with the existing footway network to the village
This is assessed in section titled 'Transport and Highway Matters' below.

3. design which provides for lesser density and/or landscaping towards the west and north of the site reflecting the transition to open countryside
This is assessed in section titled 'Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on the Surrounding Area' below.

4. provision of appropriate acoustic treatment to mitigate against adjacent industrial uses and the College Farm complex to the north-west
This is assessed in section titled 'Residential Amenity' below.

5. retention of the trees along the west boundary and the site frontage; except where removal is required for access
This is assessed in section titled 'Impact on Trees' below.

6. provision of a surface water drainage strategy that responds to the sloping topography of the land
This is assessed in section titled 'Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage' below.

7. agreement with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water Services that waste water flows from the proposal can be accommodated
This is assessed in section titled 'Foul Drainage' below and for the reasons set out it is not considered that criteria 7. or 8. of SM1 is complied with.

8. agreement with the Environment Agency that meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive would not be compromised
This is assessed in section titled 'Foul Drainage' below and for the reasons set out it is not considered that criteria 7. or 8. of SM1 is complied with.

7.12 The application site measures approximately 1.62ha and does not cover the whole SM1 allocation as it excludes an area of land to the west. The proposal is for 52 dwellings which represents a similar density to the SM1 allocation. Policy SM1 sets out a number of requirements in relation to access and accessibility, design, amenity, trees and drainage. These matters are considered elsewhere in this report.

7.13 In terms of the principle of development, the proposed residential development is largely in accordance with the allocation in terms of quantum, use and location, however as set out later in the report there is conflict with criteria 7. and 8. of Policy SM1 of the Local Plan.

Housing mix including Affordable Housing

7.14 The Cambridge sub-region Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2013 provides guidance on the mix of housing required for Huntingdonshire up to 2031. This gives broad ranges reflecting the variety of properties within each bedroom category. This indicates a requirement for the following mix: up to 4% 1-bedroom homes, 16-42% 2-bedroom homes, 26-60% 3-bedroom homes and up to 30% 4 or more-bedroom homes.

7.15 The Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk Housing Needs of Specific Groups report was released in October 2021. This indicates a requirement for the following mix: up to 10% 1-bedroom homes, 20-30% 2-bedroom homes, 40-50% 3-bedroom homes and 20- 30% 4 or more-bedroom homes.

7.16 The Huntingdonshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (August 2025) identifies the recommended housing mix across tenures to inform the emerging Local Plan. For market housing, the assessment indicates a need for approximately 5% 1-bedroom, 30% 2-bedroom, 40% 3-bedroom and 25% 4-plus-bedroom homes. Affordable home ownership is expected to comprise a greater proportion of smaller units, with 15% 1-bedroom, 45% 2-bedroom, 30% 3-bedroom and 10% 4-plus-bedroom dwellings. For affordable rented housing, the recommended mix varies by age group: households aged under 65 are anticipated to require 25% 1-bedroom, 35% 2-bedroom, 30% 3-bedroom and 10% 4-plus-bedroom homes, while households aged 65 and over demonstrate a stronger need for smaller properties, with a recommended split of 50% 1-bedroom and 50% 2-bedroom units.

7.17 The proposed development includes a mix of 1, 2, 3 and 4 bed homes which broadly aligns with the requirements above and will contribute to the creation a sustainable, inclusive and mixed community in the locality.

7.18 With regard to the development meeting the requirements of Policy LP25 criteria f to h (meeting M4 (2) & M4 (3) building requirements), the proposed dwellings are capable of meeting the requirements of M4(2) and there are two wheelchair adaptable bungalows

proposed (Plots 30 and 31). Conditions will be attached securing these requirements. An informative is also recommended to advise the applicant of the requirements of M4(3), including provision of a level access shower or wet room (not a bath), capacity for a hoist to travel from the bathroom to main bedroom and ease of access in a wheelchair from car to home. Compliance will need to be demonstrated through the discharge of condition process.

7.19 The requirements within policy LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 relating to sustainable design and construction methods are applicable to all new dwellings. This states that all dwellings should meet Building Regulation requirement Approved Document G for water efficiency. It is considered that the dwellings are capable of meeting this requirement, achieving a water efficiency of 125L per day per person. A condition will be attached to ensure that the dwellings are built in compliance.

7.20 Policy LP24 of the Local Plan states 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.

7.21 The proposal looks to deliver a policy compliant level of affordable housing (21 dwellings). 15 would be affordable rent and 6 shared ownership. These would be a mix of 1, 2 and 3 beds and the 2 2-bed bungalows proposed are shown as M4(3) adaptable. These are somewhat dispersed on the site, with the majority located in the north eastern part of the site and a few units sited more centrally in the site. There is some cross over in house types with the affordable housing and market housing, such that it is not considered that there would be a distinguishable external appearance.

7.22 The Affordable Housing Officer has worked closely with the applicant and planning officer to secure the affordable housing provision and mix. Following amendments to the scheme, it is considered that the affordable housing provision accords with the aims of Policy LP24 subject to securing the affordable housing through a Section 106 agreement.

Design, Visual Amenity and Impact on the Surrounding Area

7.23 The proposed layout shows access from the south off St Ives Road which then extends north through the site, with shared surface roads extending northwards and eastwards. A footpath is proposed across the northern end of the site, connecting the two shared surface turning heads which enables pedestrian/cycle permeability within the site.

7.24 The proposed open space is located to the front of the site around the SuDS and a narrow stretch across the rear of the site.

7.25 On the St Ives Frontage, the proposed dwellings are set back behind retained tree planting, SuDS ponds and proposed private drives. Along the eastern edge of the site, dwellings are arranged to back on or side on to the adjacent Newlands Industrial Estate.

7.26 Amendments have been made to the site layout and the design of the proposed dwellings during the course of the application to respond to comments made by HDC's Urban Design Officer. The amendments have gone some way towards addressing concerns, however there is an outstanding concern in relation to plots 36 and 44. It has been recommended that further enhancements are required to the side elevations of these units to create stronger corner-turning units and support a high-quality public realm.

7.27 The SM1 Allocation requires a "*design which provides for lesser density and/or landscaping towards the west and north of the site reflecting the transition to open countryside."* As mentioned above, the site boundary does not include the western extent of the allocation which leaves a gap of approximately 8 to 17 metres from the College Farm access track. The propsoed dwellings on the western edge are arranged to back on to the western site boundary with College Farm and the submitted Landscape Plan drawing GLY0105 LP 01 H proposes an approximately 1.50m wide, 1.50-1.75m high hornbeam hedgerow in front of the approximately 125m long section of close boarded fence to the side and rear of Plots 1 and 3 – 12. These plots have been amended during the application to comprise semi-detached and detached house types with side drives, creating a looser grain form of development on this western boundary.

7.28 On the northern edge of the site, the proposed dwellings (excluding plot 13) are arranged to front onto the turning head and strip of open space. The Urban Design Officer has noted that the parking for Plots 28-29, 30-31 projects forward of the building line and dominates the northern edge of the development. The existing hedgerow which partially falls within the red line and runs along the northern boundary is proposed to be retained. Low level native shrub and amenity grass is proposed within the open space as there is no opportunity for tree planting due to an overhead electricity cables. It is considered the offset of built form and provision of open space to the northern boundary accords with the aims of Policy SM1 to provide a lesser density to transition into the open countryside.

7.29 In terms of materials and elevations, the proposed dwellings have a traditional arts and crafts appearance with glazing bars, brick header and cill details, simple lean-to porch canopies and a mixture of red and grey tiled roofs. The proposed dwellings would have either red or buff facing brick. These materials are considered acceptable and in keeping with the local vernacular, subject to conditions securing samples of the brick and tiles. Eaves and verge details should also be conditioned to confirm the depth of soffits and fascias and dry verge cappings.

7.30 During the course of the application, amended plans have been received to introduced chimneys for the dwellings fronting St Ives Road which reflect existing dwellings further east on the south side of the road and the dwellings under construction on the Rose Homes site frontage (reference 19/0220/REM).

7.31 A plan showing detailed landscaping proposals (GLY0105 01 H) has been submitted. This shows new tree planting to the St Ives frontage and a few trees further within the site. Areas of turf, amenity grass and shrub planting are proposed to the front and side of dwellings through the site and within the open spaces. A condition is recommended to require compliance with the detailed soft landscaping scheme.

7.32 In terms of hard landscaping, whilst the general arrangement of hard standing is acceptable, it is recommended that areas of frontage parking (i.e. Plots 21-22, 37-43 and 44-47) are also in block paving to further break up and soften this parking. Furthermore, the means of demarcating and numbering spaces (applicable to shared side drives and frontage parking) should also be confirmed by way of condition.

7.33 Taking all of the above into consideration, and subject to the above recommended conditions, it is considered that the proposal would not have a material adverse visual impact and would have an acceptable effect on the character of the immediate locality. The proposed development would accord with Policies SM1, LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD.

Residential Amenity

7.34 Policy LP14 of the Local Plan to 2036 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.

Neighbouring properties

7.35 The closest neighbouring properties with potential to be affected by the proposed development are Foxgrove House and College Farm to the west. There would be a separation distance of approximately 30 metres between the side elevation of Plot 1 and Foxgrove House, and around 38 metres between the rear elevations of Plots 10 and 11, and the side elevation of the garage at Plot 12, and the dwelling at College Farm. Given these distances, it is not considered that the development would result in any unacceptable impacts in terms of overlooking or loss of privacy to existing neighbouring properties or future occupiers.

7.36 Given the scale of the proposed development, Environmental Health has advised that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be submitted and agreed prior to commencement of works. The CEMP should detail mitigation measures to control pollution, including noise, dust, and lighting, throughout the construction and clearance phases. The plan must be adhered to unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Additionally, no burning of waste will be permitted on site during these phases.

Amenity for future occupiers

7.37 The orientation and layout of the proposed dwellings ensures that there would be limited overlooking between the dwellings and each property would have its own private external amenity space. However, the landing windows of Plots 26 and 27 should also be obscured glazed and fixed shut to prevent high level overlooking to the rear gardens of Plots 16-17 which can be conditioned.

7.38 The proposed relationship between the residential plots and the adjoining commercial/industrial building has been assessed. A large first-floor window on the west elevation of the industrial building serves a meeting room and would offer some views towards the rear gardens of Plots 30 and 31. However, the 10-metre separation distance, combined with proposed boundary treatments and existing landscaping including mature trees and hedgerow would help to mitigate potential overlooking. Furthermore, due to the orientation of the bungalows on Plots 30 and 31, there would be no direct overlooking into windows serving habitable rooms. As such, the degree of overlooking is not considered to result in unacceptable harm to residential amenity.

Noise

7.39 Allocation policy SM1 requires the provision of appropriate acoustic treatment to mitigate against adjacent industrial uses and the College Farm complex to the north-west.

7.40 HDC's Environmental Health Officer has raised no comments or concerns in relation to the relationship between the proposed dwellings and the College Farm complex to the north-west. It is considered that there are two noise sources on this site – the road noise and the noise from the neighbouring industrial/commercial site.

7.41 Updated/additional information in relation to noise has been submitted during the course of the application and reviewed by HDC's Environmental Health Officer. The submitted Environmental Noise Assessment dated 21st July 2025, Report number 22906-1-R7 demonstrates the plots and rooms that are likely to require additional mitigation.

7.42 The first floor external plant at the Equipment Support Company to the north east of the site has been raised as a concern during the course of the application given the relationship to the proposed dwellings on the eastern boundary of the site.

7.43 NPPF (2024) paragraph 200 sets out the "agent of change" policy: *"Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities (such as places of worship, pubs, music venues and sports clubs). Existing businesses and facilities should not have unreasonable restrictions placed on them as a result of development permitted after they were established. Where the operation of an existing business or community facility could have a significant adverse effect on new development (including changes of use) in its vicinity, the applicant (or 'agent of change') should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed."*

7.44 Subject to the installation of an acoustic fence along the eastern boundary between plots 31 to 36 and full details of the proposed glazing, passive and mechanical ventilation units for the noise mitigation and alternative ventilation provision for certain plots and rooms which are both to be secured by condition, the Environmental Health officer no longer objects to the proposal. With mitigation, it is not considered the relationship between the existing commercial building and the proposed dwellings would be unacceptable. On this basis, the agent of change principle is not considered to be engaged and the future occupants of the dwellings would have an acceptable level of amenity both internally and externally.

Health

7.45 Policy LP29 states a proposal for large scale development will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the design of the scheme has been informed by the conclusions of a rapid Health Impact Assessment. A Health Impact Assessment Matrix dated November 2024 by Carter Jonas has been submitted with the application. This demonstrates that the proposed development satisfies the requirements of Policy LP29 of the Local Plan as the scheme would have a positive impact on health outcomes.

Contamination

7.46 Environmental Health has advised that, due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, a contamination assessment is required. This should be secured by condition to ensure that any potential risks to human health or the environment are appropriately identified and mitigated prior to commencement of development. Subject to this, the proposal would comply with Policies LP14 and LP37.

Transport and Highway Matters

7.47 Policy LP16 of the Local Plan looks to ensure that developers fully consider how the opportunities and impacts of the range of travel and transport modes are addressed in their proposals. Policy LP17 of the Local Plan sets out that a proposal will be supported where it incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates accessibility for service and emergency vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

7.48 Allocation Policy SM1 also requires:

- provision of a suitable means of vehicular access
- provision of a footway to link the site with the existing footway network to the village

7.49 The application is supported by a Transport Statement (Rev B), dated March 2025, which concludes that the proposed development would generate approximately 29 two-way vehicle

trips during peak periods. This level of traffic is not considered to have a material impact on the local highway network, equating to roughly one additional vehicle every two minutes.

7.50 The site is currently served by a field access from St Ives Road on the eastern end of the southern boundary. The proposal includes a new more centralised access further to the west. The existing site access will be removed upon completion of the development and returned to verge / footway. The Highways Officer has confirmed the access onto the highway is indicated to have vehicle to vehicle splays of 2.4m x 120m which is in accordance with the posted speed of the road. Furthermore, the pedestrian visibility indicated is acceptable.

7.51 The internal estate road is indicated as being 5 metres in width with 2 metre wide footways which is considered acceptable for the number of dwellings being served. The submitted tracking indicates the refuse freighters can turn within the adoptable turning areas which is acceptable to the Highways Officer.

7.52 In accordance with Policy SM1, the proposal includes off-site footway improvements along the site frontage and towards West Newlands, connecting to the existing widened footway. The proposed footway would measure 2m in width with a 0.5m verge separating it from the carriageway. The proposed footway connection would enable future occupants of the development to safely access services and facilities within Somersham on foot. The Highway Authority have raised no objection to the proposed off-site footway works.

7.53 In terms of parking provision, while no specific standards are set out, Policy LP17 requires adequate parking to meet the anticipated needs of residents and visitors. The proposed development would provide one parking space per one-bedroom dwelling, and two spaces per two-, three-, and four-bedroom dwelling. Visitor parking spaces are also proposed. Some plots include either single or shared garages with adjacent plots, with internal dimensions of 3.3m by 6.0m meeting recommended standards for usable garage space.

7.54 It is proposed that cycle parking would be accommodated within garages or within a covered secure structure. Details of the covered secure cycle structure are shown on drawing 9171 – CS and are considered acceptable.

7.55 Subject to conditions recommended by the Highway Authority, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of transport and highways matters and accords with Policies SM1, LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan.

Foul Drainage

7.56 In relation to Water Treatment Capacity, Policy LP6 of the Local Plan states:
"A proposal for any scale of development will be supported if:
d. Anglian Water Services do not raise concerns relating to the ability of waste water infrastructure to accommodate waste water flows from the proposal;
e. the Environment Agency and Natural England or another responsible authority do not raise concerns that the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive could be compromised;
and f. the Middle Level Commissioners or other internal drainage board do not object on the basis of flood risk in the system they manage, as may be applicable.

To achieve these requirements for proposals that would involve waste water flows to Waste water Treatment Works (WwTW) with constrained capacity, as currently identified in the Huntingdonshire Stage 2 Detailed Water Cycle Study, interim treatment measures are likely to be required until an acceptable permanent solution is put in place. Where temporary measures are not available or would be insufficient it may be necessary for development to be phased. If acceptable permanent solutions are not possible proposals will not be supported."

7.57 Allocation Policy SM1 requires:

- agreement with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water Services that waste water flows from the proposal can be accommodated
- agreement with the Environment Agency that meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive would not be compromised

7.58 The supporting text to Allocation Policy SM1 at paragraph 13.64 states: *"The policy requires agreement with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water Services that the waste water flows from proposed development can be accommodated and that meeting the requirements of the Water Framework Directive would not be compromised. The Somersham Waste water Treatment Works (WwTW) will serve this allocation. The WwTW currently has no available headroom and so unless additional headroom becomes available a change in discharge consent and process upgrades at the WwTW will be required for the projected growth. This would be achievable within the limits of conventional treatment and hence would not impact on attainment of future WFD water quality objectives. Interim treatment solutions will be necessary until a permanent treatment solution is put in place. Should temporary measures prove not to be viable or would be insufficient it may be necessary to place limits on the amount of development that can take place."*

7.59 Paragraph 187e) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.

7.60 Paragraph 201 of the NPPF (2024) states the focus of planning decisions should be on whether proposed development is an acceptable use of land, rather than the control of processes or emissions (where these are subject to separate pollution control regimes). Planning decisions should assume that these regimes will operate effectively.

7.61 Anglian Water (AW), the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural England (NE) have been consulted on the application.

7.62 AW has raised an objection to the proposed development due to the intended connection to the public foul drainage network. The site is located within the catchment of the Somersham Water Recycling Centre (WRC) which currently lacks capacity to accommodate the additional flows that would be generated by the proposed development. Anglian Water has determined that the site is unsustainable due to the associated environmental risk and the increased discharge rates, which could lead to a deterioration in water quality and an unacceptable risk of breaching environmental legislation.

7.63 Officers issued letters to both the applicant and AW on 25th November 2025. AW was asked to identify: (1) the extent to which the development would result in a net increase in waste water flows (noting that this is an existing leisure centre ; (2) the extent of any consequent increase in discharges through Storm Overflows; (3) the sensitivity of the receiving water; and (4) the additional environmental or amenity harm caused.

7.64 AW have stated that Somersham WRC is already operating above its permitted Dry Weather Flow limit and therefore cannot accommodate additional foul flows from the proposed development. The scheme would add around 19.67m³/day, worsening the exceedance and increasing environmental risk to the River Great Ouse and the upstream Ouse Washes SSSI, which is already in an unfavourable condition linked to nutrient pollution including Phosphate.

Phosphate nutrient loading within the River Great Ouse is linked in part to point source discharges.

7.65 Updated comments from the EA dated 18th August 2025 confirms that Somersham WRC is currently operating in exceedance of its environmental permit for discharge volume. The EA state that they are unable to comment on the impact to the water environment until they have a clear understanding of Anglian Water's plans to accommodate growth within this catchment, and the LPA should be satisfied that any growth can be delivered without harm to the water environment.

7.66 NE has advised that the development could have potential significant effects on the Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar in the absence of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) demonstrating otherwise which would need to take into account the lack of capacity at Somersham WRC to accommodate additional foul flows. The proposed development is currently considered unsustainable due to potential risk to deterioration in water quality.

7.67 A letter by Carter Jonas LLP on behalf of the applicant dated 15th December 2025 concludes that the applicant cannot provide any meaningful mitigation for Anglian Water's capacity concerns because the issue lies entirely with the WRC, not with the conveyance system or surface water drainage. A further letter from the applicant dated 5th February 2026 considers Anglian Water's objection to be unfounded and maintains that wastewater capacity issues fall within the responsibilities of the statutory undertaker.

7.68 The availability of treatment capacity at Somersham WRC and any environmental or amenity harm arising from increased discharges to the Dry Weather Flow limit associated with the application, is a material planning consideration in the assessment of this application. The weight to be attached to this matter is for the decision-maker.

7.69 There is a clear policy requirement for agreement from Anglian Water and the Environment Agency regarding the ability of the waste water network and Somersham WRC to accommodate the flows arising from the proposed development. Policies LP6 and SM1 make this requirement explicit, and the supporting text to SM1 outlines that Somersham WRC currently has no available headroom and that interim or permanent solutions must be identified before additional growth can be supported. In this case, AW has confirmed that Somersham WRC is operating above its permitted Dry Weather Flow limit and that the proposed development would exacerbate this exceedance. No interim treatment measures have been identified, and neither has a permanent solution been put forward that would ensure compliance with environmental permitting requirements or prevent deterioration of water quality in the receiving watercourse. In the absence of such solutions, and in the context of the Environment Agency's position that they cannot advise on environmental impact without clarity on how Anglian Water intends to accommodate growth, and noting Natural England's advice that likely significant effects on designated sites cannot be ruled out, it has not been demonstrated that the development would avoid harm to the water environment or meet the requirements of the Water Framework Directive or Habitats Regulations.

7.70 NPPF paragraph 201 requires decision-makers to assume that pollution control regimes will operate effectively. However, the Local Plan also places a requirement on applicants to demonstrate, through agreement with the relevant agencies, that wastewater flows can be accommodated without compromising environmental objectives. That agreement has not been provided in this case. The applicant's contention that wastewater capacity is solely a matter for the statutory undertaker does not overcome the policy requirement, nor does it address the evidence presented by Anglian Water that the WRC is currently over capacity and that additional foul flows would increase environmental risk. On the basis of the available evidence, and having regard to Policies SM1, LP6 and LP30, it is concluded that the proposal fails to demonstrate that adequate wastewater treatment capacity exists or can be made

available in a timely manner to serve the development. The development would therefore give rise to unacceptable environmental risk and fails to comply with Policies LP6 and SM1 criteria 7. and 8. which is to be weighed in the planning balance.

Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

7.71 Policy LP5 of the Local Plan sets out that a proposal will only be supported where all forms of flood risk have been addressed. Furthermore, Policy LP15 set out the Council's approach to surface water management.

7.72 Allocation Policy SM1 also requires provision of a surface water drainage strategy that responds to the sloping topography of the land.

7.73 The entirety of the application site is within Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's Flood Maps for Planning and Huntingdonshire's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024). The SFRA 2024 shows the southern boundary of the site and some isolated areas being at risk of surface water flooding. The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment dated May 2024 which also identifies a surface water flood risk at the site ranging from Very Low to High, including under future climate change scenarios. Low-risk events may affect the proposed open space and SuDS basin in the south-eastern part of the site. Plots 38–40 and 51–52 are partially within the surface water flood extent, with predicted depths of less than 0.2m.

7.74 The site is allocated for residential development within the Local Plan, and flood risk will have been assessed at the allocation stage. In line with paragraph 180 of the NPPF, the sequential test does not need to be reapplied at the planning application stage.

7.75 Notwithstanding this, the proposal satisfies the requirements of the sequential test as set out in the NPPF (2024), which allows exemption where a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) demonstrates that no built development, including access routes or vulnerable elements, would be at risk of flooding now or in the future. The submitted FRA confirms that the internal access roads are at Very Low risk during climate change events, and although a surface water flood risk is identified at the site entrance, predicted depths are less than 0.2m, resulting in a very low hazard to people. Isolated flood risk areas are confined to existing depressions, which will be regraded, and managed through a formal surface water drainage system. The minor flood risk affecting Plots 38–40 and 51–52 is limited to garden areas, and ground floor levels will be raised by approximately 0.15m to ensure safe, dry refuge. Safe access and egress could therefore be maintained throughout the lifetime of the development. A condition is recommended to ensure compliance with the recommendations set out within the submitted FRA.

7.76 The proposed surface water drainage system would operate via gravity, discharging to a new outfall into the existing watercourse along the site frontage. Attenuation would be provided through two detention basins designed to manage runoff and support sustainable drainage. The Local Lead Flood Authority have raised no objection in principle to the proposed development subject to conditions securing a detailed surface water drainage design, drainage measures during construction and to ensure the system is carried out as approved prior to adoption by a statutory undertaker or management company.

7.77 Subject to the imposition of conditions as set out above, the proposal is acceptable with regard to flood risk and drainage and complies with Policies SM1, LP5 and LP15 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity and Ecology

7.78 Policy LP30 of the Local Plan requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated, and that all possible efforts have been taken to avoid adverse impacts.

7.79 Paragraphs 187 and 192–195 of the NPPF (2024) relate to biodiversity, designated sites and the protection of habitats, including the requirement in paragraph 193(b) that development likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) should not normally be permitted unless the benefits clearly outweigh the harm. Paragraph 195 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where likely significant effects on a habitats site cannot be ruled out unless an Appropriate Assessment has concluded no adverse effect on site integrity.

7.80 The application is supported by an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Metric & Biodiversity Net Gain Plan.

7.81 The Ecological Appraisal confirms that the site is dominated by habitats of low ecological value. Where habitat loss is unavoidable, new habitat creation is proposed as part of the landscape strategy. The site offers minimal potential for protected species, but appropriate mitigation measures are included to reduce any residual risk. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has not demonstrated that the mitigation would be sufficient to also offset the environmental harms likely to result from additional foul water discharges at the Somersham Wastewater Treatment Works. Should permission be granted, a condition is recommended to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the Ecological Appraisal and to require submission of a Biodiversity Method Statement.

7.82 In accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021 and amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, this development is subject to the mandatory requirement to deliver at least a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The proposal includes onsite habitat and linear feature (hedgerow) creation. The onsite hedgerow creation would result in a net gain of 180.05%. For habitats, a preliminary BNG assessment of the post-development value concludes that the proposed development would result in a net loss in habitat units amounting to 1.85 units (48.25%). To achieve a net gain in habitat units, a total of 2.23 additional off-site units would be required. This could be secured through a BNG condition.

7.83 Natural England has advised that the submitted Ecological Appraisal relies on the conclusions of the 2017 Local Plan HRA which is now considered out of date due to changed baseline conditions and newly available evidence and therefore a project specific HRA is required. Natural England advise that this should take into account the advice from Anglian Water and consider the implications of any deterioration in water quality on the favourable conservation status of downstream designated sites such as the Ouse Washes SPA, SAC, Ramsar and its qualifying feature. The Local Planning Authority (as competent authority) has not been provided with sufficient information to carry out this assessment and therefore seeks to take a precautionary approach in applying paragraph 187e of the NPPF 2024 in respect of unacceptable risk of environmental harm.

7.84 Subject to conditions, the site-based biodiversity impacts are capable of complying with Policy LP30 and relevant NPPF requirements. However, the outstanding concerns raised by Natural England regarding potential effects on designated sites, and the inability at this stage to demonstrate no adverse effect on site integrity under the Habitats Regulations, weigh against the proposal and must be considered in the overall planning balance.

Impact on Trees

7.85 Policy LP31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that the potential for adverse impacts on trees, woodland, hedges and hedgerows has been investigated and that a proposal will only be supported where it seeks to conserve and enhance any existing tree, woodland, hedge or hedgerow of value that would be affected by the proposed development. Allocation Policy SM1 states that the retention of the trees along the west boundary and the site frontage; except where removal is required for access.

7.86 An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (prepared by Aspect Arboriculture, dated May 2024) has been submitted with the application and this has been reviewed by HDC's Arboricultural Officer. The proposal would involve the removal of 4 category B trees. The Arboricultural Officer has raised concern with removal of the large sycamore T34 tree to facilitate the access, noting that the existing line of trees along the front of the site forms an important visual feature in the street scene. The detailed landscaping proposals (GLY0105 01 H) includes the planting of 7 new trees along the southern boundary to enhance the existing tree lined frontage which goes some way in mitigation the required tree loss. The remainder of the existing trees on and adjacent to the site are to be retained and protected during construction works as detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment.

7.87 The Arboricultural Officer has noted that the encroachment into the RPA of T28 – Ash is significant and is likely to lead to its decline. The encroachment of this tree is a result of the proposed drainage basin – the detailed design of which is secured by condition. Whilst replacement tree planting is proposed elsewhere in the site, this is unlikely to mitigate the decline of this tree. It is therefore considered there is a degree of conflict with Policy LP30.

7.88 Notwithstanding the above, should permission be granted, conditions are recommended to ensure compliance with recommendations within the AIA, submission of an arboricultural method statement and tree pit details in accordance with Policies SM1 and LP31 of the Local Plan.

Planning obligations

7.89 Statutory tests set out in the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (Regulation 122) require that S.106 planning obligations must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonable related in scale and kind to the development. S.106 obligations are intended to make development acceptable which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms. The following contributions have been requested by consultees or identified as required in accordance with the adopted Developer Contributions SPD, as amended.

7.90 Open Space: The submitted Open Spaces Plan (drawing no. 9171/18 Rev G) indicates that the proposals would deliver a total of 2,470.52 sqm of open space including the SuDS features, or 1,412.06 sqm when SuDS are excluded. SuDS areas should not be included in the open space calculation, as they are unlikely to be usable year-round. In addition, the usability of the northern portion of the proposed open space is questionable, given the steep gradients of 1:3 and 1:4 in the northeastern corner. When discounting the SuDS areas, the development would fall short of the minimum open space requirement by approximately 900 sqm. The revised Design and Access Statement (Section 4.8) acknowledges that the scheme does not meet the minimum quantitative standards for open space. It refers to the proximity of existing green spaces in Somersham, located approximately 0.9 miles and 1.2 miles away (around 15–20 minutes' walking distance).

7.91 To mitigate for the shortfall in open space on site, a financial contribution of £30,000 is required towards off-site open space which will be transferred to Somersham Parish Council for improvements/enhancements to the Norwood Playing Field. This could be secured through a S106 agreement and this is considered to be CIL compliant.

7.92 Biodiversity Net Gain: The proposal includes onsite habitat and linear feature (hedgerow) creation. Due to the size and distinctiveness of habitat created onsite, a monitoring fee of £6,345 broken up into instalments is required to cover a period of 30 years. This could be secured through a S106 agreement.

7.93 The submitted preliminary BNG assessment of the post-development value concludes that the proposed development would result in a net loss in habitat units amounting to 1.85 units (48.25%). To achieve a net gain in habitat units, a total of 2.23 additional off-site units would be required. This could be secured through a BNG condition.

7.94 Residential Wheeled Bins: Policy LP4 of the Local Plan to 2036 relates to provision for infrastructure needs, including waste recycling facilities. Financial obligations towards the cost of waste storage containers are detailed in Section 5H of the Developer Contributions SPD adopted in December 2011. The cost for 2025/26 is £114.00 per dwelling. For 52 dwellings this equates to £5,928 which could be secured under the S106 agreement.

7.95 Affordable Housing: The proposal looks to deliver a policy compliant level of affordable housing (21 dwellings). 15 would be affordable rent and 6 shared ownership. There would be a mix of 1, 2 and 3 beds and the 2x 2-bed bungalows proposed are to be M4(3) adaptable as secured by condition. The affordable housing could be secured through a S106 agreement and this is considered to be CIL compliant.

7.96 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.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

7.97 In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.98 The principle of residential development on this site is established through allocation Policy SM1. The development would make a contribution towards the Council's housing land supply, including the provision of 21 affordable homes, which weighs in favour of the development.

7.99 In social terms, the application site constitutes a sustainable location for the scale of development proposed in respect of access to local employment opportunities, services and facilities.

7.100 In terms of the economic dimension of sustainable development, the proposal would contribute towards economic growth, including job creation – during the construction phase and through the additional population assisting the local economy through spending on local services/facilities.

7.101 In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, there would be a degree of harm to tree T28 – Ash as the proposed drainage basin would encroach the RPA. The development does however deliver additional planting, habitat enhancement and a biodiversity net gain overall.

7.102 However, these benefits must be balanced against the harms, including those relating to foul drainage, water quality, and the impact on designated sites.

7.103 Policy LP6 sets out that proposals will be supported only where (d) Anglian Water Services do not raise concerns relating to the ability of wastewater infrastructure to accommodate flows; and (e) the Environment Agency and Natural England do not raise concerns that the requirements of the Water Framework Directive or the Habitats Directive could be compromised. Allocation Policy SM1 criteria 7 and 8 further requires agreement from Anglian Water and the Environment Agency that wastewater flows from the proposal can be accommodated.

7.104 Anglian Water has raised a clear objection, confirming that Somersham WRC is operating above its permitted Dry Weather Flow limit and cannot accommodate additional foul flows generated by the development. The Environment Agency has advised that, due to the existing exceedance of the WRC's permitted discharge volume and uncertainty over future investment or upgrades, they cannot comment on the impact to the water environment.

7.105 Natural England has advised that, in the absence of a project-specific Habitats Regulations Assessment addressing the lack of WRC capacity, the Local Planning Authority as competent authority cannot confirm that there would not be significant effects on designated sites and cannot conclude that the integrity of the Ouse Washes SAC, SPA and Ramsar would be protected. This constitutes concern directly relevant to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

7.106 These combined consultee responses mean that the requirements of Policy LP6(d) and (e) and Policy SM1 criteria 7 and 8 have not been met. No interim or permanent solution to address the WRC capacity constraint has been identified, and there is no evidence that wastewater generated by the development can be treated without resulting in deterioration of water quality or harm to designated habitats.

7.107 In accordance with paragraph 195 of the NPPF (2024), the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where likely significant effects on a habitats site cannot be ruled out unless an Appropriate Assessment has concluded no adverse effect on integrity. That conclusion cannot be reached in this case. The proposal therefore carries significant environmental harm and conflicts with paragraphs 193(b), 194 and 195 of the NPPF.

7.108 Although the development would deliver housing, including affordable housing, these benefits do not outweigh the substantial conflict with the development plan arising from the failure to demonstrate adequate wastewater treatment capacity and the risk of deterioration in water quality and harm to designated sites.

7.109 For the reasons set out above, the proposal is not considered to represent sustainable development when assessed against the development plan and the NPPF when taken as a whole and is therefore recommended for refusal for the following reason(s):

1. *The application fails to demonstrate that the proposed development can be accommodated within the existing wastewater treatment infrastructure without resulting in deterioration of water quality or environmental harm to designated habitat sites. Anglian Water as statutory undertaker has confirmed that Somersham Water Recycling Centre is operating above its permitted Dry Weather Flow limit and is unable to accommodate additional flows generated by the proposed development. The Environment Agency and Natural England have not been able to confirm that the development would avoid compromising the requirements of the Water Framework Directive or the Habitats Regulations. In the absence of a project-specific Habitats Regulations Assessment and without identified interim or permanent treatment solutions, the Local Planning Authority cannot conclude that adverse effects on the integrity of the Ouse Washes SSSI, SAC, SPA or Ramsar site would be avoided. The proposal therefore fails to demonstrate compliance with Policy LP6 (criteria d and e), Policy SM1*

criteria 7 and 8, and Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, paragraphs 187(e), 193(b), 194 and 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

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