OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/01103/PIP Permission in Principle

Proposal: Permission in principle for the erection of 1 to 3 dwellings

Location: Land South West Of Cedar Close Grafham

Applicant: Mr D Coote

Grid Ref: 515869 269357

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The application site is a section of land forming part of a wider area of land which is part of the Lakeview Paddock Caravan Site approved under planning reference number 0400345FUL.

The site measures approx. 0.3ha extending north from the boundary with Church Road and west of dwellings on Cedar Close. The area has a rural character, the road is narrow and the surroundings are verdant due to the verges, hedgerows and trees either side of the road. Built development in this location is sparse with the main built-up area (BUA) of the village to the east. Further west are Westwood Lodge which appears to provide holiday accommodation and some agricultural buildings to the south of Church Road. The site boundary (with Church Road) is mainly formed of trees and hedgerows with a gated access and track.

There are no constraints associated with the site which lies within Flood Zone 1 and has no risk of flooding from other sources as per the most recent Environment Agency (EA) Flood Risk Maps and Data.

The current proposal is the first part of a permission in principle application, which only assesses the principal issues namely location, use, and amount of development proposed and establishes whether a site is suitable in principle. Should this application be successful, the applicant will have to submit a Full Technical Details Consent (FULTDC) application covering all other detailed material planning considerations. Permission in Principle is sought for the erection of 1 to 3 dwellings on the site.

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

During the lifetime of the application the description has been revised to reflect 1-3 dwellings as opposed to 1-2 as was originally submitted, the red line remains the same. Grafham Parish Council, CCC Highways and neighbours have been re-consulted. A new site notice has also been displayed for the required 14-day period.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

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

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

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

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

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

PLANNING POLICIES

Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 - adopted May 2019

LP1: Amount of Development
LP2: Strategy for Development
LP4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
LP5: Flood Risk
LP6: Waste Water Management
LP9: Small Settlements
LP10: The Countryside
LP11: Design Context
LP12: Design Implementation
LP14: Amenity
LP15: Surface Water
LP16: Sustainable Travel
LP17: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
LP25: Housing Mix
LP30: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
LP31: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
LP37: Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution

Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan 2020 - 2036 (February 2022)

Policies:

GENP1 - Definition of 'Built-up Area' (Settlement Boundary)
GENP10 - Biodiversity and Natural Environment
GENP13 - Flood Risk and Drainage

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Design Guide (2017)
Developer Contributions SPD (2011)
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD (2024)
Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
Land Availability Assessments (2024)
The National Design Guide (2021)
Local policies are viewable at https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

0213230FUL - Change of use from paddock to form overspill for touring caravans and tents during spring and summer, winter storage of 20 caravans and alterations to stable block to form toilet/shower block (Refused)

0400345FUL - Change of use from paddock to form overspill area for tents and 10 touring caravans during summer months. Conversion of stable block to toilet and shower block (Approved)

0600213FUL - Continuation of use of field as overflow caravan and camping site (Approved)

CONSULTATIONS

Grafham Parish Council (responded to both consultations and supported both). They recognised that the site was well related to the built-up area and recommended conditional approval subject to:

*Sewage system upgrade
*Effective surface water drainage
*Upgrade to road
*Street lighting
*A footpath to be added to access properties

Officer comments:

Whilst some of the matters raised above are material to the consideration of this application and will be addressed in the proceeding sections of this report some are beyond the scope of what can be considered under a permission in principle application (and so would form part of the technical details consent).

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

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

HDC Environmental Health Team - No objections.

Cambridgeshire County Council Highways Team - No objections in principle (to either description) - outstanding matters can be dealt with at technical details consent stage.

REPRESENTATIONS

One objection has been received and this is available to view on HDC's Public Access Site. It broadly relates to the following matters:

*Highway safety implications (including cyclists and pedestrians using facilities in the area by virtue of intensification).

*Impact on the character of the area by extending the village.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

This application is made pursuant to the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended) (PIP regulations) that provides opportunity for an applicant to apply as to whether permission in principle is acceptable for a site, having regard to specific legislative

requirements and, in accordance with ref. 58-012-20180615 of the NPPG, as to whether the location, land use and amount of development proposed is acceptable. The permission in principle (PIP) consent route is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle for proposed development from the technical detail of the development.

The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. PIP establishes that a particular scale of housing-led development on a defined site is acceptable. The aim is for a PIP to minimise the upfront and at-risk work of applicants.

The report addresses the principal, important and controversial issues which are in this case:

1. Location
2. Land Use
3. Amount of Development
4. Other Matters

1. Location

NPPF paragraph 78 requires the Council to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against our housing requirement. A substantially revised methodology for calculating local housing need and the reimposition of this as a mandatory approach for establishing housing requirements was introduced on 12th December 2024 in the revised NPPF and associated NPPG (the standard method).

As Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 is now over 5 years old it is necessary to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply (5YHLS) based on the housing requirement set using the standard method. NPPF paragraph 78 also requires provision of a buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land. As Huntingdonshire has successfully exceeded the requirements of the Housing Delivery Test a 5% buffer is required here. The 5-year housing land requirement including a 5% buffer is 5,501 homes. The current 5YHLS is 4,430 homes equivalent to 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'. As no 5YHLS can be demonstrated the Local Plan policies concerned with the supply and location of housing as set out in the Development Strategy chapter (policies LP2, LP7, LP8, LP9 and LP10) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 are considered to be out-of-date and can no longer be afforded full weight in the determination of planning applications.

The Local Plan is undergoing a review/update, and the Land Availability Assessments (LAA)consider this site (inclusive of land outside of the red line extending further north and partially to the north of Cedar Close). This is referred to as 'Grafham 2' within the submission. At the time, the promoter considered this suitable for provision of 17 market dwellings, 12 affordable dwellings and 2 custom/self-build plots with total capacity of 31 homes along with 1.1ha of land for biodiversity net gain. The site progressed to the sustainability appraisal stage with the outcome of the Land Availability Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal concluding that the site could support 26 homes and considering that (amongst other matters):

*May be appropriate for residential use as it relates well to the immediate surroundings and the scale would integrate well with the established community.

*Highways access to the site could be achieved from Church Road but this will need to be investigated further.

*Landscaping will be required to provide a soft development edge

*Relates well to the existing built form of Grafham

Overall, the results of the 'desktop assessments' indicated that the site was potentially appropriate for built development on a larger scale than is proposed under this scheme.

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

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

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

Grafham is defined as a small settlement under Policy LP9 of the Local Plan which states that these settlements can support proposals within the built-up area (BUA) of the settlement subject to tests relating to the sustainability of the settlement (levels of infrastructure, accessing services by sustainable travel methods and so on) as well as the impact on the settlement as a whole. The Local Plan defines a BUA as a distinct group of buildings that include 30 or more homes. It also states that land which relates more to the group of buildings rather than to the surrounding countryside is also considered to form part of the BUA. The Local Plan specifically states that open spaces (including recreational facilities and caravan sites) which extend into the countryside and are not well contained by strong boundary features and which relate to the countryside in their use, form or character will be excluded from the BUA.

In this case the site is not considered to benefit from strong boundary features. Whilst there is a boundary to the east, south and west (the south and west trees and hedgerows and fencing to the east) there is no separation to the land to the north which extends northwards and has a rural character. It is considered that the entire location by virtue of its separation from the surrounding built form and sporadic (and minimal) built development is better related to the countryside.

The Planning Statement seeks to present a contrary opinion on this matter by suggesting that there are strong boundary features and also that the site has built development on at least two sides (which is a factor in determining whether a site is within the BUA as per the local plan and which refers to caravan sites within a BUA). Whilst Cedar Close to the east is accepted as part of this argument there are no cottages immediately to the west. Given that the red line does not extend to the northern boundary of the caravan site this remains open and exposed to the

surrounding countryside. An appeal decision has also been put forward as part of this argument. Whilst Officers have reviewed this, each site must be assessed upon its own merits and it is considered that this site has a different relationship with its surroundings.

It is acknowledged that the Parish Council refer to neighbourhood plan policy GENP 3 and considers the site to be well-related to the BUA. The 'well-related' is accepted, however, this only permits development under certain considerations (such as rural exceptions housing which must accord with the requirements of local Plan policy LP28). GENP3 refers to a scheme providing affordable housing and being of a confirmed scale. In this case, the site is not presented for affordable housing provision and the scale of the dwellings (which will form part of the technical details application) is not known. This cannot therefore be afforded weight within this application.

Overall, having regard to the above assessment the site is considered to lie within the countryside and therefore Policy LP10 (The Countryside) is the starting point for assessment.

LP10 seeks to limit development in the countryside unless allowed through other opportunities provided for within the Local Plan. LP10 states that all development in the countryside must:

a. seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:

i. avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible, and

ii. avoiding Grade 1 agricultural land unless there are exceptional circumstances where the benefits of the proposal significantly outweigh the loss of land;

b. recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and

c. not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

In this case the land is defined as grade 3 agricultural land (the same grading as well as grade 2 land applies to much of the BUA of Grafham). This is not land of the highest grading and it is considered that the loss of agricultural land is largely inevitable if housing is to be provided within this rural district and as such has to be considered in the planning balance. For the purposes of this assessment and in respect of tilted balance the LPA cannot object to the loss of this small section of land when balanced against the merits of the scheme, especially given the current established use and that it has not been discounted within the land availability assessments for this reason.

In terms of part b, a permission in principle application is not required to provide full details of a proposal. These, in the event of an approval shall be dealt with under a later FULTDC application. This scheme relates to a development of up to 1 to 3 dwellings, there is no indication as to the size, scale or layout. Therefore, the matter for consideration here is if the introduction of any built form on this land would be harmful.

The general characteristics and layout of the site are discussed in the preceding sections of this report and it is considered that the site and surroundings have a rural character. That said, built development is not an unfamiliar feature (Cedar Close being a case in point). Whilst this will result in the further extension of the bult form into the countryside (and the concerns surrounding this are noted), given the close relationship with the BUA of the village and the built form (Cedar Close) it cannot be considered that this is an isolated location unspoilt by development and its associated characteristics. Church Road also provides access to the caravan sites, visitor accommodation and agricultural uses and so it cannot reasonably be considered that this is an intrinsically rural area unspoilt by modern activities. As referenced in the preceding sections of this report, at this stage there is no indication as to the scale or arrangement of development or any landscaping features

as such, it is not considered that the introduction of suitably scaled and designed development at the density proposed would cause significant and demonstrable harm when the limited weight which can be applied to Policy LP10 is considered. Furthermore, it must be considered that there is no local opposition (based upon the content of the comments received) nor any specific harm identified during the call for site assessment.

Turning attention to part c, some residential development will always give rise to some factors such as noise, light pollution and so on. However, this site is not in an area completely devoid of development and is adjacent to (albeit not a heavily used) highway. As such, it cannot reasonably be considered that this would result in the introduction of factors arising from built development into a completely undeveloped location where such factors were 'alien'.

Overall, having regard to the requirement to apply tilted balance to this decision, and the assessment above, the LPA do not consider that the resultant harm of the development of this site at the quantum proposed would result is significant and demonstrable harm when assessed against Local Plan Policy LP10.

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

Officers accept that as per the submitted planning statement there are some services and employment opportunities within Grafham but that these are limited when compared with other 'small settlements' within the local plan. It is very likely that there will be reliance on a private motor vehicle. This is not unusual in a rural setting.

Public transport to larger settlements is available (the Planning Statement states that there is a bus stop within a 5-minute walk of the site) but transport available is limited in comparison to services to other areas within the district.

That said, the village does have a church, shop, pub, restaurant and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Whilst it is important that the settlement hierarchy in terms of allocating new development must be considered the LPA recognise that Part of enabling communities to achieve this vitality is the introduction of new housing in order to allow new people to join rural communities.

Careful consideration has been given to the lack of footpath on Church Road (which is a characteristic of some villages and indeed the same for all of the dwellings on Church Road - there is no public footpath until the junction with Breach Road) and if safe and convenient access could be achieved. A concern is raised regarding pedestrian safety in the objections and the Parish Council have requested that a footpath link and street lighting is provided. Whist this is acknowledged this is not a matter which can be addressed under a permission in principle application. It therefore remains for an assessment to be undertaken as to if the site as presented is acceptable.

Officers have balanced the consideration of the fact that the site lies on a 60mph section of the road (close to the 30mph limit into the village) with the layout and nature of the road. It is largely single track and pedestrian use is not uncommon (it providing access to the non-motorised user (NMU) route around Grafham Water. During a visit to the site Officers encountered walkers, cyclists etc. Furthermore, whilst it is close to the access to the village it isn't on a main route into the village and as above, leads towards the pedestrian/cycle track (NMU) passing Grafham Water as opposed to a 'through route'. As such, vehicle volumes are likely to be low in practice and would not be travelling at significant speeds on this route given the above constraints.

It is recognised that there would be a need to navigate this road if services were to be accessed by sustainable travel methods, and, whilst this is not ideal, for the reasons given above there would not be significant and demonstrable harm when assessed against the quantum of development proposed alongside the early assessment of the site in the call for sites process. It has to be accepted that there will be some reliance on a private motor vehicle but this harm does not outweigh the benefits of boosting the local housing supply within a rural location when assessed against titled balance requirements.

Overall, having regard to if significant and demonstrable harm can be identified the LPA have to conclude that the scheme is broadly compliant with Policy LP9 of the Local Plan and would constitute a sustainable form of development in accordance with the NPPF (2024) and in terms of the planning balance, the positive aspects of the proposal outlined above, including the provision of housing, demonstrably outweigh the material planning considerations weighing against the development proposal.

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

2. Land use

The site lies within Flood Zone 1 with a small section at risk of surface water flooding as per the most recent Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps and Data.

Flood Zone 1 is defined as having the lowest risk of flooding in the Government's National Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and development of this nature is acceptable within Flood Zone 1. As such a small section of the site is subject to surface water flooding it is considered that the quantum of development propose could be designed around this such as to avoid any built development or access being within the at-risk zone. Ultimately, the development which eventually comes forward may only be a single dwelling.

There are no details of sewage or surface water disposal at this stage but these are matters which will be considered at FULTDC stage and which cannot be afforded weight at this stage. Whilst the Parish Council have raised this as a concern is not considered that the quantum of development proposed would place unmanageable strain on current infrastructure.

Policy LP14 states a proposal will be supported where a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of a proposed development and maintained for users and occupiers of neighbouring land and buildings and concerns have been raised regarding potential impacts.

The Huntingdonshire Design Guide 2017 states when considering residential development there are three key issues that need to be addressed which are loss of privacy, reducing the level of daylight and being overbearing in size and layout.

Officers need to be satisfied at this stage that the site is capable of accommodating the quantum of development proposed without having a detrimental impact on neighbour's amenity and the amenity of the proposed occupiers.

HDC's Environmental Health Team have been consulted and raise no objections in terms of noise or odour impacting neighbours nor future occupants of the dwellings nor raise any concerns in respect of contaminated land or pollution.

As detailed above, permission in principle applications do not provide details of layouts, house types and so on. Therefore, an application for 1 to 3 dwellings may only result in 2 under a FULTDC application. They may be single storey etc and so there is no way to thoroughly assess impacts such as loss of light or overbearing impacts (though these will be thoroughly assessed under any subsequent FULTDC application). For the purposes of this assessment, the LPA consider that the site is large enough to accommodate the quantum of development proposed without resulting in harm. As well as the above it is also considered that a high level of residential amenity could be achieved for future occupants of the site.

Cambridgeshire County Council's Highways Team have been consulted as part of this process and raise no objections in principle observing that three dwellings would not result in a significant increase in vehicle movements in Church Road when considered against the dwellings and services (park homes/holiday lodges and so on). They do note that due to the fact that this leads to a non-motorised user (NMU) route that a future application for FULTDC should include details of visibility splays, construction specification of the access and access drainage which shall be reviewed at that time.

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

Officers note that there is a public Right of Way (PRoW) passing through the site. At present, given that no layout details have been provided there is no indication that this will be adversely affected or require re-routing. An application for FULTDC will need to see this as a constraint (and may reduce the scope for development of the site) but this is not a matter which is permitted to be considered under the PIP process. It is noted that the PRoW is referenced in the planning statement. Whilst no consultation has taken place with the PRoW Team at CCC at this stage this is not a requirement for Permission in Principle applications as set out within Schedule 4 to the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 in regard to statutory consultees. The PRoW Team will be consulted if a FULTDC application is received.

Overall, it is considered that the scheme could be realised in accordance with Policies LP5, LP15, LP14, LP17, LP34 and LP37 of the Local Plan to 2036.

3. Amount of Development

Local Policy LP12 states new development will be expected to be well designed based upon a thorough understanding of the constraints and appraisal of the site's context, delivering attractive, usable and long-lasting buildings and spaces. A proposal will be supported where it can demonstrate that it contributes positively to the areas character and identity, successfully integrates with adjoining buildings, the routes and spaces between buildings, topography and landscape.

In this case, the LPA are satisfied that the density of development can be accommodated on the site and matters of scale, design, massing and landscaping are not matters for consideration at permission in principle stage. Given the earlier assessments it is considered that some form of residential development in accordance with that proposed could be achieved on site in broad accordance with Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Local Plan to 2036, the National Design Guide (2021) and the provisions of the NPPF (2024).

4. Other Matters

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that the scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development as assessed above. The applicant would need to also receive a grant of technical details consent before the development can proceed.

The granting of technical details consent has the effect of granting planning permission for the development. Other statutory requirements may apply at this stage such as those relating to protected species.

*Impact on Trees

In terms of impact on trees, the most important to consider are those forming the boundaries which whilst not afforded formal protection do provide some screening and add to the rural character of the area. These, along with the oak tree in the centre of the site should form an integral part of the consideration to ensure that impacts on all trees are minimised under an application for FULTDC in order to comply with Policy LP31 of the Local Plan to 2036

*Ecology

Policy LP30 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and that a proposal will ensure no net loss in biodiversity and provide a net gain where possible, through the planned retention, enhancement and creation of habitats and wildlife features, appropriate to the scale, type and location of development.

Further to the above (and separate from the requirements of LP30) the development will be subject to Biodiversity Net Gain legislation pursuant to the Environment Act 2021. This means that a 10% statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) would be required with any future application, following the hierarchy of onsite provision; mixture of on-site and off-site provision; and the last resort of statutory biodiversity credits unless it can be demonstrated that the development would be exempt.

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

Officers note the location of the site in relation to the Grafham Water Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the boundary of which lies approx. 450m to the south-west of the site (at the closest point). Offices have consulted available mapping (via Natural England) in order to determine if there will be any detrimental impact on the SSSI as a result of the development. Natural England operates a 'self-serve' scheme and the development proposed falls below the threshold of the examples provided and as such, users are referred to standing advice. Given that the site lies within a zone which could be impacted by recreational pressure from increased residential units it is recommended that a proportionate assessment on such matters accompanies a future FULTDC application at which point Natural England will be consultees.

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

*Ensure high quality landscaping to soften the impact of any new building on the edges of settlements to improve integration with the surrounding countryside.

*Enrich the area by reinforcing its special qualities and acknowledging its local character.

*Protect the rural character of long-distance views of and from the Kym Valley.

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

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

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

*Water Efficiency

Any future application for technical details consent would need to confirm compliance with the optional Building Regulation requirement for water efficiency in Approved Document G, as set out in criteria j. of Policy LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Accessible and Adaptable Homes

Policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 requires all new dwellings to comply with optional Building Regulation requirement M4(2) 'accessible and adaptable homes', unless it can be demonstrated that site specific factors make this impractical or unviable. Any future application for technical details consent would need to confirm compliance with this policy.

*Developer Contributions

Any subsequent Technical Details application should be accompanied by a signed Unilateral Undertaking for the provision of wheeled bins in accordance with the Developer Contributions SPD (2011).

*Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

As the proposed development is for new residential dwellings, the development would be CIL liable in accordance with the Council's adopted charging schedule; CIL payments will cover footpaths and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning and education.

*Conclusion

Whilst the proposal (lying outside the built-up area) would not normally be supported It is concluded that there is no identified harm that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when considering all the positives and negatives of the proposal into account. Taking national and local planning policies into account and material considerations, the principle of the proposed development, is, on balance, considered acceptable and therefore recommended that Permission in Principle be granted subject to approval of outstanding details at Technical Details stage.

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:
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