OFFICER REPORT

Case No: 25/00772/FUL Full Planning Application

Proposal: Erection of two bungalows and associated works.

Location: Land Rear Of 11 Mountfort Close Eynesbury

Applicant: AJB Homes & Utilities Ltd

Grid Ref: 518675 259242

DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

The site is located centrally within Eynesbury, within a predominantly residential area. The existing site currently comprises residential garden with a close boarded fence along the boundary to the public highway of Waterloo Drive. The site is also located within the Spatial Planning Area of St Neots and the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan boundary.

This application seeks approval for the erection of two bungalows and associated works on land to the rear of 11 Mountfort Close, Eynesbury. The proposed dwellings would be semi-detached (one one-bedroom and one two-bedroom) and would be constructed of a gable end design.

The site is not within a Conservation Area, close to any listed buildings and is within Flood Zone 1.

This application has been accompanied by the following:

- Planning, Design and Access Statement;
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal;
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report

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

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

The National Planning Policy Framework (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
LP7: Spatial Planning Areas
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

St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029 - adopted February 2016

Policy A3: Design
Policy PT1: Sustainable Travel
Policy PT2: Vehicle Parking Standards for Residential Development
Policy P4: Flooding

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

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:

Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024)
Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017
Developer Contributions SPD 2011
Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape SPD (2022)
Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply (2024)

The National Design Guide (2021)

* C1 - Understand and relate well to the site, its local and wider context
* I1 - Respond to existing local character and identity
* I2 - Well-designed, high quality and attractive
* B2 - Appropriate building types and forms
*M3 - Well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users
* N3 - Support rich and varied biodiversity
* H1 - Healthy, comfortable and safe internal and external environment
* H2 - Well-related to external amenity and public spaces
* H3 - Attention to detail: storage, waste, servicing and utilities

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

PLANNING HISTORY

23/02081/FUL - Proposed detached 3 bedroom chalet bungalow - Approved.

21/01052/FUL - Erection of a two storey dwelling (two bedroom unit) and attached single storey (one bedroom unit) - Withdrawn.

17/02135/OUT - Outline planning permission for erection of two semi-detached dwellings including means of access with all matters (appearance, landscaping, scale and layout) reserved - Withdrawn.

1000363FUL - Residential Development - Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

St Neots Town Council - Support the application. Satisfactory in terms of scale and pattern of development. Within a sustainable location.
Cambridgeshire County Council Highway Authority - No objections to the proposed development, subject to the imposition of conditions on any planning permission granted. However, note that the driveway for plot 2 is approximately 2.5m wide which is not wide enough for a single driveway which should be a minimum of 3.6m wide. The development will also require an extension to the existing dropped kerb for plot 2.

Officer Note - an amended plan has been received which shows the widening of the driveway for plot 2 so that it is now 3.6m wide in accordance with highway satndards.

Huntingdonshire District Council Environmental Health - No objections.

Huntingdonshire District Council Ecology - No objections to the proposal, following the receipt of additional information.

REPRESENTATIONS

No third-party representations were received during the course of the application.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

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

As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to have provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 48 of the NPPF (2024). The development plan is defined in Section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan consists of:

o Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019)
o Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021)
o St Neots Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2029
o Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan (2017)
o Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Plan (2018)
o Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan (2019)
o Bury Village Neighbourhood Plan (2021)

o Buckden Neighbourhood Plan (2021)
o Grafham and Ellington Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2036 (2022)
o Great Gransden Neighbourhood Plan 2021 to 2036 (2023)
o The Stukeleys Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036 (2023)
o Sawtry Village Neighbourhood Plan 2022 to 2036 (2023)

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

The main issues to consider are:

o The Principle of Development
o Design and Visual Amenity
o Residential Amenity
o Highway Safety
o Flood Risk and Surface Water
o Biodiversity
o Developer Contributions
o Accessible and Adaptable Homes
o Water Efficiency

*The Principle of the Development

The site is located within the built-up area of Eynesbury, part of the Spatial Planning Area of St Neots and therefore Policy LP7 (Spatial Planning Areas) of the adopted Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 is considered relevant in this instance.

Policy LP7 states that a proposal for residential development, which is additional to those allocated in the Local Plan, will be supported where it is appropriately located within a built-up area of an identified Spatial Planning Area settlement.

The presumption of sustainable development is clearly outlined within the NPPF, with the goal of creating positive improvements in the quality of the built environment, which includes widening the choice of high quality homes. The site is in a sustainable, accessible location and planning permission has recently been granted for a single dwelling on this site.

As such, the principle of residential development in this location is considered to be acceptable, subject to all other planning matters being addressed.

*Design, Visual Amenity and Impact Upon the Character of the Area

Policy LP11 of the Local Plan states that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context. Policy LP12 states that new development will be expected to be well designed and that a proposal will be supported where it can be demonstrated that it contributes positively to the area's character and identity and successfully integrates with adjoining buildings and landscape. This is also reflected in Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan to 2029, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

This application seeks approval for the erection of two bungalows and associated works on land to the rear of No. 11 Mountfort Close, Eynesbury. The proposed bungalows would be semi-detached, be of a gable-end design and would be constructed with a local brick finish and roof tiles. The

proposal also involves hard and soft landscaping, tree planting and the installation of 1.8m high close-boarded fencing.

Waterloo drive is characterised by predominatly 2 storey semi-detached dwellings with regular spacing, dwellings are setback behind small front gardens and landscaping. A small number of 1.5 storey dwellings have been erected on the south side of Waterloo Drive including Nos. 15, 16 and the more recent dwelling approved as part of application 20/00278/FUL (No 14). These dwellings formed back land development located within the rear gardens of Nos. 8-10 Mountfort Close but provided a frontage and relationship to Waterloo Drive, as is the case with this application. There are also examples of bungalows in the wider vicinity, most notably No. 2 Mountfort Close.

The proposed bungalows are considered to be of an acceptable scale and siting that would reflect the varied properties in the immediate area and the curved building line of Waterloo Drive. The gable-end design of the dwellings would reflect those of the neighbouring dormer bungalows along the south-side of Waterloo Drive. In it is also noted that the bungalows are in the same location, but are reduced in scale from the chalet bungalow previously consented on the site (23/02081/FUL).

The submitted application form states that the proposed dwellings would be constructed using local bricks and matching roof tiles. The proposed finishing materials are considered to be acceptable in principle and a condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to secure specific details.

The proposal would include boundary treatments of 1.8m high close-boarded fencing to the side and rear of both properties along with some hedgerow and tree planting. The front boundary will be open with grassed areas which reflects other dwellings on Waterloo Drive and Mountfort Close. The fencing is considered to be acceptable due to the existing boundary treatments at the site and those used at neighbouring properties, and the soft landscaping would visually soften the impact of the development.

Overall, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable in terms of its scale and design and would not result in harm to the character or appearance of the site, the streetscene of Waterloo Drive or the surrounding area.

As such, the proposal is deemed to be in accordance with Policies LP11 and LP12 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy A3 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan to 2029, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Residential Amenity

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.

The closest neighbouring residential properties that are likely to be impacted upon as a result of the proposed development are Nos. 11, 12 and 13 Mountfort Close and No. 16 Waterloo Drive, Eynesbury.

The neighbouring properties to the rear of the proposed dwelling on Mountfort Close are varying distances from the site and all have outbuildings in the rear gardens. The proposed dwelling is sited approximately 4m from the boundary with No. 12, approximately 4.2m from the boundary with No. 11 and approximately 3.8m from the boundary with No. 13. The proposal is single-storey in height with a boundary that would comprise a 1.8m high close boarded fence with additional planting providing a level of screening. The Local Planning Authority are therefore satisfied that the

proposal would not result in any detrimental overbearing, overshadowing or overlooking impacts on these neighbouring properties.

With regards to No. 16 Waterloo Drive to the south-east, plot 2 would be approximately 3m from the shared boundary at its closest point. Although there is a small change in levels between the site and the neighbouring property, the proposed dwelling is not considered to result in any detrimental overbearing or overshadowing impacts. The existing boundary comprises a close boarded fence which is to be retained and the proposal only marginally extends beyond the rear most elevation of the neighbouring property. Furthermore, the proposal is single storey and only contains a door and bathroom window on the south-east side elevation which will be separated from the boundary by the proposed driveway and would not result in any overlooking impacts.

Planning permission has previously been granted for a single chalet bungalow on this site (23/02081/FUL) in a similar location and this application is not considered to result in any additional adverse residential impacts. Given the application site is within an established residential area, the provision of two additional dwellings are not considered to result in any detrimental noise or general disturbance impacts on neighbouring properties.

It is also worth noting that the proposal would include adequate areas of private rear amenity space for both proposed dwellings.
Therefore, taking the above factors into consideration, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on residential amenity and therefore accords with Policy LP14 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Highway Safety

Policies LP16 and LP17 of the Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that new development incorporates appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitates access for emergency vehicles and service vehicles and incorporates adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

The proposed dwellings would be accessed via two new vehicular access points off Waterloo Drive - an unclassified road subject to a 30mph speed limit. Whilst Waterloo Drive is relatively narrow it is considered capable of accommodating the vehicles generated by the proposed dwellings. Following the submission of an amended plans, the access widths are considered to be acceptable to serve each dwelling (3.6m and 3.8m) with adequate vehicle and pedestrian visibility splays. A condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to ensure the visibility splays are retained in perpetuity and free from obstruction.

The proposal would include the provision of one off-street car parking space for the one-bedroom dwelling, and two spaces for the two-bedroom dwelling, which is considered to be acceptable given the number of bedrooms for each dwelling and the sustainable location of the site.

While it is noted there is no turning facility within the site to ensure vehicles enter the public highway in a forward gear, the proposal is not considered to result in any highway safety concerns due to Waterloo Drive being a cul-de-sac with both access points afforded adequate visibility in both directions.

A condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to secure specific details and provision of cycle parking on the basis of one space per bedroom for each dwellinghouse.

Therefore, subject to appropriate conditions, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety and therefore accords with Policies LP16 and LP17 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policies PT1 and PT2 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Flood Risk

National guidance and Policy LP5 of the Local Plan to 2036 seek to steer new developments to areas at lowest risk of flooding and advises this should be done through application of the Sequential Test, and if appropriate the Exceptions Test (as set out in paragraphs 172-182 of the NPPF (2024)).

The application site lies within Flood Zone 1 in accordance with Environment Agency mapping and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2024). The flood risk vulnerability of the proposed development is 'more vulnerable' in accordance with the Planning Practice Guidance, which is compatible with land within Flood Zone 1. Accordingly the sequential and exceptions tests for flooding nor the submission of a flood risk assessment are considered necessary in this instance in accordance with the NPPF and NPPG.

Given the low flood risk and minor scale of development, officers are satisfied that full details of the surface and foul water drainage can be secured as part of building regulations and other relevant legislative requirements in this instance.

As such, the proposal is considered to be acceptable with regard to its impact on both flood risk and surface water and therefore accords with Policies LP5, LP6 and LP15 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, Policy P4 of the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan and Section 14 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Biodiversity

Paragraph 187 of the NPPF (2024) states planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. Policy LP30 of the Local Plan to 2036 requires proposals to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated and 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.

This application has been accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), which concludes that the site has a Habitat Suitability Index for Great Crested Newts as poor and there was no other evidence of protected or notable species. Mitigation measures are proposed, including providing a Precautionary Working Methods Statement during site clearance and construction, and proposed enhancements including a bat box, insect box and hedgehog access are also proposed which are considered proportionate to the scale of development. A condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to ensure the development is carried out in strict accordance with those measures as detailed within the PEA.

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

The application has also been accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Report. The submitted report concludes that the development proposal would result in a 32.41% net loss in habitat units and a 900% gain in hedgerow units. In order to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain, 0.0185 habitat units will be required. As the shortfall cannot be delivered on-site, a condition would be imposed on any planning permission granted to ensure off-site credits will be provided.

Overall, subject to the imposition of conditions on any planning permission granted, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with Policy LP30 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) in this regard.

*Development Contributions

Part H of the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) requires a payment towards refuse bins for new residential development. A Unilateral Undertaking Form in respect of wheeled bins has been received by the Local Planning Authority dated 01 September 2025. The proposed development is therefore considered to accord with Policy LP4 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 and the Developers Contributions SPD (2011).

*Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

Policy LP25 of the Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 seeks to ensure that all housing developments in the district offers a genuine choice of Accessible and adaptable dwellings that meet the requirements of residents:

f. ensuring 100% of new dwellings, across all tenures provided, meet Building Regulation requirement M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' (or replacement standards).

To ensure that the development can meet these standards a condition would be imposed on any permission that may be granted in this regard in accordance with Policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

*Water Efficiency

Policy LP12 (j) of the Local Plan to 2036 states that new dwellings must comply with the optional Building Regulation requirement for water efficiency set out in Approved Document G of the Building Regulations. A condition will be attached to any consent to ensure compliance with the above, in accordance with Policy LP12 (j) of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036.

* Other Issues

*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

The proposed development is considered to be compliant with the relevant national and local policy as it is:

* Acceptable in principle
* Would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area;
* Would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenity of neighbours;
* Would not be detrimental to highway safety in the locality;
* Is acceptable with regards to the impact on biodiversity;
* There are no other material planning considerations which lead to the conclusion that the proposal is unacceptable.

Taking national and local planning policies into account, and having regard for all relevant material considerations, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions.

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CONTACT OFFICER:
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