

# Planning Committee Agenda

## Members of the Planning Committee:

Cllr S Lawn (Chairman)	
Cllr J M Ward (Vice-Chairman)	
Cllr A D Adams	Cllr C Karimi-Ghovanlou
Cllr S C Beadle	Cllr I N Moncur
Cllr N J Brennan	Cllr S M Prutton
Cllr J F Fisher	Cllr S Riley
Cllr R R Foulger	

## Pool of trained substitutes

Conservative	Conservative	Liberal Democrat
Cllr S M Clancy	Cllr G K Nurden	Cllr D J Britcher
Cllr J K Copplestone	Cllr C E Ryman-Tubb	Cllr S J Catchpole
Cllr A D Crotch	Cllr M D Snowling	Cllr D G Harrison
Cllr R M Grattan	Cllr J L Thomas	Cllr S I Holland
Cllr K S Kelly	Cllr K A Vincent	Cllr K E Lawrence ** Not trained
Cllr D King	Cllr S A Vincent	Cllr J A Neesam
Cllr K G Leggett	Cllr S C Walker	Cllr L A Starling
Cllr T M Mancini-Boyle	Cllr F Whymark	Cllr D M Thomas
Cllr M L Murrell		

## Date & Time:

Wednesday 21 April 2021 at 9:30am

## Place:

To be hosted remotely at: Thorpe Lodge, 1 Yarmouth Road, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich

## Contact:

Dawn Matthews tel (01603) 430404  
Email: [committee.services@broadland.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@broadland.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.broadland.gov.uk](http://www.broadland.gov.uk)

## PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link: [Broadland YouTube Channel](#)

You may register to speak by emailing us at [committee.services@broadland.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@broadland.gov.uk) no later than 3pm on Friday 16 April 2021

## Large print version can be made available

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance.

# **AGENDA**

- 1. To receive declarations of interest from members;**  
(guidance and flow chart attached – page 3)
- 2. To report apologies for absence and to identify substitute members;**
- 3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held 24 March 2021;**  
(minutes attached – page 5)
- 4. Matters arising from the minutes;**
- 5. Applications for planning permission to be considered by the Committee in the order shown on the attached schedule;** (schedule attached page 11)
- 6. Planning Appeals– for the period 12 March to 9 April 2021 - None received (for information);**

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

<p>Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.</p>
<p>Does the interest directly:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position?</li> <li>2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?</li> <li>3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council</li> <li>4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own</li> <li>5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in</li> </ol> <p>If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.</p> <p>Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.</p>
<p>Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?</p> <p>If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion or vote.</p>
<p>Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.</p>
<p>Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.</p>

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.  
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST  
INSTANCE**

# DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF





## PLANNING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Planning Committee of Broadland District Council, held on Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 9:30am.

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors: S Lawn (Chairman), J M Ward (Vice-Chairman), A D Adams, S C Beadle, N J Brennan, J F Fisher, R R Foulger, D Harrison, C Karimi-Ghovanlou, I Moncur, and S M Prutton

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillors: S Gurney and D Britcher

**Officers in Attendance:** The Assistant Director Planning, the Area Team Managers (MR & BB) and the Democratic Services Officers (DM & LA)

### 179 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member	Minute No & Heading	Nature of Interest
Cllr S Lawn	<b>APPLICATION NO: 20201679 – ROYAL NORWICH GOLF CLUB, DRAYTON HIGH ROAD, HELLESDON</b>	Other interest – Chairman of the Council's Appeals Panel considering a TPO affecting the site. Stood down as Chairman for this item and took no part in the discussion or voting on this application
Cllr A Adams		Other Interest – as a previous member of the parish council had been involved in discussions with the developers and had predetermined views of the application – took no part in the discussion or voting on this application
Cllr S Prutton		Other interest – Ward member for Hellesdon but had not taken part in any meetings about the application and retained the right to speak and vote

Cllrs Karimi-Ghovanlou, Prutton and Ward		Other interest - Lobbied – had received and read correspondence from the parish council.
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Note: all other members present had also received the same correspondence from the parish council in relation to this application but due to the time of receipt of the information had not had the opportunity to read the correspondence.

### 180 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr S Riley.

### 181 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

### 182 MATTERS ARISING

#### *Minute no 172 - Matters Arising*

The Assistant Director Planning reported that at the last meeting members had been advised that the application detailed at Minute no: 175 Application no: 20201976 – Land Adjacent to Sunny Acres, Yarmouth Road, Blofield, NR13 4LH would need to be referred back to Committee for further consideration as additional information had been received from Highways England which raised material matters which needed to be taken into account. Since that meeting, however, further representations had been received from Highways England who were now conditionally supporting the proposals and not raising any material considerations. There would therefore no longer be any need for the application to be considered further by the Committee and the decision taken at the meeting on 27 January to approve the scheme would stand.

*In respect of the decisions indicated in the following Minutes, conditions or reasons for refusal of planning permission as determined by the Committee being in summary form only and based on standard conditions where indicated and were subject to the final determination of the Director of Place.*

### 183 APPLICATION NO: 20201679 – ROYAL NORWICH GOLF CLUB, DRAYTON HIGH ROAD, HELLESDON

*The Vice Chairman of the Committee, Cllr J Ward, took the chair for consideration of this item.*

## Planning Committee

The Committee considered a reserved matters application for appearance, scale, landscaping and layout following outline planning permission 20151770 (as amended by S73 Permission 20171514 (for up to 1000 dwellings)), for Phase 2 comprising 157 dwellings and associated works including open space, sustainable urban drainage systems, landscaping, infrastructure and earthworks.

The application was reported to Committee at the request of the local members for valid planning reasons.

Members noted the location and context of the site as set out in detail in the report. Their attention was drawn to the supplementary schedule which included details of consultation responses received since the report had been prepared from the Highway Authority and the Contracts Officer, both now raising no objections. The officer recommendation to authorise approval subject to the comments of these consultees and to conditions could now be updated to recommend approval subject to conditions.

The Committee then heard from Marlon Fulcher - Hellesdon Parish Council – objecting, Alison Cornish – applicant, Stephen Milligan - Arboricultural consultant for the application, Cllr S Gurney and Cllr D Britcher local members both objecting.

The key issues in determining the application were the principle of development, the consideration of layout, appearance, scale and landscaping and other matters.

Concerns were raised and questions asked in relation to the loss of trees on the site and this not being in keeping with the Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan. Members were reminded that the original hybrid consent given in 2017 for outline permission for 1000 homes over the whole site had been granted with an acceptance of the loss of trees as a result of the scale of development. The permission had also been granted prior to the adoption of the Hellesdon Neighbourhood Plan. Mindful of the Neighbourhood Plan however and following negotiations with the applicants, the current application for Phase 2 now included proposals to retain a number of the more significant trees and a new planting scheme was proposed to replace lost trees with a mix of native species and a hedgerow. A number of factors had been taken into account in assessing the proposals including the extant permission, the constraints of the site, the community benefits arising from the scheme and the limited life expectancy of many of the existing trees on the site. The matter was finely balanced but significant weight needed to be given to the existing planning consent.

Members noted that the applicants were willing to accommodate a request from the parish council for a second access from the site to the high school but that officers had reservations about the suitability of the location proposed and its proximity to the junction with Drayton High Road. Any such amendment would need to be subject to no concerns being raised by the Highway Authority. On a show of hands members agreed to seek a second

access from the site to the High School subject to consultation with the Highway Authority.

In assessing the key issues, members acknowledged that the principle of development was acceptable. On balance, and having regard to the history of the site, they acknowledged that the proposed reserved matters including layout, scale, appearance and landscaping, reflected the principles of the hybrid permission and would result in a development which would comply with the development plan as a whole. There were no material considerations to refuse the application and it could therefore be supported subject to conditions. It was noted that the conditions were limited in scope given that the development would be controlled by the conditions on the hybrid consent.

It was then proposed, duly seconded that the updated officer recommendation to approve subject to conditions be supported together with the proposal to seek a second access to the school subject to comments from the Highway Authority. On being put to a vote by way of a roll call, it was

### **RESOLVED to**

**APPROVE** application no 20201679 subject the following conditions:

- (1) Plans and documents
- (2) Submission of precise details of external materials
- (3) Implementation of noise mitigation measures as proposed in the submitted Noise Assessment.
- (4) Second access (subject to no highway objections)

*The Committee adjourned at 11:00am and reconvened at 11.05am, when all the Committee members listed above were present.*

*Cllr S Lawn resumed the role of Chairman of the Committee for the remaining items of business.*

### **184 APPLICATION NO: 20201275 – FENGATE FARM, FENGATE, MARSHAM**

The Committee considered an application for the erection of 5 new dwellings in lieu of conversion of agricultural buildings to 5 dwellings granted under prior notification application 20181827.

The application was reported to Committee as the officer recommendation was contrary to the provisions of the development plan.

Members noted the location and context of the site as set out in detail in the report. Their attention was drawn to the supplementary schedule and a correction to date of approval for application 20181827 which should be 22 January 2019 and not 8 November 2018 as stated at paragraph 2.2 of the report.



The key issues in determining the application were the principle of development, the impact on the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity and highway safety.

In assessing these issues members felt that, although the site was outside the settlement limit, the barns could be converted to five dwellings with a similar floor space to the proposed new dwellings and this was a significant material consideration weighing in favour of the application. The layout, design and appearance of the proposed development resulted in a number of improvements over the original proposal, improving the relationship to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and residential amenity. The new proposal also resulted in a commuted sum for off-site contributions for formal recreation and green infrastructure. The proposal was an acceptable form of development which complied with the remaining relevant policies.

It was then proposed, duly seconded that the officer recommendation to delegate authority to the Assistant Director Planning to approve the application subject to conditions and successful completion of a Section 106 Agreement be supported. On being put to a vote by way of a roll call, it was

### **RESOLVED to**

delegate authority to the Assistant Director Planning to **APPROVE** application no: 20201275 subject to successful completion of a Section 106 Agreement with the following Heads of Term:

- (1) Offsite contributions for formal recreation
- (2) Green Infrastructure

and subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Time limit –full permission (TL01)
- (2) In accordance with submitted drawings (AD01)
- (3) External materials to be agreed (D02)
- (4) Boundary treatment to be agreed (L01)
- (5) Provision of parking (HC21)
- (6) Contaminated land investigation (AM12)
- (7) Implementation of approved remediation scheme and validation (AM13)
- (8) Contaminated land during construction (AM14)
- (9) Noise assessment (AM03)
- (10) Implementation of approved noise remediation scheme and validation (AM04)
- (11) Ground and air source heat pump installation (NS)
- (12) Construction and Demolition Management Plan (AM05)
- (13) Remove PD rights for Classes ABCD & E (P01)

**185 APPLICATION NO: 20210135 – 12 GRANGE CLOSE, OLD CATTON**

The Committee considered an application for a rear orangery/garden room & associated internal alterations.

The application was reported to Committee as the applicant was an employee and a close relative of a member of the Council.

Members noted the location and context of the site as set out in detail in the report.

The key issues in determining the application were the impact on neighbour amenity and the character and appearance of the area including the conservation area.

In assessing these issues members felt the proposal was acceptable with no impact on the character and appearance of the area or the Conservation Area and no unacceptable impact on residential amenity. It therefore was in accordance with the relevant policies and could be supported.

It was then proposed, duly seconded that the officer recommendation to approve subject to conditions be supported. On being put to a vote by way of a roll call, it was

**RESOLVED to**

**APPROVE** application no 20210135 subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Time limit
- (2) In accordance with plans and documents

**186 PLANNING APPEALS**

The Committee noted details of the planning appeal decisions received and appeals lodged for the period 12 February 2021 to 12 March 2021.

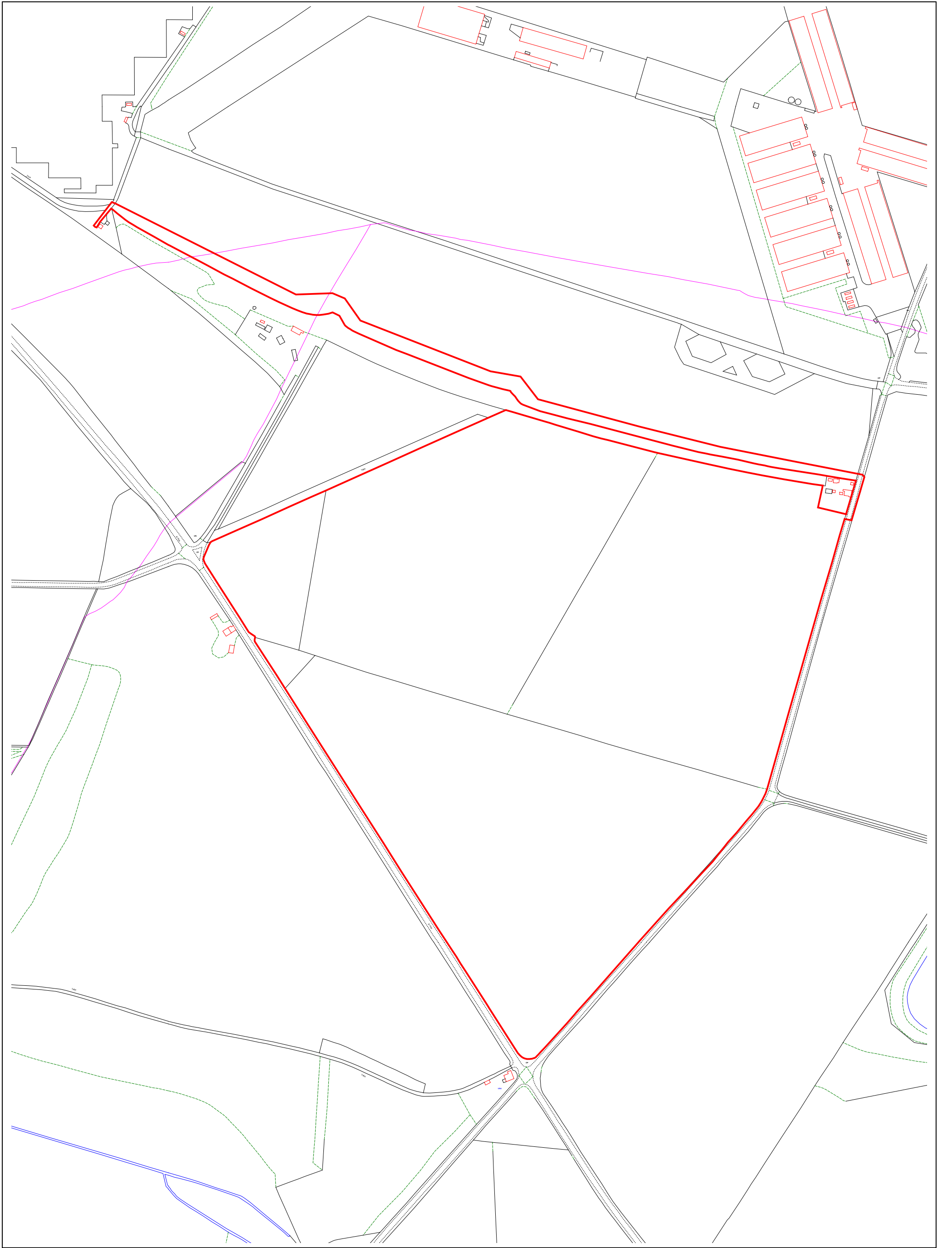
(The meeting concluded at 12 noon)

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Chairman

## SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

Area	Application No	Location	Officer Recommendation	Page No
<b>1</b>	20201776	Land north of The Street, Cawston	<b>TEMPORARY APPROVAL</b> subject to conditions	<b>13</b>
<b>2</b>	20191920	East of Manor Road and South of Newton Street, Newton St Faith	Delegate authority to the Assistant Director Planning to <b>APPROVE</b> subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement and conditions.	<b>56</b>
<b>3</b>	20202295	Hall Farm, Whitetop Lane, Blicking	<b>REFUSE</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>4</b>	20202182	White House Farm, Salhouse Road, Sprowston	<b>APPROVE</b> subject to conditions	<b>86</b>



**Application No: 20201776**  
**Land North of The Street, Cawston**

**Scale:**  
**1:2500**  
**Date:**  
**13-Apr-21**



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**Application No:** [20201776](#)  
**Parish:** **Cawston**

Applicant's Name: Mr A Brindle  
Site Address: Land North of The Street, Cawston  
Proposal: Ground mounted solar farm including associated infrastructure

### Reason for reporting to committee

The Local Member has requested that the application be determined by the Planning Committee for appropriate planning reasons as set out below in section 4.

Recommendation summary:

Approve, subject to conditions.

### 1 Proposal and site context

- 1.1 This application is seeking full planning permission for the proposed development of a ground mounted solar farm. The development includes associated infrastructure including inverters, transformers and a Distribution Network Operator (DNO) substation.
- 1.2 The application site covers an area of approximately 35.67 hectares of land to the north of The Street, Cawston. The site falls within the parish of Cawston and borders the parishes of Oulton and Heydon.
- 1.3 The proposed site comprises three agricultural fields. The site is bounded to the east and west by agricultural land. To the south west is Bluestone Plantation a large area of woodland and to the north are a number of poultry sheds and further agricultural land. To the north west there is a ground mounted solar farm. The permission for this development (ref 20150952), allowed development of over 17.1 ha but only part of it has been built. The permission is extant and the remaining phases can still be built. The Street runs along the eastern boundary which connects Cawston and Oulton Street. The B1149 runs along the southern boundary and is the main route between Holt and Horsford. Both of these roads are subject to national speed limit (60 mph).
- 1.4 The nearest residential dwellings are Bluestone Cottage located to the north of the site, Bluestone Hall that is located on the B1149 opposite the north western corner of the site, Bluestone Lodge located at the south western corner of the site opposite the junction of The Street and the B1149 and The Old Railway Gatehouse located adjacent to the north eastern corner of the site. The boundaries along the road frontages and access are planted with hedges dispersed with trees. The hedgerows are

in good condition and have been left to grow to approx. 2m high. To the north west corner of the site there is a small plantation of trees.

- 1.5 There are no Public Rights of Way crossing the site or adjacent to it. The nearest is Marriott's Way which is approximately 660m south east of the site. Given the nature of Marriott's Way being an old railway line, it sits lower than the surrounding land along large parts of it. The part of it closest to the site has substantial vegetation including hedgerows and trees on both sides of the route which means there are no views from it to the site.
- 1.6 There are overhead power lines which cross the site in a north/south direction. These will serve the project's point of connection into UKPN's 33kV grid.
- 1.7 The site is generally within Flood Zone 1 as identified on the Environment Agency Flood Risk Maps but does have two very small areas within the northern and western part of the site where low, medium and high risk of surface water flooding could occur.
- 1.8 The site does not accommodate any listed buildings or Scheduled Monuments. The closest heritage assets are Heydon and Salle Conservation Area which is located on the western side of the B1149 (Bluestone Plantation is located within it). Beerhouse Farmhouse is located 520m south of the site which is Grade II. Heydon Hall is located 1000m west of the site and is a Grade II\* listed Registered Park and Garden.
- 1.9 The nearest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the Cawston and Marsham Heaths SSSI which is located approximately 2.8km south east of the site.
- 1.10 The solar PV panels proposed will be a standard polycrystalline type which are intended for the daylight levels at this site. The installation is free draining through perimeter gaps around all panels and dispersed rainwater runoff. The proposal will comprise the installation of photovoltaic (PV) panels laid out in arrays of rows running from east to west across the site, the number of these will be dictated by the finalised layout. The height of the panels will be at a maximum of 3m above the ground.
- 1.11 The mounting structure for the panels is a metal frame securely fixed to the ground capable of withstanding appropriate environmental stresses for the location, such as wind or snow loading. The panels will be fixed on the mounting frame. The structure will also provide a route for electrical wiring.
- 1.12 The solar panels will be installed at 25° from the horizontal. The rows will be placed at an appropriate distance apart (likely to be around 5m) in order to optimise solar collection per unit land area.

- 1.13 The mounting posts will be pile-driven approximately 1.5m into the ground for support, dependent on ground conditions and will be easily retrieved using similar hydraulic equipment when the solar farm is decommissioned, and the land reinstated back to agricultural land. Such supporting systems are designed to avoid the use of mass concrete foundations on site.
- 1.14 The development will also require the installation of associated infrastructure required for the operation of a solar farm which includes:
- 2 Substations and DNO substation – Maximum height of 3.8m. (14.64sqm each)
  - 6 Inverter transformers – Maximum height of 3.5m. (14.77sqm each)
  - 21 CCTV cameras – Maximum height of 3m.
  - Perimeter fence – Maximum height of 2.5m

Revisions to the proposal have been received during the course of the application and 3 Battery storage containers originally proposed to be installed have been removed from the application.

- 1.15 The above infrastructure will be housed within a GRP type enclosure which can be colour coded to an appropriate colour if considered necessary. The site perimeter fence is typically constructed using wooden posts and wire mesh. Additional planting will be introduced for screening purposes where necessary.
- 1.16 The installation of CCTV will be required onsite for insurance purposes. The CCTV will be capable of viewing the solar PV farm only (without panning angles beyond). No floodlighting will be used as the CCTV cameras detect movement and have night vision capability in accordance with insurer's requirements. These will allow for constant monitoring but will be positioned in such a way to prevent areas outside the site being monitored. The CCTV camera poles will likely be constructed in galvanised steel. As much of the equipment as possible will be colour coordinated with the landscape and where possible it will be green in colour.
- 1.17 It is proposed that wildflower mix will be planted underneath the panels and that native hedgerow planting will take place within the gaps in the existing boundary hedgerows. The hedgerows will be allowed to grow and then maintained to a final height of 3.5m. At least 10 native fruit trees will be planted on site either to fill gaps in the existing hedgerows or other suitable areas to provide additional foraging resource for badgers.
- 1.18 The solar farm will be connected to the grid via the existing 33kV overhead lines which cross the site. In addition, there is a UK Power Network's requirement for the project to be connected to the existing substation to the north-west of the solar farm (labelled ESS on the proposed site layout plan) via a fibre optic cable. The proposed site plan shows the proposed route of the communications cable from the Customer and DNO Substation at the south of the site, along the eastern edge of the site and across the field to

the north of the solar farm. The fibre optics communication cable would be buried at a depth of around one metre below ground level.

- 1.19 The location of the cable in the field to the north of the solar farm would be between five and ten metres from the field boundary to make sure there is not any impact on trees or hedges.
- 1.20 The proposed entrance to the site will be from an existing farm access point midway along the site fronting The Street opposite the access to Docking Farm. A service road will run east to west across the site. A roadway will also be created inside the eastern boundary of the site running north to south linking the entrance to a newly created exit only access point further south. The existing access close to the junction with the B1149 will be closed off. Both are located along the eastern boundary. The applicant has provisionally indicated where the site construction compound will be located along the eastern boundary.

## 2 Relevant planning history

- 2.1 Screening Opinion (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 under planning reference [20201012](#) for proposed development of a ground mounted solar farm and associated infrastructure. EIA not required, 4 June 2020.

## 3 Planning Policies

### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

NPPF 02 : Achieving sustainable development  
NPPF 04 : Decision-making  
NPPF 08 : Promoting healthy and safe communities  
NPPF 09 : Promoting sustainable transport  
NPPF 11 : Making effective use of land  
NPPF 12 : Achieving well-designed places  
NPPF 14 : Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change  
NPPF 15 : Conserving and enhancing the natural environment  
NPPF 16 : Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

### 3.2 Joint Core Strategy (JCS)

Policy 1 : Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets  
Policy 2 : Promoting good design  
Policy 3 : Energy and water  
Policy 17 : Small rural communities and the countryside



### 3.3 Development Management Development Plan Document (DM DPD) 2015

Policy GC1 : Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy GC2 : Location of new development

Policy GC4 : Design

Policy GC5 : Renewable energy

Policy EN1 : Biodiversity and habitats

Policy EN2 : Landscape

Policy EN3 : Green Infrastructure

Policy EN4 : Pollution

Policy TS3 : Highway safety

Policy CSU5 : Surface water drainage

### 3.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Landscape Character Assessment – E1 Blickling and Oulton Wooded  
Estatelands

## 4 Consultations

### 4.1 Cawston Parish Council:

Object to this application.

In principle CPC supports the generation of electricity through photovoltaic solar farms. However: 2.90% of the land is graded 2, 3a and 3b – (all good quality land) and CPC considers the use of this land for a solar farm to be a poor use of good farm land.

CPC are worried about the lithium-ion battery storage on this scale and this close to housing. Lithium ion batteries of the size proposed are potentially hazardous. The danger of runaway fires arising in Lithium-ion installations is well known – but not well understood- particularly in a large scale installations such as this which are relatively recent. The resultant hydrogen fluoride is a toxic gas which could be a threat to local communities. CPC would like to see this properly risk assessed.

CPC is concerned that the Environmental Impact Assessment that has been presented does not take into account the potential impacts from:  
Noise: Inverters can be noisy. Cawston and the surrounding areas have experience of this at the Salle Beck substation. Light: Experience suggests that site owners like to waste a good part of their hard won energy lighting the site. This interferes with wildlife and the night sky amenity. Battery storage: See above. Visual impact: CPC is not satisfied that the screening proposals are well enough explained and committed to, and would like more detail.

There is significant building and infrastructure involved in the installation. CPC regards this as further unnecessary degradation of the open countryside. Whilst some wildlife can survive and thrive along-side the solar panels themselves, and the decommissioning argument can be legitimately applied to the panels, the buildings – hard standings and other infrastructure elements are another permanent reduction in green space in the area.

CPC thinks that the level of Community involvement is inadequate for such a proposal. Furthermore, it believes that if environmental detriment in the area is approved against the wishes of the locals, the damage should be offset by some significant benefits for the community and the environment.

Whilst generally accepting the assurances that the construction phase of the solar farm will not have a huge impact on the community, CPC considers that the possibility of disruption from the construction phase clashing with and exacerbating the already potentially devastating impacts of the windfarm cable route construction, has not been adequately explored.

#### 4.2 Heydon Parish Meeting:

No comments received.

#### 4.3 Oulton Parish Council:

Object to this application.

Some of the land is graded 2, 3a and 3b which is all good quality agricultural land and we consider its use for a solar farm to be unacceptable.

We note there are no details regarding the use of lithium batteries. We feel that advice is required from Norfolk Fire Service and we would like to see a full and proper risk assessment regarding these.

Although an Environmental Impact has been included it is very weak in the following areas and appears to gloss over the following:

Noise: A proper noise assessment is required, especially with reference to the neighbouring properties at the Old Railway Gatehouse and Docking Farm

Visual impact: although the applicants claim the site will be screened it does not appear to be hidden as they claim.

Entrance / exit will be on a bend and will remove a section of hedge.

The government target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and the responsibilities placed on district councils is acknowledged – however this is

a tiny contribution when compared to that of the three (maybe four) windfarms that will be cutting through Oulton in the coming decade.

### Further comments

1. Contribution to renewable energy targets – There is already in the immediate area:
  - a 5 MW solar farm
  - several agricultural buildings with solar panels installed on the roof
  - the National Trust's recent application (20200396) for a small scale solar site to be installed at the NT Conservation Studio in Oulton Street, appropriate to a conservation area
  - the national infrastructure proposed from 4 major offshore wind farms, which will see agricultural land dug up for high voltage cables *throughout the Cawston / Oulton area*, involving major disruption
  - The Main Construction Compounds for *three* of these projects, proposed to be located within only metres of this solar farm site, and generating continuous HGV traffic over 6-8 years
  - The combined output of the 3 largest wind farms will be over 5 GW – note, GIGAwatts.

It is therefore Oulton Parish Council's contention that this area has *already* honoured its community's contribution to the government's renewable energy targets and should be required to absorb no more.

Whilst OPC fully supports the development of renewable energy, this creeping industrialization of our intensely rural parish threatens to destroy the environment and the landscape and visual character of this entire area, which is our home. The Council sincerely hopes that the Planning Officers and the Planning Committee will take this fact into serious consideration when determining this application.

2. Battery Storage – OPC note the applicant is prepared to revise plans which would remove the Battery Storage. OPC is concerned that this would see it removed only for the battery element of the site to be added at a later date if permission were granted. There is still a lack of information regarding the battery storage. There is no technical information on what size these batteries will be, as well as a lack of technical information in general when compared to the previous solar farm application (20150952).
3. Site selection and Best and Most Versatile land – The applicant's statement on site selection suggests that there is a lack of brownfield sites and low-grade agricultural land, from which to choose a suitable site. If so, then the developer should look elsewhere.

It is also noted that the operational life of this solar facility is being estimated at 40 years – which cannot accurately be described as 'temporary'. A very high percentage of this land is Grade 2 and 3a – an

even higher percentage than in the original plan, now that the triangle of 3b land has been removed from the application (see Annex 1).

This site has been successfully growing, amongst other things in rotation, carrots to supermarket standards for several years. The claim that it can only be profitable by the use of irrigation is a pretext, rather than a valid reason for taking it out of production – on the contrary, in response to climate change generally, the farmer of this land has constructed in recent years a significant reservoir *in an almost adjacent field*, precisely to cope with this issue (see Annex 1).

Planners are advised *not* to encourage the removal of good quality agricultural land from food production, for all the obvious reasons of food security, reduction in air miles, Brexit insecurity etc. To permit the removal of a large parcel of BMV land from food production for such a long period of time would be a very poor trade-off for such a very small increase in renewable energy. See the reference at Point 1 above to the gigawatt output of large offshore wind farms, for comparison.

4. HSE Advice – OPC query whether there has been a lack of understanding of how this application at this location (with or without battery storage) may be hazardous to potential future national infrastructure. HSE stated: (Advice : HSL-201023093228-351 Does Not Cross Any Consultation Zones ) *The proposed development site which you have identified does not currently lie within the consultation distance (CD) of a major hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline; therefore at present HSE does not need to be consulted on any developments on this site. However, should there be a delay submitting a planning application for the proposed development on this site, you may wish to approach HSE again to ensure that there have been no changes to CDs in this area in the intervening period.* This advice would appear to be directly misleading.

The location of the buried electricity cables for the Norfolk Vanguard/Boreas national infrastructure projects would be running across land approximately 500m from this site (nearest location halfway between humpback bridge B1149 and The Street) and there is also the potential for the solar farm having to be partially removed in order to install the cable route section across this site for Equinor's Sheringham/Dudgeon Extension project.

5. Noise – OPC notes that the noise generated by the inverter in the middle of the site would be **82db** (at source) and that the nearest property is 145 metres away – The Old Railway Gatehouse. This decibel level seems very high and the information given by the applicant appears to be taken from one inverter. According to the site plans there would be 5 of these MV power 'stations' which contain the inverters.

When compared with the application for the existing solar farm to the west, there is very limited technical information regarding this industrial process. The recent planning application for the Potato Store (20180491) required a noise assessment to be carried out on impacted residents from the installation of industrial fans, and 'The Old Railway Gatehouse' was the subject of a noise assessment for Hornsea Three and Norfolk Vanguard/Boreas.

OPC can see no reason why the noise source of these inverters should be excluded from assessment and therefore request that a noise impact assessment should be carried out at the nearest property. This noise assessment also needs to take account of the potential for the *cumulative* impact of the operational noise of these inverters taken together with the increased traffic noise generated by Hornsea Three, Norfolk Vanguard and Norfolk Boreas.

Finally, it is noted that the applicant has consulted only with the residents of Docking Farm and that they are happy there will be no impact on them. It must be pointed out that Docking Farm is much further away, and the residents have a financial interest in the application.

6. Construction impacts/Cumulative impacts – OPC understand that construction would take place potentially ahead of the national infrastructure offshore wind farm proposals, but note that the access for emergency vehicles to the solar farm site would be impacted over the 8 - 10 years of the wind farm construction, due to the high volume of HGVs and other vehicles that will be accessing their Main Construction Compounds along this route.

The solar farm entrance and exit would be directly onto this construction access route. The Street access route for Hornsea Three/Norfolk Vanguard/Boreas was assessed without the solar farm in situ and the potential need to access the solar farm if there was an incident.

7. Visual impact and hedges – The mitigation to plant additional hedges, and for boundary hedges to grow higher – whilst essential in attempting to conceal the visual anomaly of solar panels on such a scale – will directly conflict with the mitigation for the Highways Intervention Scheme (HIS) proposed for Hornsea Three and Norfolk Vanguard/Boreas.

The HIS needs to *reduce* the height of some hedgerows to improve forward visibility for the huge increase in traffic. OPC urges the Planning Officers to seriously consider this conflict, in their deliberations: will this very large solar farm be acceptable in a rural area *with very little visual concealment at all?*

8. Equinor's Sheringham & Dudgeon Extension project also seems to have been omitted from consideration in this application, even though there is a scoping opinion published and the proposed cable route is potentially going directly through this solar farm site.

For all the reasons outlined above, Oulton Parish Council's OBJECTION to this planning application still stands.

Additional further comments:

Oulton Parish Council (OPC) wishes to comment on the Applicant's recent response and the noise report. OPC is aware that the proposed site for this solar farm is within the bounds of Cawston parish, but its location has a far greater impact on the parish of Oulton, as it sits on the boundary and forms the entrance to the hamlet of Oulton Street. OPC would like to re-state at the outset its commitment to the government's net zero target and its understanding of the vital contribution that energy from renewable sources of all kinds must make to the achievement of that target.

1. Contribution to Renewable Energy Targets – Applicant: 'In our view, buried cables running underground to serve offshore windfarms cannot be classified as renewable energy generation within Broadland District Council.' Oulton Parish Council begs to differ.

Such a perspective is nonsense, as it would result in the judgement that the only 'district' able to claim a contribution to the government's net zero target would be a 'district' situated somewhere in the middle of the southern North Sea. In fact of course it is well established in planning policy that the environmental impacts, including the cumulative impacts, of any part of a development proposal are material planning considerations in the determination of that proposal. On these grounds, the construction of the onshore cable corridors for the 'buried cables' are an integral part of all offshore wind farm projects, without which the renewable energy generated to meet the net zero target would be undeliverable.

Norfolk is about to be disrupted for a period of 8 – 10 years by major National Infrastructure offshore wind projects, which includes the 115kms of cable corridors going through and across the district, constructed by Orsted and Vattenfall to reach new inland substations, and deliver renewable energy into the national grid. OPC have been vocal in suggesting that the current proposal for point-to-point connection of these projects to the grid is flawed, and the recent Energy White Paper and the Offshore Transmission Network Review (OTNR) have agreed that this approach will have to change.

However, the recently consented projects are still progressing onshore, unless there is a sudden change in policy. Offshore wind on the scale planned has the enormous benefit of providing gigawatts of energy by

virtue of its sheer size, and location in the North Sea. Broadland DC, as well as the government, will consider these projects as a whole (including the cables) as making a massive contribution to the target of reaching net zero by 2050. It is therefore entirely unreasonable for this Applicant to brush aside Oulton's contribution to this enterprise as if it were meaningless. This parish will be hosting the Main Construction Compounds for both Orsted and Vattenfall's projects for up to 8 years, absorbing the impacts of massive amounts of HGV and other construction traffic on a daily basis. That is this community's contribution to the net zero target.

The combined potential energy output of these offshore wind farms is 6 GW, or 6,000 megawatts (MW). This is approximately 5 times the output of Sizewell B nuclear power station, all passing underground through Broadland District, on its way to join the grid. Such an enormous contribution to net zero completely dwarfs the potential output of this proposed solar farm, and yet this small output is the only justification for removing a substantial acreage of high-grade agricultural land from food production for a period of up to 40 years.

Good agricultural land is finite and should be seen as making a valuable contribution to food production and food security. The UK had to import 45% of the nation's food in 2019. The cost/benefit ratio of food production over 40 years against a small output of electricity over the same period needs to be demonstrated. It would currently appear to be a poor – and even a dangerous – trade-off.

OPC hopes that, in response to this issue, the applicant will not now resort to suggesting that sheep will be grazed under the solar panels, to offset the loss of food production. This idea was introduced for that reason, late in the day, by the developer of the existing solar farm (very close to the site of this proposal) during the course of their application.

OPC must remind the planning authority of what then happened to that 'promise': very swiftly after construction of the solar farm, the developers 'discovered' that they were having significant problems earthing the site, because of the soil type of the area. As a result, any four-legged animal on the site would be at risk of electrocution. Sheep may not 'safely graze' here!

Applicant: "In terms of the projects Oulton Parish Council reference as 'already in the immediate area', we note the following: whilst there are some solar panels in the local area, the existing 5MW scheme on Oulton Airfield is of relatively small scale, and solar panels on agricultural buildings/homes make a limited contribution to meeting national renewable energy targets. The planning reference provided in Oulton Parish Council's response in relation to a planning application for a National Trust 'small scale solar site' appears to be incorrect." [Point of information: OPC's reference to the National Trust's

application 20200369/20200385 was correct at the time of writing but the application has since been withdrawn/paused on 21.12.2020. This 'pause' is probably Covid-related, in terms of financing.]

In 2015 subsidies for solar power were withdrawn, after which date fewer solar applications were submitted by developers. However, solar is about to be included again in the government's Contract for Difference auctions (CfDs) later this year (2021). It is likely now that there will be a rash of speculative applications for solar farms, dotted all over the rural landscape of Norfolk, driven by investment opportunism.

If LPAs wrongly believe that they are under an obligation to approve all renewable energy applications, regardless of local impacts, then the effect on the landscape and visual character of rural Norfolk will be disastrous. Serious consideration of the costs and benefits of each proposal on its own merits must still be undertaken. Local adverse environmental impacts still have a place in that consideration – and that remains government policy.

Projects to date have been subsidy-driven, as a direct result of the degree of subsidy on offer, dependent on changing government policies. Up to 2015 there were subsidies on small-scale solar 5MW projects.

Solar power has its place, but OPC would argue that this should be on the roofs of domestic properties (new homes) and commercial businesses – where it can partly be used at source – and on brownfield sites or marginal land.

OPC believes that a renewable energy project should be seriously considered by planners when it is in an appropriate location and when it seeks to make a genuine contribution to the government's net zero target. It should not be imposed on rural communities in inappropriate locations, merely to enhance the profits of private developers.

Oulton has since 2012 had to respond to an extraordinary number of applications and screening opinions for various renewable energy projects (see below). The Parish Council has whenever possible supported these applications, especially when they have related to the installation of solar panels on the roofs of agricultural and other buildings.

Nevertheless, the list below demonstrates the increasing cumulative pressure on our small rural village from development proposals:

Oulton: renewable energy applications:

Requests for screening opinions for solar farms: submitted – but not progressed: 20120443 20120444 20130716



20130177: Bernard Matthews single wind turbine - withdrawn.  
20130860: Centralised Anaerobic Digester – refused & then dismissed at appeal. 20141475: Biomass boilers installation (change from LPG) Bernard Matthews turkey farm – approved.  
20151450: Bernard Matthews solar panels on buildings - approved/ permitted development.  
20150592: Airfield solar farm (10MW) 2 x 5MW approved (but only phase 1, 5MW, constructed – because of existing subsidy regime).  
Street Farm Grain Store: solar panels to roof – permitted development.  
20191885/12019895: National Trust conservation studio ground-source heat pump (change from oil boiler) – approved.  
20200369 / 20200385: National Trust conservation studio solar array – withdrawn (paused, according to applicant).  
20200161: 216.24 kW roof-mounted solar on non-domestic building – approved.

NSIP wind farms significantly impacting on Oulton:  
Hornsea Project Three: output - 2.4GW – approved 31/12/20.  
Norfolk Vanguard: output – 1.8GW – approved 01/07/20.  
Norfolk Boreas: output – 1.8GW – awaiting decision from Sec. of State 12/04/21. Dudgeon & Sheringham Shoal Extensions: output – 719MW – at consultation stage.

Finally, on this first issue, the planning authority might like to consider the implications of the existing solar farm in Oulton, in relation to our contribution to the government's renewable energy targets. The solar farm's output of 5 MW is enough to supply the needs of "approximately 1,300 homes". Oulton parish currently has 83 homes in occupation, and Cawston has approximately 550. It would therefore appear that by hosting the existing solar farm, Oulton is already helping to deliver renewable energy to cater not only for all the inhabitants of Oulton and Cawston – but with enough excess to supply several other parishes as well.

Does this not qualify as having already met our 'local' target of taking responsibility for our own energy needs?

## 2. Battery Storage

OPC notes that the Applicant has decided to remove the battery element of the application. This would seem to suggest that there was indeed a potential hazard to the surrounding area from these batteries, and the storage units' location close to the public road. OPC is therefore grateful for the removal of this feature.

However, this element (battery storage) was seemingly an important part of the original application and OPC now wonders what impact this

will have on the efficiency – and indeed the promised output – of this project.

Applicant: 'There will also be an area which will be used for battery storage on the site, to allow electricity generated by the solar farm to be stored and released into the electricity grid network at the appropriate time as required.'

Given that the sun does not shine at night, it certainly made engineering sense for battery storage to be included. The need for batteries to be removed from the application on safety grounds, therefore, serves only to highlight yet another reason why this is an inappropriate site for this project.

Our only remaining concern on this issue is an anxiety that, precisely because of the reduction in optimal output, the developer might be intending to construct the site first, and then apply for permission to add in battery storage at a future date.

OPC would be grateful if the LPA could raise this question with the Applicant.

Finally, on this issue, there needs to be further clarification on the purpose of the transformers. In the design and access statement, the transformers appear to be part of the battery storage element, which has now been removed, viz:

'three battery storage containers maximum height of 3.5m, six transformers for battery storage maximum height of 3.5m.'

Will these six transformers also be removed?

### 3. HSE Advice:

The query regarding the HSE advice showed that the application site would not be impacted by oil or gas pipelines in the area. However, this was not entirely the point: OPC were suggesting that the proposal itself, with battery storage, could be seen as a potential hazard.

The elimination of battery storage has removed that possibility, unless it is added to the site at a later date.

### 4. Noise:

OPC note the submission of the Applicant's noise report and observe that the noise report now includes transformers (6 no: 68.6db). These seem to be additional to the inverters (5 no: 82.9db) put forward as the only noise source in the Applicant's previous response. We also note that the withdrawal of the battery storage would seem to have removed

the potential for night-time noise, unless battery storage is added at a later date.

Two properties highlighted as noise receptors are Bluestone Lodge and Bluestone Hall (R01 & R02). Both are located across the road from the site and, being next to the Holt Road, will be the closest to the transformers and substations. The applicant seems to suggest that daytime noise will be limited, as traffic noise would be greater than that from the site. However, increased noise may still be noticeable during quieter periods of traffic such as evenings and weekends. The nuisance factor of the type of noise must also not be under-estimated. It is well accepted by planners that low-frequency humming is an extremely intrusive form of noise, and disturbing to many people.

It is noted that there are two substations (substation & DNO substation) on the plan, which are positioned near to the transformers. There appears to be no noise data for this equipment. Noise from this source is likely to impact the R01/R02 properties, given the substations' location.

The Old Railway Gatehouse (R04) is the only property immediately adjacent to the proposed site and is nearest to the inverters (MV power station). According to the data provided, property R04 would be less impacted than properties R01& R02.

OPC asks whether the prevailing wind, which blows southwest to northeast, has been taken into consideration?

Located at the northeast corner of the whole site, RO4 is very likely to experience the maximum impact of any and all noise generated from this site. This also applies to properties further away which may be impacted by noise, dependent on wind direction.

This property in particular (R04) is about to be impacted by the noise and emissions generated by the HGV traffic of the Hornsea Three and Norfolk Vanguard/Boreas construction processes. The addition of a large solar farm constructed on the boundary of this property can only be considered as having an intolerable adverse impact on the quality of life of the residents.

### 5. Construction Impacts/Cumulative Impacts:

The Applicant makes reference to a recent decision to consent one of the offshore wind farm projects, in the following terms:

'In their decision, the Secretary of State specifies that they are satisfied that the Construction Traffic Management Plan would 'reasonably mitigate and minimise the temporary construction impacts...'

The Applicant refers to this as the 'Cawston Highway Intervention Scheme.'

OPC are obliged to correct the Applicant, as the Cawston Highway Intervention Scheme (HIS) is entirely separate to and different from the proposed HIS for The Street/B1149. The Cawston HIS only attempts (unsuccessfully) to address the issue of how HGV construction traffic might safely negotiate its way through Cawston High Street. This has nothing to do with the solar farm proposal.

It is only the Oulton HIS (The Street/B1149) that is relevant to the solar farm application, as it will impact the entrance/exit of the proposed site, whether it is constructed before or during the other projects. Only the Oulton HIS provides details of the ways in which the solar farm might be affected by attempting to share its access road with the construction traffic of 3 major wind farm projects (Hornsea 3 and Vanguard/Boreas) over an 8 – 10 year period.

The Street Highway Intervention Scheme involves works that include the formalisation of 8 passing places and the grading of a significant hump in the road next to the Old Railway Gatehouse. The passing places are 'temporary' elements and will be reversed post construction – after 10 years. At that time there will be another major disruption to the lane and therefore a disruption to the solar farm access.

It is noted that the applicant proposes to install fibre optic communications from the site past The Old Railway Gatehouse, before running along the perimeter of a field to the airfield solar farm. Since the section of road outside R04 is subject to changes to the substrate, according to the terms of the HIS, this may have an impact on the fibre optic cables proposed.

### 6. Landscape and Visual Impact:

The applicant has now decided on the planting of new hedges that will be internal to the site and will not conflict with the need to reduce hedges on the highway boundary, to improve visibility for wind-farm HGV construction traffic. This is an unsatisfactory solution, as the new hedges will need many years of growth to mature to the necessary height, in order to screen the site at all.

Had the Highway Intervention Scheme for the wind farm projects – including the reduction of hedge heights – not been needed, then the existing boundary hedgerows would have acted as an immediate screening, at least in part, due to their maturity.

Once again, the conflict between this proposal and existing consented NSIP proposals is another indicator that this solar farm is in the wrong location. OPC queries whether this proposal complies with the national

planning policy guidance which states that regard should be given to the cumulative impact of solar farms on the landscape and local amenity, as the number of arrays increases. One 5MW solar array in Oulton is enough.

OPC needs again to highlight our major concern that this is a rural area, which is in danger of becoming industrialised with every additional application we have received over recent years. Oulton and Cawston have not been earmarked for industrial development in any local plans, but here is yet another industrial application – this time for a large-scale solar farm of 28MW. This will be sited on agricultural land directly adjacent to the western approach to the major tourist area and historic visitor attraction of Blickling Hall and parkland. The south-western corner of the Blickling Conservation Area (which includes the hamlet of Oulton Street) is less than 1 km from this proposal site.

Has the National Trust been consulted on their opinion of this proposal?

One of the Parish Council's overriding concerns is that this solar farm, in terms of its landscape and visual impact, would add a long-term visual insult to the injury of HGV construction traffic from other projects, every time residents and visitors enter or leave our village.

This is an intensely rural area and this proposal is yet one more example of the serious threat of creeping industrialisation – that the planning process exists to prevent.

### 7. Biodiversity:

A recent review of the ecological impacts of solar farms – and especially the effects on biodiversity – by BSG Ecology, was reported on the 'Environment Analyst Global' website. It concluded that: "ground-mounted PV panels have the potential to cause the highest impact on nature as they are installed on land which may have some value to wildlife."

The review focused primarily on the ground-mounted commercial arrays that are generally connected directly at grid distribution level. These typically span large areas, as in the case of this proposal, and include perimeter security fencing.

Interestingly, the impact upon wildlife being prevented from moving between existing connected habitats appears not to have been considered in this application. All these solar farms include high perimeter fencing for security purposes and, in addition, there would be the necessity in this particular location to exclude four-legged animals from the whole site, for their own safety. See section on 'sheep' at point 1 above.

### 8. Equinor's Sheringham & Dudgeon Extension Project:

OPC notes that the applicant has been in touch with Equinor and that there seems to be the possibility for their cable route to be installed on the site's perimeter. Equinor are at Phase 2 consultation stage of their pre-application process. Their cable trench is likely to be at least 45m wide and the project might be installed in 2 phases.

The potential for future conflicts around this site between all these enormous projects must not be underestimated, nor brushed aside on the simplistic basis that "we might be able to get here first".

OPC recommends that, before making any decision, the planning authority contact Equinor themselves and engage in serious discussion about their imminent future plans in this immediate area.

### Conclusion:

Oulton Parish Council urges the planning authority to refuse this application on the following grounds:

1. The parish of Oulton and the district of Broadland are already making a massive contribution to the government's renewable energy targets, by hosting and enabling the onshore infrastructure necessary for the consented offshore wind farm projects.
2. The parish of Oulton is already hosting a solar farm with sufficient output to supply the needs of all its own residents, with sufficient surplus for Cawston and several other parishes.
3. In the interests of food security, good agricultural land on this scale should not be taken out of production in exchange for a relatively small electrical output, which does not justify the poor trade-off.
4. There are actual conflicts between this proposal and already consented NSIP proposals affecting the southern end of Oulton Street. All proposals are competing to use this same stretch of rural lane for access. This solar farm should not be added to the mix.
5. The proposal emits noise of a low-frequency nature, sufficient to have the potential to cause nuisance to neighbours on a continuous basis.
6. The proposal would adversely affect the biodiversity of the natural environment.
7. The Landscape and Visual effects of this proposal will be immense and will impact negatively on the quality of life of residents of this parish and the quality of experience of all tourists visiting this area.

8. This proposal represents unjustifiable and uncoordinated creeping industrialisation of a rural area.

4.4 Cllr G Peck:

If you are minded to approve this application I wish to call it in.

My reason for call in is; Government guidelines are that Solar factories should be sited on poor agricultural land. The land on this site is graded high quality at either Grade 2, 3a and 3b.

The use of lithium batteries on site, which are highly polluting and create a fire risk, are a cause for concern. In addition this community has already exceeded its contribution in reducing carbon emissions by having a large solar park on Oulton Airfield, with another given permission to proceed, yet to be completed. In addition four cable routes servicing three off shore wind farms are due to come through the parishes of Oulton and Cawston. The cumulative impact of all these projects needs to be considered.

Further comments:

I believe I already called this application in, if you are minded to approve.

I understand the applicant has removed the lithium based batteries from their revised application, so you can delete that from my reasons for call in.

However, my other objections still stand. The site they are proposing is on grade 2 and 3a quality farmland. Which is not in line with government guidelines, which state that solar parks should be built on low grade farmland.

I understand Oulton Parish Council will be objecting to this application.

4.5 Emergency Planning Officer:

No comment from emergency planning is required.

4.6 Lead Local Flood Authority:

No comments to make.

4.7 Norwich Airport:

The proposed development has been considered, and we find that provided it is constructed as shown on the drawings and plans attached to the Application, and at the OSGB Grid Coordinates indicated, Norwich Airport would offer no aerodrome safeguarding objections to the Application.

### 4.8 Health and Safety Executive:

The proposed development site which you have identified does not currently lie within the consultation distance (CD) of a major hazard site or major accident hazard pipeline; therefore at present HSE does not need to be consulted on any developments on this site. However, should there be a delay submitting a planning application for the proposed development on this site, you may wish to approach HSE again to ensure that there have been no changes to CDs in this area in the intervening period.

### 4.9 County Ecologist:

The Ecology Assessment report is thorough and fit for purpose. There are no objections on ecological grounds subject to the following conditions based on BS42020:2013:

- Control over lighting (hours of use) –The site shall not be externally lit between dusk and dawn unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority to avoid impacts on foraging bats and other nocturnal species.
- Biodiversity Method Statement – Given the nature and size of this development and the information included in the Ecology Report [Wild frontier Ecology 2020], immediately prior to the start of site clearance the site will be re-surveyed for badgers to check for setts and signs of use by badgers. Should new setts be identified it may be necessary to amend proposals/obtain a licence from Natural England before works can proceed.
- During construction the following working practices will be adhered to prevent harm to animals during construction and in compliance with the Protection of Badgers Act 1992:
  - All construction and waste materials will be stored above the ground, such as on pallets or in skips respectively. This measure will ensure that such materials do not provide a sheltering opportunity attractive to small animals.
  - If excavations are left overnight sloped escape ramps for badgers shall be created. This may be achieved by edge profiling of trenches/excavations or by wide planks placed into them at the end of each working day.
  - Open pipework greater than 150mm outside diameter being blanked off at the end of each working day.
  - If any protected species are identified at any stage during the development, work should immediately cease and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted for further advice.
  - No works shall take place within 30m of the outlier sett identified on Figure 3 of the Ecological Report (Wild Frontier Ecology, 2020).



- An ecological enhancement and management plan shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the LPA prior to commencement of development. The content of the plan shall include the following:

### Ecological Enhancement:

- Details of enhancement of all species-poor and defunct hedgerows onsite.
- Details of the location of the 10+ native fruit trees.
- Details of the location of the: three bat boxes, five bird boxes, two bug boxes, and two log piles.
- Details of the site fencing showing provision for badger access.
- Description and evaluation of features to be managed.

### Management Plan:

- Ecological constraints on site that might influence management.
- Aims and objectives of management.
- Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.
- Prescriptions for management actions.
- Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan.
- On-going monitoring and remedial measures.
- Details of funding resources and mechanism(s) to ensure sustainable long-term delivery of the proposed management.
- Details of the legal and funding mechanisms by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer.
- The plan shall also set out (where the results of monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the EMP are not being met) how remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so the development still delivers the fully function biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme.”

Due to the presence of badgers onsite if more than one year has passed since surveys were undertaken then updated surveys may be required and any additional mitigation measures that need incorporating into the site’s design agreed with the LPA to comply with the NPPF and Policy EN1 – Biodiversity and Habitats.

### INFORMATIVES

Additional Survey Requirements if hedgerows or trees are to be removed as part of the development further assessment for bats and Hedgerow Regulations 1997 will be required. If works are proposed within 30m of the outlier sett further assessment will be required.

### Further comments

We previously responded on 28/10/2020 (no objection subject to conditions) and have reviewed documents submitted since this date. I have reviewed the ecology report against the amended Proposed Site Layout Plan (2050-00-002-I, Lanpro 13/01/21) and I am satisfied the Ecology Report (Wild Frontier Ecology, Sep 2020) remains valid.

We have no additional comments to make.

#### 4.10 Environmental Protection Officer:

Whilst these sites generally do not give rise to any noise issues, it would be useful to have technical noise data associated with the transformer and inverter to confirm this plant will not cause any issues. It would also be useful to know where these will be sited so proximity to residential properties can be ascertained.

### Further comments:

Operationally it is unlikely that the proposal will impact on the nearest noise sensitive dwellings. It is possible that night time noise may cause an issue if there is an audible hum or a discrete harmonic however. If you are minded to approve I would suggest that a condition is imposed requiring a noise assessment to be carried out prior to construction when all plant and equipment is known. Any proposed mitigation would need to be approved before construction. Conditions AM 03 and 04 seem appropriate.

The applicant has proposed a Construction Management Plan and you may wish to condition this too. AM 05 does not seem appropriate because it is heavily related to residential development.

### Further comments:

I have looked at the noise assessment prepared by Lanpro and would make the following comments:

It would be helpful to know about the way in which the ground anchors are to be installed eg are they driven percussively, hydraulically or screw driven for example? Please can Lanpro confirm that the noise predictions take full account of all operations associated with battery storage and discharge and the subsequent import or export of electricity which I assume can happen at any time. Finally the recorded background levels seem lower than those chosen in table 5.1. Can you please show how you have derived the La90. I understand you have based it on worst case summer 0400 – 0500.

### Further comments following response to questions raised:

No further comments to make.

### 4.11 Minerals and Waste Policy Officer:

The proposal site is underlain by an identified mineral resource (sand and gravel) which is safeguarded as part of the adopted Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy, and Core Strategy policy CS16 'Safeguarding' is applicable. Safeguarded mineral resources are derived primarily from the BGS Mineral resources map (2004) as amended by the DiGMapGB-50 dataset.

A duty is placed upon Local Planning Authorities to ensure that mineral resources are not needlessly sterilised, as indicated in National Planning Policy Framework (2019) paragraph 204, and 'A Guide to Mineral Safeguarding in England' published jointly by DCLG and the BGS.

Paragraph 206 of the NPPF (2019) states that "Local planning authorities should not normally permit other development proposals in Mineral Safeguarding Areas if it might constrain potential future use for mineral working".

The planning application does not include reference to the Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy, which forms part of the development plan. It also does not include any references to the paragraphs within the NPPF which relate to mineral safeguarding.

The Planning and Design and Access Statement accompanying the planning application states in paragraph 3.24 that "At the end of a 40-year period the structure, including all ancillary equipment and cabling, would be carefully dismantled and removed from the site".

As the application is for temporary development only, then Norfolk County Council, as the Mineral Planning Authority, does not object to the planning application 20201776 on this site because temporary development would not sterilise the underlying mineral resource. Therefore, any grant of planning permission should be conditioned to ensure that the development is temporary with a 40-year development life, plus an appropriate length of time to take into account commissioning and decommissioning.

#### Further comments:

It is considered that our previous response dated 30 October 2020 is still relevant.

### 4.12 Highway Authority:

The operational traffic generation of this type of site is negligible with construction traffic being the main concern.

The submitted information indicates the site construction period to be 8-10 weeks and therefore with suitable management there are no grounds for highway objection to the proposal.

Should your Authority be minded to approve the application I would be grateful for the inclusion of the following conditions and informative note on any consent notice issued to ensure highway safety and efficiency is maintained:

- Prior to any works starting on site the vehicular egress crossing over the verge to Oulton Street (C263) shall be constructed in accordance with the Norfolk County Council Industrial Access Construction specification and thereafter retained at the position shown on the approved plan. Arrangement shall be made for surface water drainage to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge from or onto the highway.
- Vehicular access to and egress from the adjoining highway shall be limited to the access(s) shown on the approved drawing only (Lanpro 2050-00-002-H). Any other access or egress shall be permanently closed, and the highway verge shall be reinstated in accordance with a detailed scheme to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority concurrently with the bringing into use of the new access.
- Prior to any works starting on site visibility splays shall be provided in full accordance with the details indicated on the approved plan. The splay(s) shall thereafter be maintained at all times free from any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.
- Prior to any works starting on site, signs in compliance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (2016) (or any Order/Act revoking, amending or re-enacting those Regulations) shall be provided and thereafter retained at the means of ingress and egress in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- Prior to any works starting on site the proposed access and construction traffic parking area shall be laid out and demarcated in accordance with the approved plan and retained thereafter available for that specific use.
- For the duration of the construction period all traffic associated with (the construction of) the development will comply with the Construction Traffic Management Plan and use only the 'Construction Traffic Access Route' as detailed in the submitted Traffic Impact Assessment and no other local roads unless approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

### 4.13 Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Officer:

We note that an historic environment and archaeological desk-based assessment has been submitted with the application. Whilst we recognise that the DBA is a competent and professionally produced document we disagree with some of its conclusions. There is potential for previously unidentified heritage assets with archaeological interest (buried archaeological remains of prehistoric date) to be present within the current application site and that their significance would be affected by the proposed development.

If planning permission is granted, we therefore ask that this be subject to a programme of archaeological work in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework 2019 paragraphs 199 and 189.

### 4.14 Ministry of Defence:

This application relates to a site outside of Ministry of Defence (MOD) statutory safeguarding areas (SOSA). We can therefore confirm that the MOD has no safeguarding objections to this proposal.

### 4.15 Other Representations:

CPRE:

Whilst CPRE Norfolk generally supports wind and solar generation of electricity, this needs to be weighed against any harms, so that the benefits can be justified. In this case we feel that this is not the case due to the following reasons.

- The proposals would lead to the loss of good quality agricultural land, according to the applicant's report as being Grade 2, 3a and 3b. This loss does not justify any benefits brought by the application.
- The application includes construction of an amount of infrastructure as well as the solar array itself. This amounts to new development which is outside any settlement boundary. We contend this is against policy GC2, Location of new development (Broadland Development Management DPD, 2015) as the proposal would lead to a significant adverse impact through the loss of good quality agricultural land, as well as impact on open countryside. This makes the application contrary to Policy 17, Smaller rural communities and countryside (Joint Core Strategy, 2014) as the application is not one of the exceptions within that policy which would permit its development. Moreover, as 6.66 of the JCS explains in connection to this policy:

*Much of the area is agricultural land forming an attractive backdrop to the existing settlements and the Broads. This area contains many attractive built and natural features including areas of notable*

*landscape character, geological and biodiversity interest. These need to be protected and enhanced, while providing for the rural economy and accessibility to services to be maintained and enhanced.*

- The cumulative effects of construction work from this proposal, together with that from the NSIPs laying cabling across the area for offshore windfarms, would lead to unacceptable noise and disturbance as well as traffic issues, for local residents in particular.

#### 4.16 Resident of The Street:

I would like to request that the planning authority gives due consideration to the fact that the benefit of this proposal, in terms of its very small contribution to government renewable energy targets, does not need to trouble the LPA unduly. We are aware that all District Councils are under an obligation to make a contribution to the national effort to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 – but the Broadland District area is already making a huge contribution to that ambition. To put this in context of the solar farm application, the Cawston/Oulton area is already contemplating hosting cabling for 3 enormous offshore wind farms (with a 4th on the way), which have a combined electrical output of 5 times the output of Sizewell B. I hope that the LPA will agree that that is contribution enough.

#### 4.17 Occupant of The Old Railway Gatehouse, Oulton Street:

Our house is going to be surrounded by the solar panels. We have our reservations about this project regarding noise etc. Concerned about the location of the power boxes and noise of rain and hail on the panels.

## 5 Assessment

### **Key Considerations**

- Principle of development
- Loss of agricultural land
- Need for development
- Landscape impact
- Heritage impact
- Biodiversity impact
- Traffic and highway safety
- Drainage and flooding
- Noise

- 5.1 As set out in paragraph 1.1 of this report the application seeks planning permission for the temporary use of the land for a solar farm with associated infrastructure.

- 5.2 The main issues to be taken into consideration in the determination of this application are an assessment of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and whether there are any other material considerations. This includes traffic and highway safety, landscape, agriculture, heritage, biodiversity, drainage and flooding impacts and the impact on neighbours in relation to noise.

### **Principle**

- 5.3 Under Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('The 2004 Act'), the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the approved development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4 The NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future under paragraph 148. Policy 3 of the JCS states that developments shouldn't rely on non-renewable energy. Policy GC5 of the DM DPD is supportive of renewable energy stating that it should be encouraged where its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable.
- 5.5 The site is located within an area designated as countryside in the local plan. Policy GC2 of the DM DPD identifies that development outside of settlement limits will be permitted where the development does not result in any significant adverse impact where it accords with a specific allocation and/or policy of the development plan. There are no sites allocated across the District for renewable energy technologies and Policy GC5 states that proposals for renewable energy technology and associated infrastructure will be encouraged where its impacts are (or can be made) acceptable. The scale of ground mounted solar farms require these to be developed on land outside of settlement limits in the countryside. The Council has not identified any specific areas for renewable energy developments in the District, therefore the consideration on the appropriateness of a site should be done on a site by site basis.
- 5.6 Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) paragraph 13 requires local planning authorities to consider "encouraging the effective use of land by focussing large scale solar farms on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value; "where a proposal involves greenfield land, whether (i) the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal allows for continued agricultural use where applicable and/or encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays."
- 5.7 Solar farms require a relatively large land area as well as a grid connection point. This means that solar farms are more suited to a countryside than urban location, where large areas of land, or brownfield sites are typically allocated for residential or commercial expansion. It is therefore considered

that suitable sites for solar farm development are likely to be outside settlement boundaries.

### **Agricultural Land**

- 5.8 Oulton Parish Council and Cawston Parish Council have raised an objection to the use of this area of agricultural land for a solar farm on the grounds that good quality agricultural land should be retained for food production. The site has a mix of agricultural land classifications across it, with a mix of 2, 3a and 3b. The Ministerial Statement in March 2015 advises that where a proposal of a solar farm involves the best and most versatile agricultural land, it will need to be justified by the most compelling evidence. It goes on to say that every application needs to be considered on its individual merits, with due process, in light of the relevant material considerations.
- 5.9 The application is accompanied by an Agricultural Land Classification Report and it has found that the site is made up of 3.1% grade 2, 68% grade 3a and 28.9% grade 3b agricultural land. Therefore, the site consists of 71.1% of best and most versatile and 28.9% of moderate quality agricultural land. The report does note that droughtiness and soil depth and type in some areas is a limiting factor for crop production and the site is reliant on irrigation for growing a viable crop of sugar beet and potatoes. Given that the majority of the site consists of best and most versatile agricultural land a Site Selection Assessment has been prepared and accompanies this planning application.
- 5.10 The Site Selection Assessment has described the method in which the applicant selected a suitable site for the development proposals, by discounting sites that are not suitable. This assessment has identified the study area by the requirement to connect to the local electricity network and ensuring that the connection is viable. The assessment also includes review of brownfield sites and previously developed land within the Broadland District Council area. None of the sites assessed were considered to be suitable for the solar farm.
- 5.11 The site is shown as Grade 3 Agricultural Land on the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification Maps. The Agricultural Land Classification Report submitted with this planning application shows that the site comprises a mixture of 3a and 3b land. There are only very small areas of lower Grade 4 in Broadland and no Grade 5 agricultural land within Norfolk. There is no Grade 4 land within the 2.5km search area around the sub-station connection point, but there are areas of higher land value (Grade 2). The site is therefore considered to be appropriately situated to assist with the planning objective of maintaining a supply of agricultural land. The proposals accord with the PPG as the assessment demonstrates (i) the proposed use of the agricultural land has been shown to be necessary and poorer quality land has been used in preference to



higher quality land; and (ii) the proposal encourages biodiversity improvements around arrays.

- 5.12 Overall, it is considered that the proposals can be considered to be in accordance with Policy GC2 of the DM DPD and represents an appropriate form of development in the countryside. In summary, whilst the site is in the countryside, it is considered that the principle of the development in this location is acceptable.

### **Need**

- 5.13 It is integral to planning decision-making that a balancing exercise is undertaken in respect of considering the benefits of development against impacts. Given the objective of transitioning to a low carbon future, there is a clear need for the development. Oulton Parish Council and Cawston Parish Council, as set out in full above, have questioned the need for the solar farm in the Parish citing the contribution that the area has already made as a whole to renewable energy in the form of existing onshore installations and the proposed largescale offshore wind farms that are using the District for their cabling routes.
- 5.14 The NPPF is heavily supportive of renewable energy development. The NPPF places an over-riding emphasis on the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which this development clearly constitutes. Infrastructure, which is required to ensure the generation of renewable energy, is inherently sustainable under the NPPF.
- 5.15 The UK is legally bound through the Climate Change Act (2008) to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels. The Renewable Energy Directive 2009/28/EC sets targets for Member States in respect of the use of energy from renewable resources. The UK's obligation is 15% of energy consumption from renewable energy resources by 2020. In January 2018 the EU revised the 2030 energy mix target from 27% to 35% renewables. The development would contribute towards meeting these requirements and would also be fully supported by energy policy because it would assist in replacing outdated energy infrastructure and the move to a low carbon economy (and ultimately will assist with more affordable energy bills).
- 5.16 In line with the Climate Change Act 2008, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.17 The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, identifying that sustainable development consists of economic, social and environmental roles.
- 5.18 Paragraph 11 advises that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The development is considered to

accord with the overarching principle of sustainable development, as it has a great potential to result in economic and social benefits in respect of supplying affordable, low carbon electricity. The impacts of the development on the environment will be carefully assessed and where necessary mitigated, so that it will not lead to any significant adverse effects.

- 5.19 Paragraph 148 states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. The site has been considered as the optimal location which can maximise the energy output, while leaving minimal impact on nearby properties and the environment.
- 5.20 Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out that in order to increase the use and supply of renewable energy, LPAs should not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy. LPAs should approve the application if its impacts are or can be made acceptable.
- 5.21 As noted above Policy GC5 of the DM DPD is supportive of new proposals for renewable energy developments in the District. The energy generated by the proposed development will contribute to supporting growth in the region, and the carbon emissions saved as a result of generating electricity from a renewable source, would help to tackle climate change and minimise resource use. As such the proposed development would be in accordance with this policy.

### **Landscape**

- 5.22 Policy EN2 of the DM DPD relates to the landscape and advises that development proposals should have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment SPD and should consider the impacts upon certain areas which include sensitive skylines, hillsides and valley sides, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens. Development proposals should protect and enhance where appropriate. Given the scale of the development, the impact that the solar farm will have on the landscape context and the visual impact is a prime consideration.
- 5.23 Within the wider context the landscape character is defined as the Blickling and Oulton Wooded Estatelands which comprises mainly arable fields with settlements, villages and isolated farmsteads scattered with historic buildings. Large parkland estates centred on grand houses comprise a characteristic feature of the area accommodating gardens, parkland and plantations on their grounds. The full extent of the site covers approximately 35.67 hectares and is located on the eastern side of B1149, on the west side of The Street and adjacent to the former Oulton Airfield situated to the north of the site. The nearest market town is Aylsham, 4.5km to the east. The topography is very gently undulating. The site is currently in arable agricultural use and enclosed with hedgerows and

mature trees to the boundaries. A small pocket of woodland and scrub bounds the site from the west. The site does not have any Public Rights of Way (PRoW) or bridleways crossing it and is not within any protected areas or site designations in relation to protected or sensitive landscapes. There are no scheduled monuments or listed buildings on the site.

- 5.24 A number of Statutory Land-Based designation sites lay within relative proximity to the site. Cawston and Marsham Heaths (SSSI), Buxton Heath (SSSI) and Booton Common (SSSI) fall within 5 km radius from the site, while Felmingham (SSSI), Felmingham Cutting (LNR), Westwick Lakes (SSSI), Whitwell Common (SSSI) and Foxley Wood (SSSI, NNR) fall within 15 km radius from the site. In terms of Non-statutory Land-Based designations, Heydon Park lies 1.5 km to the west, while Blicking Park and Salle Park are situated within 2.5 km distance. Ancient replanted woodlands of Newhall Wood is situated 2 km to the west and Leaslands 1 km to the north east of the site. In terms of Local Designations, opposite the site to the south west side of B1149 is the locally designated Heydon and Salle rural conservation area, with Bluestone Plantation within its grounds.
- 5.25 Oulton Parish Council and Cawston Parish Council have raised concerns about the cumulative landscape and visual effects of the proposed development in conjunction with other developments in the area. There is an existing solar farm situated 130m to the north of the applicant site and separated from it by mature hedge and tree boundary and the Oulton Airfield. The development covers an area of 16.1 hectares and consists of two phases of which Phase 1 is currently complete. The development under consideration is relatively small size and effectively screened by mature hedgerows of 3m height and trees, and is not currently visible from any parts of the Oulton Street solar farm. There is little or no inter-visibility between the sites. The existing solar farm is not visible from any of the viewpoints relative to the proposed site. As a result, the potential landscape and visual cumulative effects are considered to be acceptable.
- 5.26 The landscape mitigation has focused on creating effective screening of indigenous hedge planting around the site boundary. The existing hedge boundary is currently at an approximate height of 2m and is dense at most of its length to the east along The Street, while to the south east along B1149 the hedgerow is thinned by sporadic gaps where planting has failed during the course of time. The landscape mitigation proposal suggests the existing hedgerows to be retained and enhanced with new native species rich and wildlife beneficial planting at places where the density of the existing hedgerows have started to decline and be allowed to grow and maintained to a final height of 3.5m minimum in order to conceal the full height of the solar PV units at 3m maximum height. Intrusive structures of the development proposal consist of substations, transformer units and CCTV cameras all of which will be at a maximum height of 3.5m. These structures are not expected to be protruding over the boundary. Further habitat will be achieved by seeding of shade tolerant wildflower meadow to

the full extent of the site underneath the solar panels. The selection of native plant species for the landscape aims to provide a habitat rich environment through nectar, pollen and fruiting with hedgerow and canopy habitat to provide shelter resources throughout the year. The hedges are of strategic importance providing screening and a buffer at the same time as retaining the characteristic hedgerow pattern. The wildflowers will contribute to the environmental value of the site.

- 5.27 In terms of landscape sensitivity the site is situated within Landscape Character Area E1: Blickling and Oulton, characterised as gently rolling landscape, predominantly of agricultural use and with long established agricultural history. Within the wider context the landscape character is one of mainly arable fields with settlements, villages and isolated farmsteads scattered with historic buildings. Large parkland estates centred on grand houses comprise a characteristic feature of the area accommodating gardens, parkland and plantations on their grounds.
- 5.28 A Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) has been prepared to accompany the application and assesses the impact on the immediate setting and longer distance views of the site in the landscape. Due to the gently undulating landform and the effective screening of mature hedgerows, trees and patches of woodland, the assessment has established that the views of the site are visually very contained within close proximity of the site boundaries. The change will produce an effect to the agricultural and arable fields character of the site and its immediate surroundings, as well as the views out from the edge of area towards the Bure Valley. However, as the views from where the development will be perceived are short and condensed the impact of the landscape effects is not expected to be significant and can be effectively mitigated, with the reinforcement of boundary hedgerows to a height which will effectively screen the development. Additionally, the landscape mitigation proposal will enrich the existing habitat and enhance the environment with native species of hedge plants and wildflowers. It is recommended in the LVIA that all indigenous hedge plants are planted as 175-200cm bare root transplants and hedges maintained at 3.5m height. These would be expected to reach this height during the sixth year following their planting. The existing hedge is expected to achieve the full height of 3.5m within five years following the cease of hedge topping. Overall, on the condition that the landscape mitigation guidance provided in the LVIA will be followed, the development can be considered acceptable in terms of landscape and visual effects.
- 5.29 The site has been assessed to establish where the key viewpoints were into and out of the site to identify where potential mitigation planting would be needed. This established that the site is well contained within the landscape and has a good level of screening from trees and hedges from most viewpoints with just a few points where gaps need to be filled in and reinforced. Therefore, the development can be considered acceptable in

terms of landscape and visual effects subject to appropriate landscaping conditions.

### **Heritage**

- 5.30 The site does not contain any listed buildings or Scheduled Monuments. The closest heritage assets are Heydon and Salle Conservation Area which is located on the western side of the B1149 (Bluestone Plantation is located within it). Cawston Conservation Area is located approximately 2km from the site, while Aylsham, Blickling and Reepham Conservation Areas fall within 5km from the site. A number of Grade I, Grade II and Grade II\* listed buildings are present in the area, mostly within the aforementioned conservation areas. Beerhouse Farmhouse Grade II listed building is situated 520m south of site, while Heydon Hall registered Park and Gardens Grade II\* is situated 1000m to the west. There are no Scheduled Monuments within a 5km radius from the site. The site is well contained within the landscape and it is considered that the proposed development will have no impacts outside of the site boundary on any of these heritage assets.
- 5.31 Policy EN2 of the DM DPD also deals with heritage assets including conservation areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Historic Parks and Gardens. The Historic Environment Report submitted with this planning application concludes there is some limited potential for the survival of remains dating to the early prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman periods within the study site. It is possible that buried remains relating to medieval or post-medieval agriculture could survive, such as ploughing or field boundaries, but these would be of negligible significance. Notwithstanding the findings of the Historic Environment Report, the Historic Environment Officer has requested that a condition of planning permission is that a written scheme of investigation is submitted, agreed and investigations are completed prior to commencement of the development.

### **Biodiversity**

- 5.32 Policy ENV1 of the DM DPD relates to biodiversity and habitats and requires development to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the district, avoid fragmentation of habitats and support the delivery of a co-ordinated green infrastructure network throughout the district. If any harmful impacts do occur it should be adequately demonstrated that the development cannot be located where it would cause less or no harm and that adequate mitigation is incorporated and that the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts.
- 5.33 An Ecological Assessment of the land proposed for the solar farm has been carried out. Habitats have been assessed on the proposed site and immediate surroundings, and the area has been appraised for any Protected Species potential.

- 5.34 The Ecological Assessment reports that the site is currently three arable fields with a species poor semi-improved grassland field beyond the north-west boundary of the site. There is a mixed woodland plantation on the northern boundary of the site, and an area of mixed woodland southwest of the site. The Ecological Assessment concludes that there is no realistic potential for the development to affect designated nature conservation sites, either during the development phase or once operational.
- 5.35 It is not expected that hedgerows or trees will be removed as part of the development but further assessment may be necessary if this changes. Several trees on site were noted as having potential for roosting bats and if they are to be affected by the development, mitigation or further surveys will be required. The hedges and trees on site also provide suitable habitat for nesting birds, and any removal of woody vegetation should be carried out outside of the main bird nesting season.
- 5.36 An outlier badger sett was found in the mixed woodland bordering the site, and mitigation is recommended in the form of an exclusion zone around the woodland and mitigation to prevent harm to badgers during the construction phase. Habitat enhancements for badgers are also advised.
- 5.37 There is suitable habitat on site for small terrestrial animals, including hedgehog, brown hare, and toads. Recommendations are made within the Ecology Assessment for appropriate mitigation measures and timing of works to reduce impacts.
- 5.38 Disturbance to nocturnal species such as bats or badgers is likely if there is insensitive night-lighting of the site. This can be avoided using a sensitive lighting approach.
- 5.39 Suitable enhancements to increase biodiversity value on site have been provided, including the provision of wildlife habitats, bird and bat boxes, and the filling in of hedgerow gaps with native plant species. Future habitat management of the site will be guided by an Ecological Management Plan, which when followed, the development has the potential to provide a net benefit to biodiversity in the medium to long term as well as deliver multi-functional ecosystem services for agriculture and the wider area.
- 5.40 The County Ecologist has concurred with the findings of the Ecology Assessment and has no objections to the development as proposed subject to conditions to control lighting, a requirement for submission of a Biodiversity Method Statement and Ecology Enhancement and Management Plan as set out in section 4.9 above. The application is considered to meet the aims of Policy EN1 of the DM DPD.

### Traffic

- 5.41 Policy TS3 of the DM DPD in respect of highway safety requires all development to ensure that there will not be a significant adverse impact upon the safe functioning of the highway network. A Transport Impact Assessment has been prepared and accompanies this planning application.
- 5.42 The main traffic generation will be during the construction period which will be relatively short. The Traffic Impact Assessment contains some details in relation to construction management and a traffic routing plan and it is recommended that this is a condition of planning permission to ensure that routing and traffic generation details are agreed as part of the formal application. Once operational, traffic movements would be minimal with only maintenance access required.
- 5.43 Once completed the applicant advises that movement within the site will be by quad bike or small, farm utility vehicle. The Electricity Board will visit the site from time to time to check the apparatus. No on-site staff will be required to operate the solar farm and no staff offices or maintenance buildings are needed within or near to the site. Some permanent equipment for monitoring the site will be held in one of the transformer enclosures and/or grid connection cabinet. Whilst this would typically be accessed remotely, it would be available for occasional physical access during routine visits.
- 5.44 A significant concern that has been raised by Oulton Parish Council and Cawston Parish Council about safety of the access and the amount of traffic associated with the construction of the solar farm and in particular the cumulative impact that this proposal and the offshore windfarm cable route work will have for the roads in this area. Their responses to the proposed development are set out in full in section 4.3 above.
- 5.45 On 1 July 2020 the Norfolk Vanguard offshore wind farm received DCO approval, although this was quashed by the High Court in February 2021 and the Secretary of State must re-determine that application although further clarification is awaited from the Examining Authority on what happens next with this project. The offshore wind farm known as Hornsea 3 received DCO approval in December 2020. A decision is also due in April 2021 on a further offshore wind farm known as Norfolk Boreas, although due to its linkages with the Norfolk Vanguard wind farm this may be delayed. A fourth offshore windfarm project known as the Sheringham & Dudgeon Extension Projects is still to commence its examination process before a decision on its DCO can be made by the Secretary of State.
- 5.46 As part of the submissions they provided high level construction programmes which indicate that for the Hornsea 3 project onshore works will commence in 2021 and 2022 for Norfolk Vanguard. Both programmes

were based on obtaining consent in mid/late 2019 which has been delayed.

- 5.47 Once DCOs are approved the project team will need to go through a process of detailed design, procurement and discharging requirements imposed on the DCO before any works can commence.
- 5.48 Given the delays in obtaining a decision on Norfolk Vanguard it is currently unclear what impacts this will have on the projects programme, but it is likely that the original programme set out in 2018 will be delayed.
- 5.49 Hornsea 3 does have DCO approval and work is underway on the requirements to undertake the necessary detailed approvals, it is anticipated that there is potential that any commencement could be further delayed into 2021/22.
- 5.50 In relation to whether any construction periods may be undertaken at the same time as this application, the applicant will be looking to commence construction within 6 -9 months after approval and the development would take around 10-12 weeks to complete. Therefore, it is anticipated that the solar farm would be fully constructed and operational before work is started on the cabling routes along this section of the offshore windfarms projects. Taking into account the above noted delays on the offshore windfarm projects and the far more complicated process of discharging requirements, planning procurement etc it is highly unlikely that this development will still be in its construction phase at the same time as either of the offshore windfarms are starting their on-shore construction.
- 5.51 There is another solar farm which is located to the north west of the site on the former Oulton airfield. The permission for this development (ref 20150952) allowed development over 17.1ha but only phase 1 of the project has been built. Within the planning statement which was approved as part of that application it stated that the scheme would be built in two phases but did not give any indication on the timescales for building out phase 2. There have been no planning applications relating to phase 2 since 2016 and it is not certain that this will ever be built.
- 5.52 Considering a worst-case scenario of the 2nd phase being built out at the same time as this development being built, the applicant indicated that phase 2 would take 8 weeks to construct. Whilst both developments would be using the same route for traffic, they would have separate access points onto their sites. As indicated in the Construction Traffic Management Plan for the application, the airfield has seen a number of times where it was used as a construction compound and storage area for large amounts of plant and the road network was used by long articulated HGVs for much longer periods of time than is required in association with the construction of a solar farm. The Highway Authority raised no objection to the use of the road network for any of those uses and also considered it acceptable at the time of the determination of the two phase solar farm on the airfield.



- 5.53 It is considered that, overall, the development will not cause disruption to the safe and free flow of traffic during operation as raised as concerns by Oulton Parish Council. The application is considered to be in accordance with Policy TS3 of the DM DPD and the Highway Authority has not raised any objections to the proposal subject to conditions in relation to the construction of the site access, access visibility and construction traffic management as set out above.

### **Drainage and Flooding**

- 5.54 The site is situated within Flood Zone 1 as shown on the Environment Agency flood zone mapping and does have two small areas at risk from surface water flooding. In terms of surface water solar panel arrays are not considered to prevent direct infiltration into the ground and will allow rainwater to drain freely into the ground. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been prepared and accompanies this planning application and should be referred to for full details.
- 5.55 The FRA concludes that given the site is in Flood Zone 1 there is a low probability of flooding and therefore all forms of development as listed in the NPPF are considered appropriate. In relation to surface water flooding, the two areas which are indicated as at a high risk with a greater than 1 in 30 chance of flooding in any year. The panels will be located on posts which will be above the depth of any flooding and will therefore be unaffected.
- 5.56 The ground conditions of the fields are granular in nature and any rainwater infiltrates naturally into the subsoil. There will be no increase in impermeable area which will mean that the proposals will not increase flood risk on or off site.
- 5.57 Policy CSU5 of the DM DPD on surface water drainage requires that proposed developments should not increase flooding on the site or elsewhere. Taking the conclusions in the FRA, the development meets the requirements of the policy.

### **Noise**

- 5.58 Oulton Parish Council has raised concerns as set out in full above, about the level of noise that will be associated with the proposed development. Paragraph 170 of the NPPF states that 'Planning policies and 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'. Paragraph 180 goes on to state 'planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living

conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should mitigate and reduce to a minimum, potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life. Furthermore, paragraph 182 states that 'planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development can be integrated effectively with existing businesses and community facilities and the applicant should be required to provide suitable mitigation before the development has been completed'.

- 5.59 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further guidance with regard to the assessment of noise within the context of Planning Policy. The overall aim of this guidance is to identify whether the overall effect of noise for the given situation. However, the NPPF and PPG do not present absolute noise level criteria. The applicant has carried out a Noise Assessment in relation to the proposed development using appropriate guidance including 'BS 8233 – Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings' (2014) and 'BS 4142: 2014 Methods for Rating and Assessing Industrial and Commercial Sound'.
- 5.60 The noise levels generated by construction activities and experienced by nearby sensitive receptors (NSRs), such as residential properties, depend upon a number of variables, which are the noise generated by plant or equipment used on site, such as piling, the periods of operation of the plant on the site, the distance between the noise source and the receptor, the attenuation due to ground absorption, air absorption and barrier effects and the existing noise environment and noise levels at the time of the works.
- 5.61 It is understood that any piling scheduled on this project will take approximately 15 days, so any potential impacts would be temporary in nature. Based upon the BS 5228 ABC assessment method construction noise levels at the façade of the nearby sensitive receptors without mitigation measures in place, construction noise levels may result in some temporary, short-term adverse effects at the worst affected sensitive receptors close to the works during the noisier operations. In practice, construction noise levels and resulting impacts are likely to vary during the different construction phases of the development depending upon the location of work sites, activities and plant in operation and proximity to sensitive receptors. Given the nature of the area and the scale of works, it is not expected that significant effects would occur for prolonged and continuous periods of time. However, specific mitigation measures will assist in further identifying and minimising construction noise impacts.
- 5.62 To ensure the potential construction impacts are minimised, a condition requiring the preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prior to construction is recommended to ensure any potential impacts are minimised. The CEMP will be required to outline the allocated responsibilities, procedures and requirements for site environmental

management and include relevant site-specific method statements, operating practices, and arrangements for monitoring and liaison with local authorities and stakeholders. The main contractors undertaking the construction of the development will need to adopt and comply with the CEMP, allocate environmental management responsibilities to a site manager and ensure that all sub-contractors activities are effectively managed in accordance with the CEMP.

- 5.63 In relation to operational noise and level of effect at nearby properties, the applicant advises that sound from the development will generally be low level and constant, with no rapid change in the level or character of noise. Plant will not have identifiable on/off conditions, with many items operating at gradually varying loads relative to both the intensity of light upon the solar panels and the air temperature. The Noise Assessment models the inverters running throughout the night for completeness but the inverters will either not be in operation or will be at a significantly reduced capacity during hours of darkness. The noise assessment has assumed a worst-case approach, and full operation of the inverters has been included. A representative daytime background noise level has been derived from an average dB LA90 07:00 – 22:00. A representative background during hours have darkness have been taken from an average between 04:00 – 05:00 to represent worst-case summer months.
- 5.64 The assessment concluded that noise levels from the solar farm are predicted to be at least 6 dB below background noise levels at the closest sensitive receptors during the daytime. During the night-time (hours of darkness), noise levels are predicted to exceed background noise levels by up to 9dB. The background noise levels during the daytime indicate that the proposals would not be audible from the properties during the daytime. Despite predicted noise levels exceeding the background noise level during hours of darkness, a specific noise level of up to 40dBA is not considered to result in a significant adverse impact, as internal noise levels in bedrooms would be within WHO and BS 8233 guidance criteria to prevent sleep disturbance.
- 5.65 Internal noise levels, at nearby sensitive receptors from all sources of potential noise associated with the proposed development have been assessed both with windows open, where a reduction from a partially open window of 10dB has been used, and with windows closed where an assumption of single glazing with a sound reduction of 30dB has been used. The assessment concluded that internal noise levels from all potential noise sources, during both daytime and night-time periods are predicted to be within the WHO and BS 8233 noise intrusion criteria at all sensitive receptor locations.
- 5.66 In summary, the noise assessment considers the potential noise generation from the construction phase and operational phase, including plant associated with the proposed development, with respect to existing noise levels in the area. Noise limits associated with the construction of

the proposed development have been identified, with additional best practice measures provided within a CEMP which would reduce the effects associated with construction noise at the closest sensitive receptors. Daytime and night-time noise levels have been assessed using the assessment methodology contained in British Standard 4142:2014+A1:2019 Method for rating and assessing industrial and commercial sound and BS 8233:2014 'Guidance on sound insulation and noise reduction for buildings – Code of practice'. The assessment identifies that the rating levels from the proposed operations are below the measured daytime background noise levels at the closest sensitive receptors, which indicates a low impact when assessed in accordance with BS 4142:2014+A1:2019. Given the low night-time background levels, absolute levels have been considered. Operational noise levels during the daytime and night-time periods are predicted to be below the WHO and BS8233 guideline noise intrusion criteria at all nearby sensitive receptors. Overall, and when assessed on a worst-case basis, noise from the proposed solar farm is predicted to have a low impact and noise levels fall within the Lowest Observed Adverse Effect Level (LOAEL).

5.67 The proposed development falls within the description contained at paragraph 3 (a) 'Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water (unless included in Schedule 1)' of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and meets the criteria set out in column 2 of the table in that Schedule. The Local Planning Authority carried out a Screening Opinion (planning reference 20201012) and having taken into account the criteria set out in Schedule 3 to the 2017 Regulations, was of the opinion that it was unlikely the proposed development in isolation or in combination would result in significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size or location. The proposed development is not of more than local importance in terms of its environmental and ecological effects and would not result in unusually complex or potentially hazardous environmental effects that cannot be assessed and addressed within the normal validation requirements and determination of the planning application. For these reasons the application is not EIA development and does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment.

5.68 **This application is not liable for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).**

## 6 Conclusion

6.1 The proposals have been prepared as informed by technical assessments, submitted alongside this planning application, that demonstrate how the development is designed in a sensitive manner which respects the site location and surrounding character.

6.2 There is a recognised need and support for renewable energy technology through National and Local planning policy and this development would

contribute towards the targets set for the UK's greenhouse gas emission reduction and increasing the country's energy supply from renewable sources.

- 6.3 The proposals can be considered to be in accordance with Policy GC2 of the DM DPD and represents an appropriate form of development in the countryside. Therefore, the principle of the development in this location is acceptable.
- 6.4 The application is supported by Policy GC5 of the DM DPD which advocates new proposals for renewable energy developments in the District. The energy generated by the proposed development will contribute to supporting growth in the region, and the carbon emissions saved as a result of generating electricity from a renewable source, would help to tackle climate change and minimise resource use.
- 6.5 The proposed landscape mitigation, shown on the landscape mitigation plan provides appropriate visual screening as required by Policy EN2 of the DM DPD. The proposal also accords with the historic environment assessment criteria of Policy EN2 and the Historic Environment Report submitted with this planning application concludes there is some limited potential for the survival of remains dating to the early prehistoric, Iron Age and Roman periods within the study site. It is possible that buried remains relating to medieval or post-medieval agriculture could survive, such as ploughing or field boundaries, but these would be of negligible significance.
- 6.6 The proposed development will provide gains in biodiversity by supplementing the existing vegetation and hedgerows surrounding the application site with a range of native species. In addition, the temporary use of the land as a solar farm will provide opportunities for improved grassland species, it is proposed that wildflower mix will be planted in-between the solar panels which will contribute to enhancing biodiversity, as required by Policy EN1 of the DM DPD.
- 6.7 Policy TS3 of the DM DPD requires all development to ensure that there will not be a significant adverse impact upon the safe functioning of the highway network. The development will not cause disruption to the safe and free flow of traffic during construction or operation of the development.
- 6.8 Policy CSU5 of the DM DPD on surface water drainage requires that proposed developments should not increase flooding on the site or elsewhere. The Flood Risk Assessment submitted with this planning application demonstrates that the proposals meet the requirements of this policy.
- 6.9 In summary, the proposals are considered to be in accordance with relevant planning policies, and therefore recommended for approval.

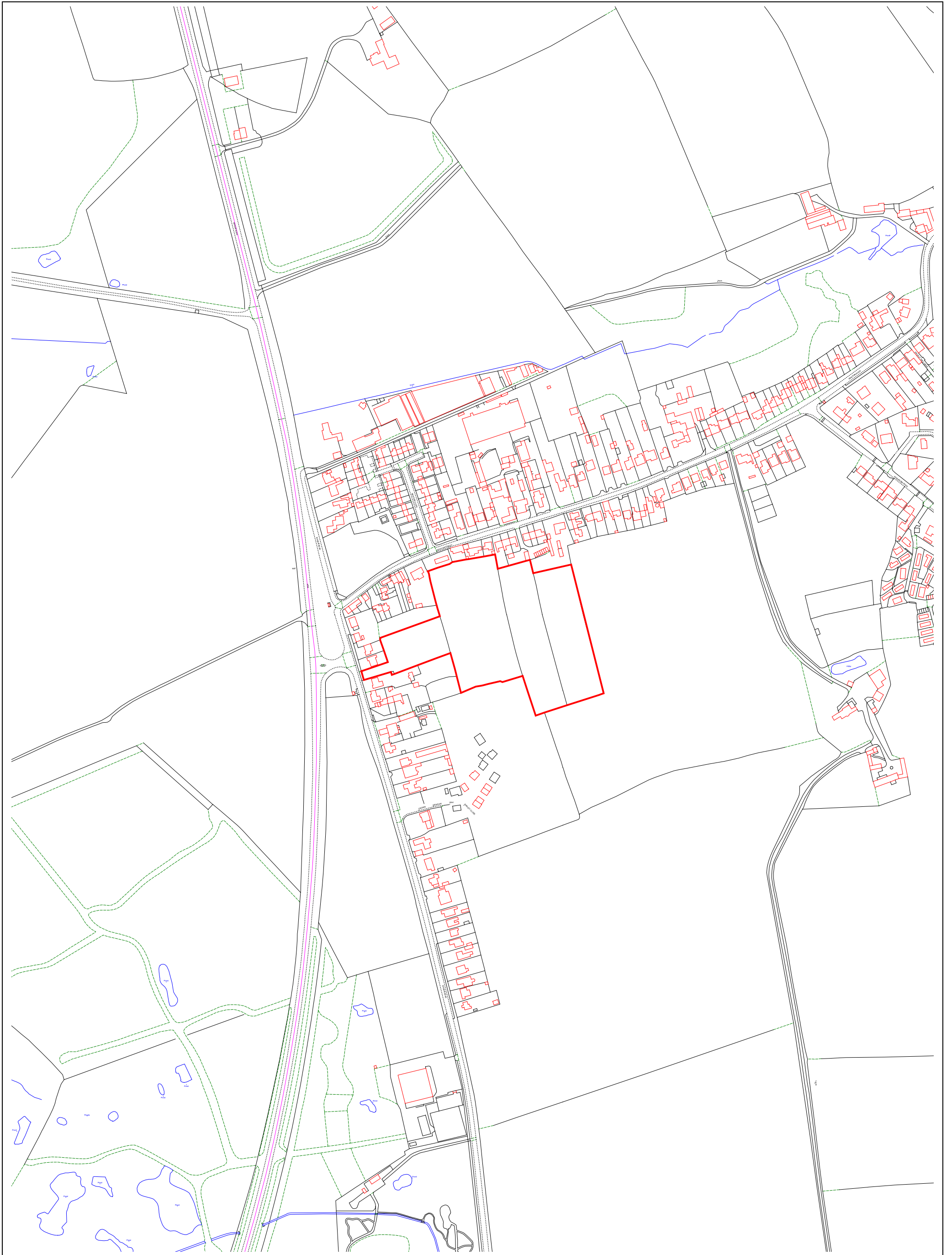
Recommendation: Temporary approval subject to conditions:

- (1) Temporary Permission 40 years (TMT01)
- (2) In accordance with submitted drawings (AD01)
- (3) New access (HC05 amended)
- (4) Existing access closure (HC08)
- (5) Visibility splay, approved plan (HC17)
- (6) Access one way system (HC18)
- (7) Provision of construction traffic parking (HC21)
- (8) Construction traffic management (HC24B variation)
- (9) Ecology – Lighting hours of use (NS)
- (10) Biodiversity Method Statement (NS)
- (11) Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan (NS)
- (12) Noise Assessment (AM03)
- (13) Implementation of approved noise remediation (AM04)
- (14) Construction Management Plan (AM05)
- (15) Archaeological work to be agreed (H01)

Informatives:

Highways Inf 2 Works within the public highway  
Ecology Inf Hedgerow Regulations  
Ecology Inf Protected species (Bats and Badgers) further assessment

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**Application No: 20191920**  
**Land to the East of Manor Road & to the South of Newton Street, Newton St Faith**

**Scale:**  
**1:2500**  
**Date:**  
**13-Apr-21**



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**Application No:** [20191920](#)  
**Parish:** **Horsham and Newton St Faiths**

**Applicant's Name:** Bright Future Development St Faiths Ltd  
**Site Address:** Land to the East of Manor Road and to the south of Newton Street, Newton St Faith  
**Proposal:** Outline Application for Residential Development for 19 Dwellings (Amended Description)

### Reason for reporting to committee

It is contrary to the provisions of the Development Plan for reason of it being outside of the settlement limit and it not being an allocation.

### Recommendation summary:

Delegate authority to the Assistant Director Planning to approve subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement.

### 1 Proposal and site context

- 1.1 The site is located to the north of Norwich just off the A140 in Newton St Faith. It lies to the east of Manor Road and to the south of Newton Street.
- 1.2 To the north and west it has a boundary with existing residential properties, to the south-west it abuts a site which has recently been granted permission for residential development. To the east and south east is agricultural land. Further to the east is a group of listed buildings, Middle Farmhouse and barn and a public footpath.
- 1.3 The site is made up of four small parcels of adjoining land with hedges and trees between. The site area is 3ha, it is level and currently unused agricultural land.
- 1.4 This application is an Outline Application for 19 dwellings, with access included for determination. All other details would be the subject of a Reserved Matters application. An indicative site layout has been submitted for information but this does not form part of the application. It shows how the site could be developed siting the dwellings to the west of the site, closest to Manor Road, with public open space, including SuDs and a 30 metre landscape buffer to the east.
- 1.5 The site has one access from Manor Road between two detached properties and the site layout shows a pedestrian/cycle link to the approved development to the south.
- 1.6 The majority of the dwellings are affordable units. The scheme has been amended through negotiation and the proposal is for 19 dwellings; 11



affordable units and 8 private houses. The affordable units comprise 8 to rent and 3 shared ownership.

### 2 Relevant planning history

2.1 [20181525](#): Outline application for residential development for 64 dwellings. Refused 8 October 2019. Appeal dismissed 18 December 2019.

2.2 Adjacent site:

[20182043](#): Demolition of dwelling and erection of 69 Dwellings and associated infrastructure and landscaping. Approved 19 December 2019.

2.3 Various reserved matters/conditions of 20182043 approved.

### 3 Planning Policies

#### 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

NPPF 02 : Achieving sustainable development

NPPF 04 : Decision-making

NPPF 05 : Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

NPPF 08 : Promoting healthy and safe communities

NPPF 09 : Promoting sustainable transport

NPPF 10 : Supporting high quality communications

NPPF 11 : Making effective use of land

NPPF 12 : Achieving well-designed places

NPPF 14 : Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

NPPF 15 : Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

NPPF 16 : Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

#### 3.2 Joint Core Strategy (JCS)

Policy 1 : Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets

Policy 2 : Promoting good design

Policy 3 : Energy and water

Policy 4 : Housing delivery

Policy 6 : Access and Transportation

Policy 7 : Supporting Communities

Policy 9 : Strategy for growth in the Norwich Policy Area

Policy 15 : Service Villages

Policy 17: Smaller Rural Communities and the Countryside/Exception Sites

#### 3.3 Development Management Development Plan Document (DM DPD) 2015

Policy GC1: Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy GC2: Location of new development

Policy GC4: Design

Policy EN1: Biodiversity and Habitats

Policy EN2: Landscape

Policy EN4: Pollution  
Policy TS3: Highway safety  
Policy TS4: Parking guidelines  
Policy CSU5: Surface water drainage

### 3.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Recreational Provision in Residential Development SPD  
Landscape Character Assessment  
Parking Standards SPD  
Affordable Housing SPD

### **Statutory duties relating to Listed Buildings, setting of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas:**

- 3.5 S16(2) and S66(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides that in considering whether to grant planning permission or listed building consent for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

## 4 Consultations (summarised, for full details see on file or online)

### 4.1 Housing Enabling Officer:

31/12/19 Initial comments relating to the mix and tenure.

15/01/20 Further information on local need from the Housing List. If this is to be considered as an exception site, we would expect an equal mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom properties (to include bungalows) for rent plus a small number of 4 bedroom units. So it may be sensible to exchange a number of the 2 bedroom units for 1 bedroom units. All rental units need to meet or exceed Level 1 Space Standards. As always we do not advise on the housing need for the intermediate tenure units (as shared ownership).

13/4/21 In terms of the AH mix this is much better and takes on board my previous comments (as I was a bit concerned about the high number of 1 beds being proposed). Previous comment and on which they seem to have amended the mix:- So they are proposing a good mix of affordable homes for rent now: Rent x 8, 3 x 1 bed bung, 2 x 2 bed bung, 2 x 3 bed bung, 1 x 4 bed 7/8 person house, S/O - 2 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bedroom bungalows for S/O (x 3). So a total of 11 affordables on a site total of 19 units gives 57.89% - 58%. So much happier with this more balanced mix of affordable homes for rent (and including bungalows) and

as before all are proposed to good space standards and will be for LLP in perpetuity

### 4.2 Arboriculture and Landscape Officer:

A Preliminary Arboricultural Impact Assessment (PAIA) undertaken A T Coombes Associates Ltd in January 2018 has been provided, this has highlighted that the site has significant tree and hedgerow features of historical importance; which are shown on both the First Edition Ordnance maps and Tithe maps and that the larger trees on the site were already significant landscape trees prior to the 1880s. It will be essential to ensure that the majority of the significant trees are retained as part of the development plan and as mentioned within the AIA this should be achievable as most are located on the edges of the existing meadows. As the hedges are within a rural location they will be subject to the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and if any removals are proposed to implement future layouts they will have to be assessed under the criteria within the regulations to determine if they would qualify as important. It is also highlighted within the PAIA that the existing trees are also subject to the Forestry Commissions Felling Licence Regulations. Drawing No. 5681 -01 –Rev P14 shows an indicative layout that has been used as an example of what the future development plan may look like, this appears to be reasonably sympathetic to the Root Protection Areas (RPA's) of the 'A' & 'B' category trees within and adjacent to the site, although this could be further improved to ensure no RPAs are encroached. Within the PAIA it is highlighted that the overshadowing from the trees should also be considered, this detail is not annotated on Drawing No. 5681 -01 –Rev P14, if this is added some of the plots may experience unacceptable levels of overshadowing and it is essential that future layouts are further informed by the Tree Constraints Plan (TCP). I noticed that the existing overhead high voltage cables bisect the site east to west, if it is the intention to move them underground to improve the aesthetics of the site, the existing trees RPAs should be avoided.

In summary any future layouts should take account of the existing trees shadow patterns and RPAs and the TCP should be used to inform this. If the application progresses an updated AIA including an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) will be required once a layout is agreed and the detail of a suitable landscaping scheme should be secured, condition L05 would be suitable.

### 4.3 S106 Officer:

This development would be subject to the appropriate off site Recreational contributions for play, sport, allotments and GI.

### 4.4 Natural England:

No comments to make.

### 4.5 Senior Heritage and Design Officer:

The scheme now preserves the immediate small fields/paddocks to the east with the existing hedgerows. The depth of backland development now replicates the depth of backland development already permitted to the south, which is closer to the listed farm house grouping. This does assist in helping to preserve the setting of Middle Farmhouse and barn and the development will be less visible from the public footpath to the east. Keeping the two fields with hedgerows improves the separation from the listed farmhouse and barns of Middle Farm and will mean it will remain relatively isolated.

With regard to the character of the development, it is now based around two cul-de-sacs / courtyards to the north and south. I have no objection to this approach in principle, however the layout and grain appear to shape around the cul-de-sacs in a more suburban manner.

Although this is an outline application without details, other features to provide a more rural character would be specification of vernacular materials eg clay pantiles instead of cement tiles specified in the application form. Also, a good red brick and perhaps weatherboarding to replicated more traditional backland agricultural buildings rather than brick and render. This could be included in the design and access statement to demonstrate how a development could be developed in a more contextualised manner. Although the fields/paddocks to the east are left as being undeveloped – their use is only specified as orchard – it will be important to specify a sustainable use rather than left without purposed and unmaintained. A pedestrian link is shown as accessing the adjacent site to the south. Although providing connections beneficial, both link and the space around it need to be well overlooked with natural surveillance.

### 4.6 NCC Infrastructure Officer:

Taking into consideration the permitted development in the area, and the current situation at local schools, there is spare capacity within the Early Education sector but there is insufficient capacity at St Faith's CE VC Primary School and at Hellesdon High School. The following infrastructure will need to be funded through CIL Education: Mitigation required at St Faith's CE VC Primary School for 4 places and at Hellesdon High School for 2 places.

New development will have an impact on the library service and mitigation will be required to develop the service, so it can accommodate the residents from new development and adapt to users' needs.

Connections into the local Green Infrastructure (GI) network, including Public Rights of Way and ecological features, should be considered

alongside the potential impacts of development. Direct mitigation and GI provision should therefore be included within the site proposal. Mitigation for new and existing GI features identified as strategic shall be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) through the Greater Norwich Investment Programme.

1 fire hydrant at a cost of £824 per hydrant, which should be dealt with through condition.

#### 4.7 NCC Ecology Officer:

10/01/2020 The application is supported by an Ecological Assessment (Hopkins Ecology, July 2018). This site was surveyed in March 2018, (22 months ago). In accordance with CIEEM guidelines it is recommended that a professional ecologist undertakes a site visit and reviews the validity of the report. This updated report should be submitted in support of planning.

08/04/2021 (In response to a request to condition this requirement): It wouldn't take long for the ecologist to do a walk over and write a letter/email validating the original survey (a day max), but you could condition it if you are minded to.

#### 4.8 Anglian Water:

Anglian Water has assets close to or crossing this site or there are assets subject to an adoption agreement. Therefore the site layout should take this into account and accommodate those assets within either prospectively adoptable highways or public open space.

The foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Whitlingham Trowse Water Recycling Centre that will have available capacity for these flows.

The sewerage system at present has available capacity for these flows. If the developer wishes to connect to our sewerage network they should serve notice under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991. We will then advise them of the most suitable point of connection. Informatives included.

The preferred method of surface water disposal would be to a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with connection to sewer seen as the last option. From the details submitted to support the planning application the proposed method of surface water management does not relate to Anglian Water operated assets.

#### 4.9 Historic Environment Officer:

The archaeological desk-based assessment and more particularly the geophysical survey submitted with the above application have provided new

and useful information on the archaeological potential of the above site. Newton St Faith is, as the name suggests, probably a linear common or hearth edge settlement with its origins in the late medieval or early post-medieval periods. The geophysical survey anomalies interpreted as possible archaeological features may predate the use of the area as heath and be of prehistoric date. There is potential for heritage assets, buried archaeological remains of possible prehistoric date to be present within the proposed development area and that the significance would be adversely affected by the proposed development. If planning permission is granted, we therefore ask that this be subject to a programme of archaeological work in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (2018) paragraphs 188 and 199. In this case the programme of archaeological mitigatory work will commence with informative trial trenching to determine the scope and extent of any further mitigatory work that may be required (eg an archaeological excavation or monitoring of groundworks during construction). A brief for the archaeological work can be obtained from Norfolk County Council Environment Service. Condition requiring investigation to attach.

#### 4.10 Environmental Health Officer: Pollution Control:

I have read through the desk study which has not identified any potential sources of contamination on or close to the site. I am not aware of any specific contamination issues at this location. Therefore based on the information submitted by the applicant in the desk study report I can see no reason to require any further assessment.

#### 4.11 Environmental Contracts:

There are no bin collection points or tracking to show the vehicle can get into and service this development, so at this stage I cannot confirm if we can collect waste from this development.

#### 4.12 LLFA:

20/01/20: We object to this planning application in the absence of an acceptable Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy. Further information requested.

07/04/20: The applicant has provided Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Statement (Land at Manor Road, Newton St Faith, Norfolk Bright Futures Developments Version 2 (26 Feb 2020) to account for the local flood risk issues and surface water drainage at this location. We welcome that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have been proposed in the development. The applicant is proposing to discharge to ground via an infiltration basin. However, a Management and Maintenance plan has not been submitted as part of the FRA/Drainage Strategy. Consideration needs to be given to the ongoing management and maintenance of all drainage features over the lifetime of the development. This must be provided at the

Reserved Matters / Full stage of the application. We have no objection subject to conditions being attached to any consent if this application is approved and the applicant is in agreement with pre-commencement conditions. If not, we would request the following information prior to your determination.

### 4.13 Highway Authority:

07/02/20 More information required.

30/03/20 We are satisfied that the revised plans (drawings 5681-01-P17 1064-100-P2) reference the 5 off-site highway recommendations raised in our original comments of 7 February. We note however that none of the layout comments (included revised junction form/road type) have been incorporated into the indicative layout. We re-iterate our original layout comments which should be incorporated into the design.

On the basis the layout is not marked for consideration at this time we would raise no objection.

Standard conditions to attach including requiring off-site highway works.

### 4.14 CPRE:

- Outside settlement boundary, contrary to policy.
- Site is not allocated, the adjacent allocated site has been approved for 69 dwellings meeting the requirement, there is no further need.
- It is a greenfield site which is designated countryside and part of the rural setting of the village.
- It exceeds the JCS scale for Service Villages and is unplanned.
- There is an identified 5-year land supply.

### 4.15 Horsham and Newton St Faiths Parish Council:

Objects to this development as being outside the current local development plan, an access which was too close to the Manor Road/A140 junction and the additional pressure on local facilities following so close on the development of 64 properties on an adjacent site.

### 4.16 Other Representations (summarised, for full details see on file or online):

10 representations have been received from residents objecting to the application. The objections are summarised as follows:

- Sufficient housing already, there is a 5 year land. supply.
- Outside the settlement limit, not allocated
- Site has been refused already.
- Change the character of the village.
- Impact on ecology, loss of green site, trees and impact on wildlife.

- Increase in traffic and congestion.
- Dangerous junction with many accidents.
- Disturbance to residents.
- Lack of amenities and doctors is already busy.
- No good public transport links.
- Lack of employment.
- Overlooking and dominant to properties on Newton Street.
- Pollution from increased traffic.
- 'orchard' is too vague on the plans.
- Large lagoon for drainage expensive.
- Developer will aim to build on all of the site.

### 5 Assessment

#### **Key Considerations**

- 5.1
- The principle of the development
  - Exception site and viability
  - The appeal decision
  - The impact on the character and appearance of the area
  - The impact on amenity
  - The impact on trees and ecology
  - The impact on highway safety
- 5.2
- The main issues to be taken into account in the determination of this application are an assessment of the proposal against the policies of the development plan, the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance, the Appeal decision and whether there are any other material considerations. This includes; the impact of the development on the character and appearance of the area, residential amenity, highway safety and the provision of affordable units.

#### **Principle**

- 5.3
- Under Section 38 of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 ('The 2004 Act'), the determination of planning applications must be in accordance with the approved development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 5.4
- Horsham and Newton St Faiths is identified as a Service Village in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) under Policy 15. This means that it is considered a sustainable location for allocations to be made and small housing developments are acceptable in order to deliver the small sites allowance, subject to location and form and character considerations. An allocation HNF1 has been made in the Local Plan and has been subject of a recently approved application for 69 dwellings.



5.5 Policy GC2 of the DM DPD seeks to locate new development within defined settlement limits. It states that development outside of settlement limits will be permitted where it accords with a specific allocation and/or policy of the development plan and does not result in any significant adverse impact.

5.6 The site is outside the Settlement Limit that has been defined for the village and it is not allocated for any purpose. However it has been put forward as an exception site under Policy 17 of the JCS and it therefore must be considered under this policy and its impact assessed.

### **Exception site and viability**

5.7 Policy 17 of the Joint Core Strategy states that 'In the countryside adjacent to villages sites will be permitted for affordable housing where there is a specific need as an exception to general policy.'

5.8 Further to this Paragraph 77 of the NPPF states that 'In rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this.'

5.9 This application is for 19 dwellings in total with 58% of those dwellings being classed as affordable on a split of 8 private market dwellings, 8 affordable rent and 3 shared ownership. Therefore, in accordance with the above policies it is has been necessary to consider this application in the context of this being a rural exception site, based on the need in the locality for affordable housing and the need for the market housing to support the viability of the scheme.

5.10 There has been a consistent under provision in affordable housing in Horsham and Newton St Faiths over a number of years and whilst the adjacent site is now providing affordable housing only 3 would be for local lettings, whereas all the rented units within this site will fall within the local lettings criteria. There is also an added benefit in two of the affordable units being built as bungalows to level 1 space standards. Therefore there is clearly a benefit to the locality for much needed affordable housing that this site will provide.

5.11 To assess the viability of the development the applicant was required to produce a viability report, which was then assessed independently on behalf of the Council by a consultant from NPS Property Consultants Ltd. This critical appraisal of the viability report looked at the appraisal inputs and adjusted a number of those inputs in order to align with current information and industry practice. A new base appraisal was undertaken for each of the 2 schemes provided by the applicant using the adjusted

data inputs. The schemes were further tested by varying the level and application of the developer's profit. Full details of these schemes and scenarios can be found within the appended documents. In summary none of the scenarios within the higher affordable provision (scheme 2) proved to be viable when the residual land value was assessed on a gross area basis. With regard to Scheme 1 a number of the various scenarios do show viability when assessed against the purchase price and the Benchmark Land Value scenarios. Therefore, in conclusion it has been demonstrated that the additional 3 market dwellings in scheme 1 do provide sufficient additional revenue to support the applicant's development proposals.

- 5.12 Given the above I consider that the provision of this much needed affordable housing should be given significant weight in the decision making process and is supported by Policy 17 of the JCS and Paragraph 77 of the NPPF.

### **The appeal decision**

- 5.13 The previous application was submitted in 2018 for 64 dwellings on the site. This is a significant material consideration in the determination of this application. It was refused and dismissed at Appeal for the following reasons:

‘There would be harm arising from the location of the appeal scheme, its scale and how it would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area and the setting of listed buildings.’

- 5.14 The Inspector considered that the scale was out of character in a low density area. The current proposal substantially reduces the number of dwellings from 63 to 19 and locates them to the west side of the site, closest to the existing built-up area and in line with the western boundary of the adjacent site to the south. This contains the development and prevents it encroaching into the more rural landscape. The indicative layout shows how the dwellings could be sited on larger plots, which reduces the density whilst also providing open space and a 30 metre buffer to the east. Retaining the fields to the west means that the existing hedge lines are not breached and will not need to be removed, which further protects the existing landscape and habitats. I consider that the revised proposal has adequately addressed the Appeal decision in this respect through reducing the amount of development to less than a third.
- 5.15 Reducing the development also significantly increases the distance to the listed buildings and a Heritage Statement has been submitted which sets this out. The Senior Heritage and Design Officer does not consider that the revised proposal will have a detrimental impact on these heritage assets and that the revised proposal has adequately addressed the Appeal decision in this respect.

- 5.16 The impacts of the proposal must also be considered as set out in paragraphs 5.17 to 5.42 below.

**The impact on the character and appearance of the area**

- 5.17 Paragraphs 127 and 130 of the NPPF seek to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character, that developments establish or maintain a strong sense of place and that permission should be refused for poorly designed development that fails to take the opportunities available to improve the character and quality of an area. Policy 2 of the JCS states that development proposals will respect local distinctiveness. Policy GC4 of the DM DPD requires proposals to, amongst other things, pay adequate regard to the environment, character and appearance of the area. Policy EN2 of the DM DPD relates to the landscape and advises that development proposals should have regard to the Landscape Character Assessment SPD and should consider the impacts.
- 5.18 The site is adjacent to existing housing and with the development to the south it will be surrounded on three sides by residential development and be part of the built-up area of the village. The reduction of the proposal enables it to be integrated at an appropriate scale and retaining the existing hedge lines will contain it to the east. The addition of a 30 metre buffer to the east of the development will screen and enhance the overall landscape setting of the village. It is important that this land is appropriately laid out so that it becomes an integral part of the development rather than a forgotten area of unused open space. To ensure that this is the case a management plan will be required to be submitted for this land and its provision for public use will be required ahead of a certain number of dwellings. This will be agreed through the S106 agreement.
- 5.19 The site will be accessed via road between two residential properties on Manor Road. Once into the site the indicative site layout shows two properties (1 and 2) facing west which would be highly visible from oncoming vehicles. Whilst this plan is only indicative at the detailed stage it will be vital to ensure a high quality design and setting to these properties. The access road in between the two residential properties on Manor Road would not be the preferred choice if other options were available. However, there is not another option and given the lack of objection from the Highways Authority or Environmental Services from a safety or noise perspective I consider this to be an acceptable access. Of note is that the neighbouring allocated site has a similar access between two properties which has been approved and is currently being built.
- 5.20 I consider that the proposal will not have an adverse visual impact on the site and it is sympathetic to the general character and appearance of the immediate area. The proposal therefore complies with the NPPF, Policy 2 of the JCS and Policy GC4 of the DM DPD.

### **Neighbour amenity**

- 5.21 Policy GC4 of the DM DPD states that proposals should consider the impact on the amenity of existing properties.
- 5.22 The application is in outline therefore the details of the proposed dwellings are not being determined at this stage. The indicative plan shows that 19 dwellings can be adequately accommodated with sufficient separation from existing properties. The precise details of siting, design and position of windows would be submitted for consideration if the outline is approved.
- 5.23 Overall, I consider that the development could be designed so that it would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of either existing residents or future residents. The outline application is therefore considered to comply with Policy GC4 of the DM DPD.

### **Heritage**

- 5.24 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires proposals to take account of any heritage assets. Furthermore, S16(2) and S66(1) Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides that in considering whether to grant planning permission or listed building consent for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority, or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 5.25 The site is not in a conservation area and does not contain any listed buildings. There is a group of listed buildings to the east, Middle Farm and its granary and a Heritage Statement has been submitted to assess this. As stated above, the Senior Heritage and Design Officer does not consider that the revised proposal will have a detrimental impact on these buildings or their setting and has no objection to the application.
- 5.26 The archaeological assessment has established that the study area has a moderate potential for prehistoric, medieval and post-medieval activity and a low potential for Iron Age, Roman and Saxon activity submitted with this planning application. The Historic Environment Officer has requested that a condition of planning permission is that a programme of works is agreed with the Historic Environment Service to commence with informative trial trenching to determine the scope and extent of any further mitigatory work that may be required. This can be secured by condition.
- 5.27 Overall, I not consider that the development would have a detrimental impact on any heritage assets subject to the suggested condition. The application therefore complies with the NPPF, S16(2) and S66(1) of the

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Development Plan.

### Highways

- 5.28 Policy TS3 of the DM DPD in respect of highway safety requires all development to ensure that there will not be a significant adverse impact on the safe functioning of the highway network. Policy TS4 sets out the parking requirements for all new development.
- 5.29 A single access to the site is proposed from Manor Road. Concern has been raised relating to additional traffic within the village which has been considered by the Highway Authority. Following the additional information and amended plan required, the Highway Authority is satisfied that there are no highway safety concerns and that pedestrian safety and vehicle visibility has been provided for with improvements to the access which can be secured by conditions to ensure this is all provided. Adequate on-site parking would be required to be shown at reserved matters stage.
- 5.30 Given that the Highway Authority has not raised an objection in principle to the proposal in this location and that this is supported for infill development by the JCS as a sustainable location for new housing, I do not consider the application to be refusable on highway grounds.
- 5.31 I consider that the proposal has no significant detrimental impact on highway safety and the application complies with Policies TS3 and TS4 of the DM DPD.

### Ecology and Trees

- 5.32 Policy ENV1 of the DM DPD relates to biodiversity and habitats and requires development to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the district, avoid fragmentation of habitats and support the delivery of a co-ordinated green infrastructure network throughout the district. Policy ENV2 seeks to protect natural features which contribute to defining the character of an area. There are existing mature trees with some of the hedgerows falling under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 and an Arboricultural report has been submitted with the application. The reduction in size of the development shows that most of the mature trees and hedge line will be outside of the development area and can be retained with substantial new landscaping provided within the site to the east. A detailed AIA and a landscaping scheme would be required at reserved matters stage and these can be ensured by a condition.
- 5.33 The Norfolk County Council Ecology Officer initially requested an updated Ecological Assessment. However, as no significant impact on any species or habitat were found in the previous assessment, which was for the much larger development the question was asked as to whether this

could be dealt with by a pre-commencement condition. This was agreed by the Ecology Officer, but the applicant has also taken it upon himself to undertake the work and it may be complete by the time of the committee meeting. If it is then it will be reported verbally.

- 5.34 I therefore consider that the proposal complies with Policy 1 of the JCS and Policy EN1 of the DM DPD which require biodiversity and habitats to be protected and enhanced.

### **Other Issues**

- 5.33 The proposal will require a S106 agreement to secure the affordable housing, recreation and open space, play and allotment provision, green infrastructure, education and library contributions.
- 5.34 This application is liable for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The County Infrastructure Officer has considered this scheme and notes the need for school places which may be generated from the development and which will be collected through the CIL payment along with a contribution towards library provision. In addition a fire hydrant, secured by a Condition, will be required.
- 5.35 The proposal will require a S106 agreement to secure the affordable housing, recreation and open space, play and allotment provision, green infrastructure, education and library contributions. One of the key elements of this S106 agreement will be a requirement to ensure that this development will be truly affordable housing led. To that extent there will be appropriate triggers put into the S106 agreement to require the affordable housing to be delivered ahead of the private dwellings or at least a significant majority of it.
- 5.36 This application is liable for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The County Infrastructure Officer has considered this scheme and notes the need for school places which may be generated from the development and which will be collected through the CIL payment along with a contribution towards library provision. In addition a fire hydrant, secured by a Condition, will be required.
- 5.37 The site is within Flood Zone 1 where there is a low probability of flooding. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage strategy has been submitted uses SuDs to deal with surface water. Following further information submitted the LLFA has no objection to the proposal subject to a detailed drainage scheme being required by condition.

Policy CSU5 of the DM DPD on surface water drainage requires that proposed developments should not increase flooding on the site or elsewhere. Taking the conclusions in the FRA, the development meets the requirements of the policy.

- 5.38 An Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the Conservation and Habitat and Species Regulations has been carried out by the Council and concluded that the development will not adversely affect the integrity of any habitat sites as mitigation measures will be provided in accordance with Policy EN3 of the DMDPD and regarding water quality and hydrology issues these can be mitigated by condition so again there is no likely impacts.
- 5.39 Paragraph 68 of the NPPF states that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area. The Council has taken a proactive approach to this through the allocation of a range small and medium sized sites and through defining Development Boundaries for over 80 settlements to facilitate suitable windfall development. Point (c) of NPPF para 68 states that local planning authorities should *‘support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions – giving great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes’*. Although this is a material consideration in the determination of the application, it can only be afforded limited weight, given the previous supply of housing on small sites within the district.
- 5.40 The application is recommended for approval and will generate housing, including affordable units, and some employment during construction and help to support the local community it therefore makes a positive contribution in the reaction to COVID-19.
- 5.41 Under Section 143 of the Localism Act the Council is required to consider the impact on local finances. This can be a material consideration but in the instance of this application the other material planning considerations detailed above are of greater significance.

### Conclusion

- 5.42 I consider the proposal discussed above to be an acceptable form of development that, whilst contrary to the provisions of the development plan is consistent with a number of aims and objectives of it and is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of providing cross subsidy of private market dwellings to support the delivery of exception sites. Whilst there has been a previous refusal and failed appeal on this site, the reasons for refusal have been overcome as demonstrated above. Therefore the decision from a planning perspective needs to be made as to whether the cross-subsidy of the affordable housing with some private dwellings is considered appropriate and acceptable. On balance, I consider the provision of much needed affordable housing in the area is a significant benefit of the scheme compared to the limited policy harms of the development. The Local Planning Authority has taken a proactive and positive approach to decision taking in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Recommendation: Delegate authority to the Assistant Director Planning to approve subject to the successful completion of a Section 106 Agreement with the following Heads of Terms:

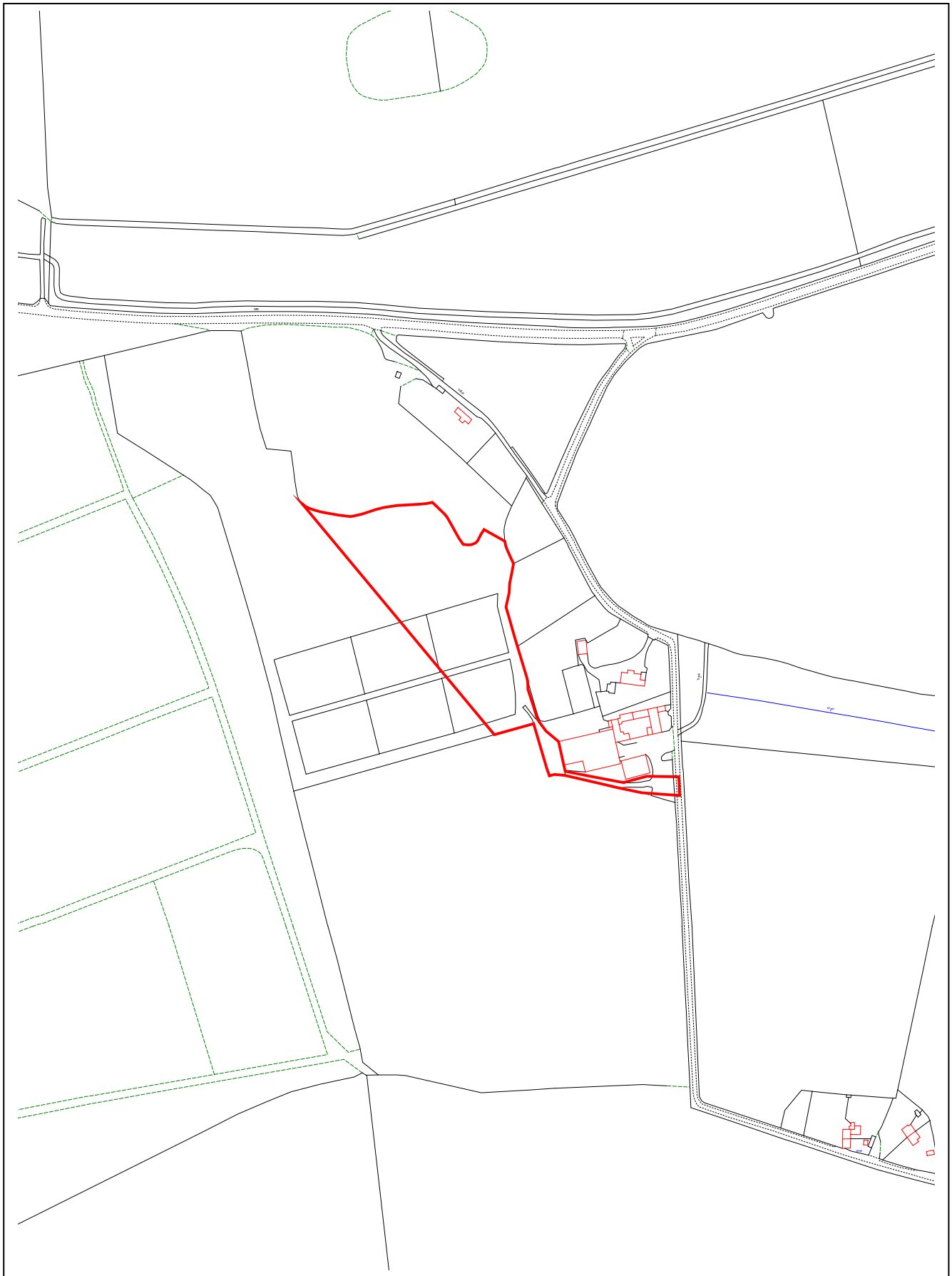
- (1) Affordable housing at 58%
- (2) Recreation, play space and open space provision
- (3) Green Infrastructure

And the following conditions:

- (1) Outline time limit
- (2) Reserved matters
- (3) In accordance with submitted drawings as amended
- (4) New access details
- (5) Visibility splays
- (6) Provision of construction traffic parking/wheel washing
- (7) Off-site highway works
- (8) Footpath link to south
- (9) Landscaping plan
- (10) Hedgerows to be retained
- (11) Updated AIA including; Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP)
- (12) Up-dated Ecology Report required
- (13) Programme of archaeological works required
- (14) Fire hydrant
- (15) Surface water drainage plan
- (16) Extent of developable area

**Contact Officer,** Ben Burgess  
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**Application No: 20202295**

**Hall Farm,Whitetop Lane,Blickling,NR11 6NL**

**Scale:  
1:2500**

**Date:  
13-Apr-21**



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**Application No:** [20202295](#)  
**Parish:** **Blickling**

Applicant's Name: Mr John Gay  
Site Address: Hall Farm, Whitetop Lane, Blickling, NR11 6NL  
Proposal: Development of new glamping site with 10 accommodation structures on land currently used as horse paddocks (previously arable land)

### Reason for reporting to committee

The proposal has potential to generate employment but the recommendation is for refusal.

Recommendation summary:

Refuse.

### 1 Proposal and site context

- 1.1 The application site relates to a field currently used as horse paddocks located to the North West of Hall Farm. The site is within the Blickling Conservation Area and part a tenanted farm on the National Trust Blickling Estate. Blickling Hall is located further to the North East
- 1.2 It is proposed to erect ten contemporary camping domes which are approximately 5.6 metres by 5.3 metres and 3.4 metres tall. Each dome would have an associated timber/ metal clad building adjacent to it housing a toilet and shower. The bathroom buildings would be 2.6 m x 2.9 metres and 2.55 metres high. Water would be heated by gas using external cylinders. The domes would be well spaced out in a field which it is proposed to be planted with wildflowers with natural paths cut to each dome and additional landscaping would be provided between the domes. Each dome would sleep up to four people have mains electricity, a small kitchenette and wood burning stove. There would also be a BBQ externally and some domes would have wood fired hot tubs. It is proposed to have a woven fence surrounding each dome's private area. Each dome would have a detachable internal insulated layer which will facilitate use all year round. Low level lighting would be provided along the paths to aid access around the site in the dark.
- 1.3 Car parking would be on the existing hard standing adjacent to the farm building, which would also accommodate a cycle store. A new access off Whitetop Lane is proposed to serve the development separating the glamping traffic from the existing farm vehicles.

### 2      Relevant planning history

#### 2.1    No relevant planning history.

### 3      Planning Policies

#### 3.1    National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

NPPF 02 : Achieving sustainable development

NPPF 04 : Decision-making

NPPF 06 : Building a strong, competitive economy

NPPF 09 : Promoting sustainable transport

NPPF 12 : Achieving well-designed places

NPPF 14 : Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

NPPF 15 : Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

NPPF 16 : Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

#### 3.2    Joint Core Strategy (JCS)

Policy 1 : Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets

Policy 2 : Promoting good design

Policy 5 : The Economy

Policy 6 : Access and Transportation

Policy 8 : Culture, leisure and entertainment

Policy 17 : Small rural communities and the countryside

#### 3.3    Development Management Development Plan Document (DM DPD) 2015

Policy GC1    Presumption in favour of sustainable development

Policy GC2    Location of new development

Policy GC4    Design

Policy EN1    Biodiversity and habitats

Policy EN2    Landscape

Policy EN4    Pollution

Policy E3     Tourist accommodation

Policy TS3    Highway safety

Policy TS4    Parking guidelines

Policy CSU4   Provision of waste collection and recycling facilities in major development

Policy CSU5   Surface water drainage

#### 3.4    Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Landscape Character Assessment

### **Statutory duties relating to Listed Buildings, setting of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas:**

S72 Listed Buildings Act 1990 provides: "In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of [the Planning Acts], special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."

#### **4     Consultations**

##### **4.1   Parish Council:**

No objections.

- Welcome most ventures which could bring employment to the area.
- Felt that the objection from highways was disingenuous given support for recent changes to the Old School at Blicking where they did not mention the possibility that users may cycle on the Highway.
- They also disregarded all the issues caused by Blicking Hall on local roads which are far worse than those that will be experienced by this relatively small development.

##### **4.2   District Member:**

No response.

##### **4.3   NCC Highways:**

Object.

- Carried out a site inspection and Hall farm is located within a network of poorly aligned single track rural lanes with limited passing provision and where sharp bends and junctions with severely restricted visibility are in evidence.
- Accordingly these roads are not considered suitable for any intensification of vehicular use whatsoever.
- The application is isolated from any services or normally accepted tourist facilities and therefore occupants of the proposed holiday accommodation units can be expected to travel regularly from the site to access such facilities.
- No local footways or pedestrian refuges are available on the narrow poorly aligned road network, using by farm vehicles not encouraging cycling.
- Accordingly notwithstanding the applicant's assertion that cycling and walking by visitors to the site will be encouraged a very high proportion of daily access to and from the site can be expected by car.
- Acknowledge that the site is some 400m from the junction of Whitetop Lane with the Blicking Road and that may well be the primary means of

access and egressing the site. However, it is also the case that vehicles may travel from east and south to the site via a much longer and circuitous lengths of single track rural roads.

- In many cases the section of carriage way between the site access point and Blickling Road is of the same characteristic as detailed above.
- The proposal is for ten accommodation structures which using generally accepted Trip rate information data would generate in the region of three daily traffic movements per unit.
- A total of thirty additional traffic movements on the adjacent sub-standard rural road network.
- It should be noted that the site has significant further expansion and any permission granted to this development may set any undesirable precedent for future additional pitches on this or other site adjoining the road network.
- Recommend refusal on inadequate road network causing situation detrimental to highway safety and unsustainable location.

#### 4.4 CPRE:

Object.

- Glamping domes and associated bathrooms etc. would harmful impact on designated “countryside” area
- This is particular the case as the proposed development affects the wooded estate land countryside and would cause significant harmful impacts through the development being of a scale greater than the “limited leisure and tourist facilities” permitted as an exemption under policy 17 of the Joint Core Strategy. The proposed structure introduce alien building forms into what is currently a tranquil landscape.
- Access to site would be primarily be by private vehicles which would bring an unacceptable increase in road use to what is a narrow rural lane.
- Heating domes with wood burning stoves would raise issues for the reduction of air quality.

#### 4.5 Senior Conservation and Design Officer:

Object.

- Site is within the Blickling Conservation Area and in close proximity to Blickling Hall which is a Grade II\* listed building and registered historic park and garden.
- With regard to the historic park and garden, the site does not directly abut the historic parkland, and there is a large band of trees to the north of the site which means there is no intervisibility with areas within the parkland or from Blickling Road, and therefore no direct impact on setting.

- Parts of the conservation area outside the historic parkland the conservation areas states that the area has a “strong rural character”.
- It is also an area of landscape value.
- This is an historic landscape which has both elements of natural character and importantly the layers of history from human habitation in terms of the historic buildings, the farming practices and the management of woodland areas.
- The domes will be quite an alien looking feature within this historic landscape.
- Together with the toilet blocks there will be 20 structures within the field, which I consider quite an intensive use of the land shown, and they will be permanent.
- In this rural farmyard setting in a general area characterised by historic buildings in a rural setting, I would suggest a more traditional tent design, fewer tents and separate toilets or larger area and ideally the toilets area to be one hut.
- Design may well work well in other context, but I do not consider that what could be considered a ‘futuristic’ design is contextually appropriate for this site/area.
- A glamping site for 10 tents works well and is more sympathetic at nearby Mannington Hall.

#### 4.6 Other Representations:

None received.

### 5 Assessment

#### **Key Considerations**

- 5.1 The main issues to be taken into consideration in the determination of this application are an assessment of the proposal against Development Plan policies and national planning guidance. In particular, whether the site constitutes a sustainable location for tourist accommodation. The other issues to be considered are the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the conservation area, highway safety, neighbour amenity and ecology.

#### **Principle**

- 5.2 Policy GC1 of the DM DPD sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development and Policy GC2 states that the settlement hierarchy seeks to focus development within settlement limits unless it accords with a specific policy of the development plan and does not result in any significant adverse impact.
- 5.3 The application site is located in Blicking where there is no settlement limit, therefore it is a countryside location in planning terms and needs to comply

with a specify policy of the development plan. Paragraph 83 in the NPPF supports the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses and sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside. Policy 5 and Policy 17 of the JCS support appropriate sustainable tourism initiatives which enhance the rural economy. Policy E3 requires that such proposals adequately demonstrate there is a site specific demand for this accommodation and that the enterprise will be financially viable.

- 5.4 The applicant has submitted a business plan based on providing luxury accommodation amongst a habitat creation project, the site being in close proximity to Blicking Hall and easy access to both the Norfolk Coast and Broads Area. They are targeting the higher end of the market providing a more luxurious option than other glamping sites including private bathroom facilities. Their market research has identified a high demand for glamping accommodation within the area with other glamping site in the area having high booking rates. The financial information submitted shows that the site has potential to be financially viable and is intended to be developed in two phases. The application is therefore considered to comply with the aims of policies 5 and 17 of the JCS. It meets the economic objectives of paragraph 83 of the NPPF, but as discussed below it is not considered that the development respects the character of the countryside. Although the accommodation is not for a site-specific purpose it is close to Blicking Hall which attracts high visitor numbers, so could justify a departure from policy EC3 in the DM DPD.

### **Highway Safety**

- 5.5 Policy TS3 of the DM DPD requires development not to result in any significant adverse impact on the satisfactory functioning or safety of the highway network. Policy TS4 requires appropriate parking and manoeuvring should be provided which reflects the location as well as accessibility by non-car modes.
- 5.6 The NPPF requires the planning system to actively manage patterns of growth to minimise the need to travel, and the ability to encourage walking, cycling, and use of public transport and reduce the reliance on the private car. This approach is supported by policies 1 and 6 in the JCS and policy GC4 in the DM DPD.
- 5.7 The site is located approximately 2 miles from Aylsham where there are a range of services and facilities including public houses and restaurants and just over half a mile to the Buckingham Arms Public House in Blicking and Blicking Hall itself where there are cafes and restaurants. Although there are a number of public footpaths in the area access to Blicking Hall or the public house would include walking along sections of the main road or along narrow country lanes. As a result, there is a high probability that a good proportion of visitors would access the site, services and visitor attractions via a private car. The proposal is for ten accommodation

structures which using generally accepted trip rate information data would generate in the region of three daily traffic movements per unit.

- 5.8 It is proposed to access the site via a new access off Whitetop Lane just south of the existing farm access. Whitetop Lane which is part of a network of poorly aligned single track rural lanes with limited passing provision and where sharp bends and junctions with severely restricted visibility are in evidence. The Highway Officer considers that these roads are not suitable for any intensification of vehicular use.
- 5.9 The applicant intends to encourage access from the North via the Blickling Road junction, in their direction to the site and aligning the access to discourage movements to the south. Although the Highway Officer acknowledges that the site may be primarily accessed from the North he is concerned that vehicles may travel from the east and south to the site via a much longer and circuitous length of single track rural roads. Despite the access from the north being on a shorter section of road it remains narrow and poorly aligned and not suitable for increased vehicular use.
- 5.10 Discussions have occurred with the Highway Officer as to whether a smaller number of domes would be acceptable, but he considers that the road network is not suitable for any increased use.
- 5.11 Discussions have also occurred as to whether access could be achieved directly via Blickling Road which the Highway Officer does not object to subject to achieving adequate visibility. The applicant does not want to pursue this as they are concerned that the visibility splay could result in loss of vegetation and result in hard surfacing needing to be provided across existing fields.
- 5.12 As a the proposal stands the road network serving the site is considered to be inadequate to serve the development proposed, by reason of its poor alignment, restricted width, lack of passing provision and restricted forward and junction visibility, which would be likely to give rise to conditions detrimental to highway safety contrary to policy TS3 in the DM DPD.
- 5.13 Adequate space for car parking would be provided on the existing hard standing adjacent to the farm buildings, with access to the actual domes would be by foot. It is considered that the proposal complies with policy TS4 as it provides adequate car parking provision.

### **Impact on the character and appearance of the area including the Conservation Area**

- 5.14 The site is within the Blickling Conservation Area and in close proximity to Blickling Hall historic registered historic park and garden Grade II\* Listed building.



- 5.15 The site does not directly abut the historic parkland and there is a large band of trees to the north of the site which means there is no intervisibility with areas within the parkland or from Blickling Road, and therefore no direct impact on the setting of Blickling Hall or the Historic Parkland.
- 5.16 The Conservation Area Appraisal states that the areas of the conservation area outside the historic parkland have a “strong rural character”. The site is part of an historic landscape which has both elements of natural character and importantly the layers of history from human habitation in terms of the historic buildings, the farming practices and the management of woodland areas. The site forms part of an area of landscape value being part of the E1 Blickling and Oulton Wooded Estate lands defined by the Landscape Character Appraisal SPD, as a mosaic of parkland, arable fields, woodland, copses of mature trees and clipped hedgerows creating a diverse and interesting landscape character.
- 5.17 S72 Listed Buildings Act 1990 provides: “In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of [the Planning Acts], special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”
- 5.18 Paragraph 127 of the NPPF, Policy 2 of the JCS and Policy GC4 of the DM DPD requires a good standard of design which respects the local distinctiveness of the area.
- 5.19 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF requires less than substantial harm of the designated heritage assets to be balanced against heritage assets and policy 1 in the JCS requires the protection of heritage assets policy EN2 in the development management policies seek to preserve and enhance conservation areas.
- 5.20 It is noted that the site is reasonably well screened with vegetation but there will be some views into the site, especially in winter. An informal Landscape Visual Impact Assessment which has been submitted identifies a slight adverse impact from Whitetop Lane, but doesn't take into consideration the Conservation Area status. The Senior Conservation and Design Officer considers that the proposed domes which will be 3.4 metres in height, will be quite an alien looking feature within this historic landscape. Together with the toilet blocks and associated paraphernalia would result in unsympathetic visual clutter which would be a permanent feature all year around. The Senior Conservation and Design Officer considers that the futuristic domes would not be contextually appropriate in this rural farmyard setting which is generally characterised by historic buildings in a rural setting.
- 5.21 It is considered that the proposed development would cause less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset and in accordance with the paragraph 196 in the NPPF, an assessment has been made and it is

considered that harm of the conservation area is not outweighed by any public benefit of the business on the rural economy and provision of tourist accommodation in this instance.

- 5.22 The development is therefore considered contrary to policies 1 and 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk and policies GC4 and EN2 of the Broadland Development Management Development Plan Document.
- 5.23 Discussions have occurred around more traditional tent design and a shared toilet block. The applicant however, does not feel the proposed alternatives fit within their business plan.

### **Residential amenity**

- 5.24 Policy GC4 of the Broadland DM DPD seeks to protect the amenity of existing residents. The nearest residential property apart from the farmhouse is the Brick Kiln to the north east which is separated from the site by a wooded area. The site will result in an increase in noise and disturbance but it is not considered that this would be to such an extent which would warrant refusal of the application.

### **Ecology**

- 5.25 A satisfactory ecology report has been submitted with the application. It concluded that there would no impact on any designated sites. The site is largely modified grass at the moment so sowing a wild flower meadow and the provision of planting as part of a landscaping scheme would result in a biodiversity enhancement. The surrounding trees have moderate bat roost potential and any impact could be mitigated by sensitively designed lighting, which could be conditioned.

### **Drainage**

- 5.26 The site is over a hectare in area, so a Flood Risk Assessment is required despite the amount of development being quite small for the overall size of the site. Given the recommendation the applicant had not been requested to provide one. It is unlikely given the scale of the development that a Flood Risk Assessment would highlight any significant issues. The Environment Flood Risk maps identify some surface water flooding to some of the surrounding ditches and water courses.
- 5.27 It is proposed the surface water off the domes would free drain onto the surrounding grass. It may be advisable to provide gravel filled trenches around the domes to prevent any erosion from concentrated flows. This could be conditioned.

- 5.28 It is proposed that the foul water would be dealt with by a package treatment plant which is acceptable in terms of the foul drainage hierarchy in the NPPF.

### **Other issues**

- 5.29 The need to support the economy as part of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is a material consideration. In addition this application will provide holiday accommodation in the UK at a time of increased demand and this weighs in favour of the proposal although this does not outweigh the unacceptable impacts set out above.
- 5.30 Under Section 143 of the Localism Act the Council is required to consider the impact on local finances. This can be a material consideration but in the instance of this application the other material planning considerations detailed above are of greater significance.
- 5.31 **This application is not liable for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)** due to nature of the structures and floor area not exceeding 100 square metres.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.32 In conclusion the proposed development would result in additional tourist accommodation close to Blicking Hall which it has been demonstrated would be financially viable.
- 5.33 The proposed location remote from services would result in the user of the development being dependent of the use of the private car which would intensify use of the inadequate road network which would be detrimental to highway safety contrary to Policy TS3 of the DM DPD.
- 5.34 It is considered futuristic design of the domes which are 3.4 metres in height would be an alien feature within this historic landscape and together with the toilet blocks and associated paraphernalia would result in unsympathetic visual clutter on a permanent basis which would adversely affect the rural historic undeveloped character and appearance of the conservation area causing less than substantial harm to the designated heritage asset which is not outweighed by the provision of the tourist accommodation in this instance.

Recommendation: Refuse.

Reasons for Refusal The road network serving the site is considered to be inadequate to serve the development proposed, by reason of its poor alignment, restricted width, lack of passing provision and restricted forward and junction visibility. The proposal, if permitted, would be likely to give rise to

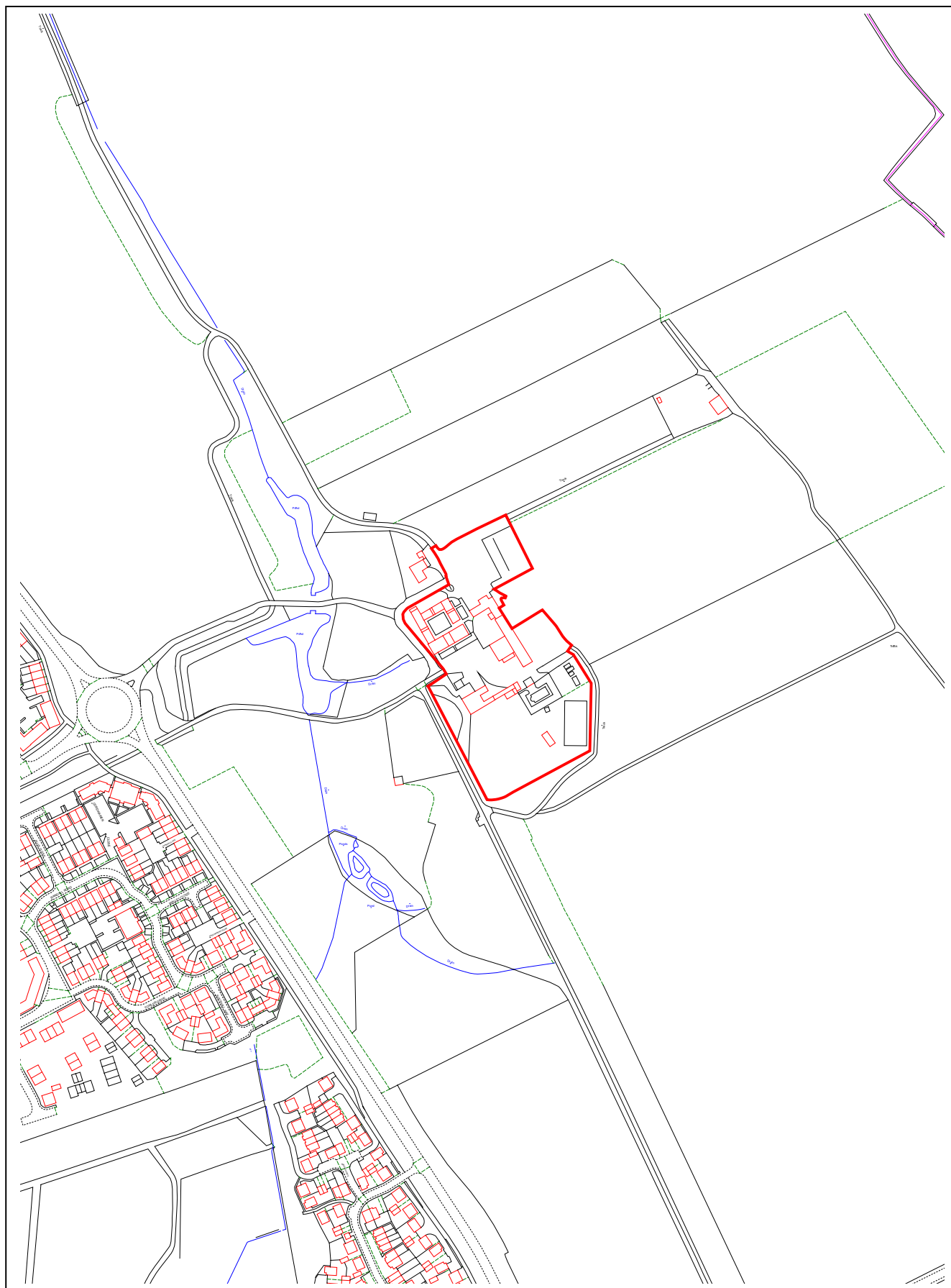
conditions detrimental to highway safety. Contrary to Policy TS3 in the Broadland Development Management Development Plan Document.

The proposal is isolated and remote from the local service centre provision and tourist attractions conflicting with the aims of sustainable development, the need to minimise travel, and the ability to encourage walking, cycling, use of public transport and reduce the reliance on the private car as represented in national and local policy. Contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework Policy 1 and 6 in the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk and Policy GC4 in the Broadland Development Management Development Plan Document

The futuristic design of the domes which are 3.4 metres in height would be an alien feature within this historic landscape and together with the toilet blocks and associated paraphernalia would result in unsympathetic visual clutter on a permanent basis which would adversely affect the rural historic undeveloped character and appearance of the conservation area causing less than substantial harm to the Conservation Area which is not outweighed by a public benefit of the provision of tourist accommodation and is therefore contrary to paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Guidance, Policies 1 and 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk and Policies GC4 and EN2 of the Broadland Development Management Development Plan Document.

**Contact Officer,  
Telephone Number  
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**Application No: 20202182**

**White House Farm, White House Farm Shop And  
Cafe, Salhouse Road, Sprowston, NR13 6LB**

**Scale:  
1:2500**

**Date:  
13-Apr-21**



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**Application No:** [20202182](#)  
**Parish:** **Sprowston**

**Applicant's Name:** Mr O Gurney  
**Site Address:** White House Farm, White House Farm Shop And Cafe, Salhouse Road, Sprowston, NR13 6LB  
**Proposal:** Proposed siting of 2 portable cabins within courtyard to accommodate new small businesses

### Reason for reporting to committee

The proposal is contrary to policy with a recommendation for approval.

Recommendation summary:

Approve with conditions.

### 1 Proposal and site context

- 1.1 The site is located at White House Farm, a 'pick your own' fruit farm, which has in recent years, diversified and expanded to include a farm shop, butchers, café, and a development of 7 small business units accommodated in converted farm outbuildings. The business units currently include a hair salon, a beauty boutique, a dance studio, several offices and a children's nursery.
- 1.2 White House Farm is situated on the eastern edge of Sprowston and lies close to an area allocated within the Growth Triangle Area Action Plan [GTAAP] for significant new housing and mixed-use development, with approximately 60ha of land either approved or allocated for residential and mixed-use development to the immediate west and south of the site – known as GT 5 and GT20 in the adopted GTAAP. The site itself is located outside of the defined settlement limits.
- 1.3 The White House Farm site is accessed via a dedicated access leading directly off a newly constructed roundabout on the orbital road link that has been delivered through the adjoining development. The site has a large existing car park.
- 1.4 The application seeks permission to site two portable cabins within the courtyard area to provide additional units to further expand the number of retail/business units at the site. As part of a longer term business plan it is intended to convert some remaining agricultural buildings in order to provide more permanent accommodation for these uses which are seen as a temporary interim measure.
- 1.5 Currently there is one user (a florist) waiting to occupy one the cabins whilst there is no user in place for the second cabin.

- 1.6 The florist is an existing business currently located in the District and there is uncertainty as to the long term future of their current location which is why they are seeking to relocate.
- 2 Relevant planning history
- 2.1 [20140082](#): Change of use from cart sheds to farm shop/cafe to replace the existing farm shop. Approved 17 February 2014.
- 2.2 [20140527](#): Change of use from cart sheds to farm shop/cafe/butchers to replace the existing farm shop (revised proposal). Approved 7 May 2014.
- 2.3 [20151197](#): (1) Conversion of agricultural building to provide 6 no. retail units and 1 no. office unit (2) Conversion of grain barn to a play barn facility. Approved 3 November 2015.
- 2.4 [20160106](#): Application for variation of condition 2 of planning permission 20151197 – (1) Conversion of agricultural building to provide 6 no. retail units & 1 no. office unit (2) Conversion of grain barn to play barn facility (revised plans) removal/variation of a condition (S73). Approved 5 April 2016.
- 2.5 [20160109](#): Application for approval of details reserved by condition 3 of planning permission 20151197 – joinery, rooflights & cladding details approval of details reserved by condition. Approved 8 March 2016.
- 2.6 [20160717](#): Application for approval of details for condition 3 following grant of planning permission 20160106 – roof tiles to be used on courtyard barn. Approval of details reserved by condition 24 April 2016.
- 2.7 [20170171](#): Part change of use for Unit 7 from approved office use B1 to children's nursery D1. Approved 23 March 2017.
- 2.8 [20170379](#): Change of use of Unit 5 from approved retail use (use class A1) to dance studio (use class D2). Approved 7 April 2017.
- 3 Planning Policies
- 3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- NPPF 02 : Achieving sustainable development  
NPPF 06 : Building a strong, competitive economy  
NPPF 12 : Achieving well-designed places

### 3.2 Joint Core Strategy (JCS)

Policy 1 : Addressing climate change and protecting environmental assets

Policy 2 : Promoting good design

Policy 5 : The Economy

### 3.3 Development Management Development Plan Document (DM DPD) 2015

GC2 : Location of new development

GC3 : Conversion of buildings outside settlement limits

GC4 : Design

TS3 : Highway safety

TS4 : Parking guidelines

### 3.4 Sprowston Neighbourhood Plan

Policy 2 : Good design

Policy 6 : Local employment opportunities

### 3.5 Growth Triangle Area Action Plan (GTAAP) (2016)

GT1: Form of Development – All development should create, or contribute to, the creation of distinct quarters, the characteristics of which should be based upon the principles of mixed-use walkable neighbourhoods.

Developments are expected to provide, or contribute to the provision of, community services and facilities.

## 4 Consultations

### 4.1 Town Council:

Whilst my Council has no objection to the granting of this application concerns were expressed about the detrimental visual impact portable cabins would have on an attractive court yard.

### 4.2 NCC Highways:

No objection.

### 4.3 District members:

No comments received.

### 4.4 Other Representations:

None received.



5 Assessment

**Key Considerations**

- 5.1
- Principle of development
  - Expansion of an existing agricultural diversification site that provides employment and business use locally
  - Design and impact on the character and appearance of the area
  - Impact on residential amenity
  - Impact on parking and highway safety

**Principle**

- 5.2 Applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. This point is reinforced by the NPPF, which itself is a material consideration.
- 5.3 Policy GC2 of the DMDPD states that new development will take place within the defined settlement limits and will only be allowed outside of these limits where it accords with a specific policy or allocation of the development plan. The site is outside of the settlement limit and is not within a specific allocation in the GTAAP and as such is contrary to policy GC2.

**Support of an existing employment/business site and local facility**

- 5.4 Whilst the site is outside of the settlement limit it is an existing facility that provides services and employment as described in para 1.1. Material to the proposal is the location of the site in relation to existing and proposed growth as referred to in para 1.2. Furthermore, given the planning history of the existing site, I consider this to be a sustainable location for the proposed development.
- 5.5 In support of expansion of the existing site it has the potential to bring benefits to the existing businesses on the site through increased visitor numbers. The new businesses will potentially also benefit from the passing trade associated with visiting the existing facilities/services on site.
- 5.6 Policy 6 of the SNP indicates that local employment opportunities will be supported by promoting the development of appropriate and new and expanded businesses.
- 5.7 The proposal seeks in part to provide for an existing business in finding a new suitable unit as they are having to re locate from their existing premises elsewhere in the Broadland district.
- 5.8 Policy GC3 of the DMDPD allows for the conversion of buildings for employment uses outside of settlement limits. Due to the current

circumstances surrounding COVID the applicants are reluctant to incur the initial outlay of converting an existing building to accommodate the proposed new uses. In allowing the cabins for what will be suggested as a temporary period it provides the opportunity for the new businesses to establish themselves and will provide the applicants with funds towards the potential future conversion of the existing building on site.

- 5.9 The above factors in this particular case are considered significantly material to the determination of the application as to justify new additional retail/business floor space outside of the settlement limit.

### **Design**

- 5.10 Policy GC4 of the DMDPD, JCS Policy 2 and Policy 2 of the SNP promote good design.
- 5.11 The site is characterised through the conversion of red brick and tile former agricultural buildings, also including timber infill of former openings. The proposal seeks permission for two portable cabins as a temporary solution to providing additional floor space prior to the potential conversion of an existing building on site.
- 5.12 The portable cabins will be designed to be in keeping with the materials of the existing buildings with western red cedar cladding and light blue joinery and trims.
- 5.13 Whilst noting the comments of the Town Council and given the proposed external cladding appearance, the proposed cabins would not result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area which is internal to the site being within an enclosed courtyard. As such the proposal is considered to comply with the design policies referred to above.

### **Residential amenity**

- 5.14 Policy GC4 states that consideration should be given to the amenity of existing properties.
- 5.15 Given the location of the cabins within the courtyard area and the established nature of the site I consider that there will be no significant impact on the amenities of neighbouring properties. Indeed the site stands alone from the nearest existing/proposed housing. As such the proposal is considered to comply with Policy GC4.

### **Highway safety and parking**

- 5.16 Policy TS3 of the DMDPD protects highway safety and Policy TS4 seeks sufficient parking and manoeuvring space on site.

5.17 The proposal would make use of the existing roundabout access and car park which has availability for over 200 vehicles. NCC highways raised no objection and there is ample parking available on the site to satisfy the increased use of the site. As such the proposal complies with the relevant policies.

5.18 Under Section 143 of the Localism Act the Council is required to consider the impact on local finances. This can be a material consideration but in the instance of this application the other material planning considerations detailed above are of greater significance.

This application is not liable for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) as it is less than 100sq m floor space

### **Conclusion**

5.19 The site is located outside of any development boundary and therefore the introduction of new floor space is contrary to policy. Taking into account the current circumstances surrounding the COVID pandemic as referred to above and the benefits the proposal would bring to the existing site and the function that it provides through services and facilities the proposal is considered complimentary to these and the material considerations referred to above weigh in favour of the current application. I consider that there are sufficient reasons in this particularly case to indicate that the application should be approved contrary to the provisions of the development plan.

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions:

- (1) Temporary permission (3 years)
- (2) In accordance with approved plans (AD01)
- (3) Specific use – retail (Class E(a)) (R03)

**Contact Officer,** Martin Clark  
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**and E-mail** [mclark@s-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:mclark@s-norfolk.gov.uk)

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**21 April 2021**

**Final Papers**

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Attached is the Supplementary Schedule showing those representations received since the Agenda was published and other relevant information.

### **DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

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## SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

Plan No	Application No	Location	Update	Page No
3	20202295	Hall Farm Whitetop Lane Blicking	<p>Two letters of support submitted by the applicant from the National Trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the proposal which will keep the farm economically viable and allow environmental work on the farm to be expanded.</li> <li>• Feel the alternative put forward by Highways is a poor solution to a problem that does not exist.</li> <li>• The use of the road is very limited and in practical terms only gets used by the farm.</li> <li>• People entering Silvergate will almost certainly use Silvergate regardless of what direction they are coming from.</li> <li>• Adding a small number of traffic movements each day seems of minimal consequence.</li> <li>• Concerned about the proposed solution creating a track across the field would be unnecessary development in the countryside something we would not want to see.</li> <li>• It will cross a heavily used footpath and be visible from the road.</li> <li>• Concerned about the fast moving road traffic and visibility.</li> <li>• Feel this is not a suitable highway solution and the existing one is better.</li> </ul>	74