Case No: 18/02569/OUT (OUTLINE APPLICATION)

Proposal: PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING THE ERECTION OF 16 DWELLINGS AT LAND EAST OF NO. 66 THRAPSTON ROAD, BRAMPTON, PROPOSED ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS

Location: LAND EAST OF 66 THRAPSTON ROAD, BRAMPTON

Applicant: ABBEY PROPERTIES CAMBRIDESHIRE LIMITED

Grid Ref: 521194 271134

Date of Registration: 29.11.2018

Parish: BRAMPTON

RECOMMENDATION - APPROVE subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 obligation relating to affordable housing, provision of an off-site open space and maintenance contribution, wheeled bins, and subject to conditions.

OR

RECOMMENDATION - REFUSE in the event that the obligation referred to above has not been completed and the applicant is unwilling to agree to an extended period for determination, or on the grounds that the applicant is unwilling to complete the obligation necessary to make the development acceptable.

This application is referred to the Development Management Committee (DMC) in accordance with the current Scheme of Delegation as it is a Departure from the Development Plan as the proposals are for 16 dwellings (10 market and 6 affordable) in the countryside and Brampton Parish Council’s ultimate recommendation of refusal is contrary to the officer recommendation of approval.

1. DESCRIPTION OF SITE AND APPLICATION

1.1 The application site relates to a roughly rectangular shaped parcel of undeveloped land covering an area of 0.78 hectares that is located on the north side of Thrapston Road, Brampton. The frontage to the site, which currently comprises existing trees and hedgerow, measures approximately 175m. The site has a depth of approximately 85 m. The site has its boundary to the west with number 66 Thrapston Road and there is a footpath along the site frontage and National cycle route 12. There are ponds located further to the north of the site.

1.2 The adjoining land uses comprise open land with an agricultural tied dwelling and cattle sheds to the north, residential dwellings to the east and west and Thrapston Road to the south of the site. There is an existing children’s nursery and residential dwelling to the north.
east and the access to this nursery and Poplars Farm forms the eastern boundary of the site.

1.3 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 as identified by the Environment Agency’s Flood Mapping and Huntingdonshire District Council’s Updated Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Maps (2017). There are no designated heritage assets within or adjacent to the application site.

1.4 The application seeks outline consent for residential development of the site for 16 dwellings with all matters reserved apart from access into the site from the public highway.

1.5 The application is accompanied by an illustrative layout plan which aims to demonstrate that the site is capable of accommodating the scale of development proposed (16 dwellings). The illustrative layout shows one option for how the site could be developed should permission be granted. An illustrative landscape masterplan also accompanies the proposals which details a number of soft landscape works, including a landscape buffer to the north. These submitted plans are indicative only and the final layout and details of the development would be established at the reserved matters stage.

1.6 The application is however accompanied by the following plans which have been submitted for approval at this stage:
   * Site boundary
   * Site access arrangements

1.7 During the lifetime of the application revised plans have been submitted to address comments received from consultees. Following the submission of revised plans, re-consultation has been undertaken accordingly.

2. NATIONAL GUIDANCE

2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (19th February 2019) (NPPF 2019) sets out the three objectives - economic, social and environmental - of the planning system to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF 2019 at paragraph 10 provides as follows: ‘So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11).’

2.2 The NPPF 2019 sets out the Government's planning policies for (amongst other things):
   * delivering a sufficient supply of homes;
   * achieving well-designed places;
   * conserving and enhancing the natural environment;
   * conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

2.3 The NPPF 2019 replaces the NPPF 2012 (and updates the 2018 publication). Transitional arrangements are in place for authorities who have submitted Local Plans on or before the 24 January 2019. To ensure consistency, the 2012 Framework policies will continue to be relevant for the purposes of examining those plans. For clarity HDC submitted their Local Plan on 29 March 2018 and the
examination hearings took place in July and September 2018. This emerging Local Plan is a material consideration. The NPPF 2019 should also in the normal way be taken into account as a material consideration in dealing with applications.

2.4 Planning Practice Guidance is also relevant and a material consideration.

For full details visit the government website: [https://www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

3. **PLANNING POLICIES**

3.1 Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995) (saved policies):
- H23: Housing development outside environmental limits
- H31: Residential privacy and amenity standards
- H37: Housing and Environmental pollution
- T18: Access requirements for new development
- T19: Footpath provision in new development
- T20: Cycleway provision in new development
- EN11: Ancient monuments and archaeological sites
- En12: Archaeological recording
- En13: Archaeological potential evaluation
- En17: Development in the Countryside
- En18: Protection of countryside features
- En19: Tree Preservation Orders
- En20: Landscaping Schemes for new development
- En22: Nature and Wildlife conservation
- En24: Access provision for the disabled
- En25: General Design Criteria
- CS8: Water supply, sewerage, sewage disposal and surface water drainage requirements
- CS9: Flood water management
- R7: Open playspace provision standards in new housing schemes
- R8: Commutation of open playspace

3.2 Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alterations 2002 (Saved policies):
- HL5: Quality and Density of Development
- HL6: Housing Density
- HL10: Choice in new housing
- OB2: Maintenance of Open Space

3.3 Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2009:
- CS1: Sustainable development in Huntingdonshire
- CS2: Strategic Housing Development
- CS3: The Settlement Hierarchy
- CS4: Affordable Housing in Development
- CS10: Contributions to Infrastructure Requirements

3.4 Huntingdon West Area Action Plan 2009 (adopted 2011):
- Policy HW6 – The Council will pursue an extension of Hinchingbrooke Country Park. Paragraph 8.4 of the AAP says “It is anticipated that there will be no major development along
3.5 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017
(as amended March 2018 for submission):
- HU10: Hinchingbrooke Country Park Extension, Huntingdon
- LP 1: Amount of Development
- LP 2: Strategy for development
- LP 3: Green Infrastructure
- LP 4: Contributing to Infrastructure Delivery
- LP 5: Flood Risk
- LP 6: Waste Water Management
- LP 7: Spatial Planning Areas
- LP 11: The Countryside
- LP 12: Design Context
- LP 13: Design Implementation
- LP 15: Amenity
- LP 16: Surface Water
- LP 17: Sustainable Travel
- LP 18: Parking Provision and Vehicle Movement
- LP 25: Affordable Housing Provision
- LP 26: Housing Mix
- LP 32: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- LP36: Heritage Assets and their Settings
- LP 33: Trees, Woodland, Hedges and Hedgerows
- LP 39: Ground Contamination and Groundwater Pollution

3.6 The LPA considers the Local Plan to 2036 to be a sound plan and it was submitted for examination on the 29th March 2018. Footnote 22 of the NPPF 2019 states during the transitional period for emerging plans submitted for examination (set out in paragraph 214 of NPPF 2019), consistency should be tested against the previous Framework published in March 2012. The plan has therefore reached an advanced stage and is considered to be consistent with the policies set out within the NPPF 2012. The Local Plan examination hearings ended on 27 September 2018 and the Inspector's initial findings are that the plan can be made sound by main modifications.

3.7 Following the examination hearings held in July and September 2018, the wording of LP2, LP3, LP5 and LP11 are to be changed. For LP2 “recognise” is to be added in relation to the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, LP3 adds text above the Grafham Water heading, LP5 is to be amended as agreed with the Environment Agency and County Council, and LP11 the word "protect" is to be replaced with "recognise".

3.8 With regard to Policy HU10, the Inspector has requested a modification to the size of the extension to Hinchingbrooke Country Park, to reduce this from 44ha to 27.5ha. This removes the land to the north of the application site from the proposed extension to the country park.

3.9 The Inspector has not required any main modifications to any of the other policies listed above that would have any material implications for this application.
3.10 The emerging Local Plan has now reached an advanced stage and in the light of the Inspector’s initial findings should be afforded more weight. Save for policies LP2, LP3, LP5 and LP11, it is considered that significant (but not full) weight should now be afforded to the policies referred to within the Local Plan to 2036 (as amended March 2018 for submission). The Local Planning Authority has agreed to the required changes to LP2, LP3, LP5 and LP11 but as the required changes to Policies LP2, LP3, LP5 and LP11 have recently been subject to further consultation before adoption, it is considered that moderate rather than significant weight should be afforded to these policies as modified.

3.11 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Guidance:
- Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPD 2017
- Huntingdonshire Townscape and Landscape Assessment SPD 2007
- Developer Contributions SPD 2011
- Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2017
- Huntingdonshire Tree Guidance Note 3
- December 2018 Annual Monitoring Review regarding housing land supply.
- RECAP CCC Waste Management Design Guide (CCC SPD) 2012

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

Housing Land Supply:

3.12 In order to satisfy the requirements of the NPPF to boost housing supply the Council must demonstrate an up-to-date five year supply of deliverable housing sites to meet its objectively assessed need, with an additional buffer to ensure choice and competition in the market for land; this requirement is set out in paragraph 73 of the NPPF. Due to under delivery in recent years the buffer to be applied for the District is 20%. The December 2018 Annual Monitoring Review applies the 20% buffer and demonstrates that the Council has a five year supply of housing land.

3.13 The Development Plan policies relevant to the supply of housing (En17 and H23 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (HLP) 1995 and CS2 and CS3 of the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy (HCS)) 2009 were set against a lower Objectively Assessed Need figure such that strict application of these policies would result in failure to achieve the objectively assessed housing need figure that the Council currently has identified as part of the emerging Local Plan to 2036. These policies are therefore no longer fully up-to-date or consistent with the NPPF and, at this time and until the Council adopts the Local Plan to 2036 with up-to-date policies, the ‘tilted balance’ as set out within paragraph 11 of the NPPF (2019) is engaged. For decision-taking this means where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless: any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits (when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole), or specific polices of the Framework indicate development should be restricted.
Weight of Development Plan Policies & NPPF Consistency:

3.14 The fact that the Development Plan policies are old is in itself irrelevant as they remain saved policies and the statutory starting point and under S.38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004.

3.15 As a material consideration carrying significant weight, the NPPF advises at paragraph 213 due weight should be given to Development Plan policies which pre-date the NPPF according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. The closer the policies are to the NPPF, the more weight they may be given. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF 2019 identifies the weight to be given to emerging plans. The LPA consider the Local Plan to 2036 to be a sound plan and it was submitted for examination on the 29th March 2018. The plan has therefore reached an advanced stage and is consistent with the policies set out within the NPPF.

4. PLANNING HISTORY


4.2 A subsequent appeal was dismissed under reference APP/H0520/W/17/3172571 on 11.12.2017 as the Inspector concluded that this larger 3ha site would result in a harmful impact on the ‘valued’ local landscape and townscape.

4.3 17/01161/OUT - Proposed Rural Exceptions Residential Development involving the Erection of 63 Dwellings, proposed access, arrangements and associated works – Pending determination.

4.4 18/01489/OUT - Residential development involving the erection of 14 dwellings, proposed access arrangements and associated work – Pending consideration. There are outstanding objections from statutory consultees and the LPA, including the LLFA and Urban Design.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 Brampton Parish Council – 19.12.2018 – Recommends APPROVAL (COPY ATTACHED)
Brampton Parish Council has concerns over additional vehicular movements into and out of the proposed development. The junction shown on Drawing No. 2100 will not be adequate in dealing with the new traffic flow. Although the transport statement indicates a reduction in overall traffic flow along Thrapston Road, Brampton Parish Council is not convinced this will be the case. A traffic calming scheme, similar to the one currently being carried out in Ermine Street, Great Stukeley, will go some way towards slowing the traffic using this route and reduce “rat running” with vehicles taking short cuts to Huntingdon and the station. In view of this Brampton Parish
Council recommends HDC is asked if any traffic calming scheme is planned. 
Partly dependent on an answer from HDC re a traffic calming scheme,
1. Brampton Parish Council recommends approval for the proposed 16 no dwellings subject to modification of the new junction with a revised layout submitted to Brampton Parish Council.
2. Recommend approval subject to the existing hedge at the southern/road boundary being retained.

5.2 **Brampton Parish Council** - 30.01.2019 – The PC notes the comments from County Highways relating to this application (COPY ATTACHED).

5.3 **Brampton Parish Council** - 01.03.2019 – Recommends REFUSAL (COPY ATTACHED) noting that there are concerns regarding the access onto Thrapston Road.

5.4 **HDC Landscape and Trees** – NO OBJECTION, subject to conditions.

5.5 **HDC Urban Design** – OBJECTIONS – see below in report.

5.6 **Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust** – NO OBJECTION subject to conditions.

5.7 **Cambridgeshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)** – NO OBJECTION subject to conditions.

5.8 **HDC Environmental Health** – NO COMMENTS.

5.9 **Cambridgeshire County Council as Local Highway Authority** - NO OBJECTION subject to conditions.

5.10 **Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology** - NO OBJECTION subject to conditions.

5.11 **Highways England** – NO OBJECTION.

5.12 **HDC Policy and Enabling Officer** – NO OBJECTION.

5.13 **HDC Waste** – NO OBJECTION.

5.14 **HDC Green Spaces** - NO OBJECTION subject to securing an off-site contribution through S106.

6. **REPRESENTATIONS**

6.1 Nine representations have been received from local residents objecting to the application which raise the following concerns:
* Proposals represent over-development in the village and the site is only suitable for 8 or 9 dwellings.
* Infrastructure, roads, surgery, school and wildlife concerns.
* Concerns regarding access into the site, which is close to the vehicular and pedestrian access to the memorial park.
* Request for traffic calming measures along Thrapston Road.
* Concern regarding cycle path and risk of traffic collisions.
* Properties should be limited to 2 storeys in height.
* Concerns regarding the new road opening into the existing hedge on the use of the shared foot and cycle path.
* Insufficient parking for new residents.
* Justification for the farm access road leading to the rear is required.
* The frontage hedge should be retained as part of any proposal.
* The ecological value of the site must be maintained and enhanced to offset loss of habitat.
* The site is liable to flooding.
* Existing traffic congestion in Brampton will be exacerbated.
* The developers should take measures to avoid damaging or destroying active bird nests during tree, hedgerow and scrub clearance works on site.
* The mature trees and the retained hedgerows should be protected during construction through the provision of appropriate fencing to protect the root zone from compaction.
* Concerns regarding the rapid expansion of the village in a very short timescale.
* The proposed development would cause serious harm to the character and the appearance of the area’s landscape and townscape.
* Concern regarding site levels (the road is just over a metre higher than the ground immediately north of the hedge).
* The access design does not comply with Sustrans guidelines and the NPPF calls for cyclists to have priority.
* A CEMP should be required as part of any reserved matters application.

7. **ASSESSMENT**

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

7.2 As set out within the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 38(6)) and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (section 70(2)) in dealing with planning applications the Local Planning Authority shall have regard to the provisions of the Development Plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations. This is reiterated within paragraph 47 of the NPPF (2019). The development plan is defined in section 38(3)(b) of the 2004 Act as "the development plan documents (taken as a whole) that have been adopted or approved in that area".

7.3 In Huntingdonshire the Development Plan consists of:
* Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 (Parts 1 and 2)
* Saved policies from the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002
* Adopted Core Strategy 2009
* Huntingdon West Area Action Plan 2011
* Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Core Strategy
* St Neots Neighbourhood Plan
* Godmanchester Neighbourhood Plan
7.4 The statutory term ‘material considerations’ has been broadly construed to include any consideration relevant in the circumstances which bears on the use or development of land: Cala Homes (South) Ltd v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government & Anor [2011] EWHC 97 (Admin); [2011] 1 P. & C.R. 22, per Lindblom J. Whilst accepting that the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the Development Plan, para 2 confirms that it is a material consideration and significant weight is given to this in determining applications.

7.5 The main issues to consider in assessing this application are whether there is any conflict with Development Plan policies. If there is any conflict, whether the application can be considered to be in accordance with the Development Plan when taken as a whole. If the application is not in accordance with the Development Plan, whether there are any material considerations, including emerging policies in the Local Plan to 2036 and the NPPF, which indicate that planning permission should be granted. With this in mind the following issues are assessed below:

- Principle of Development;
- Indicative Layout, Landscape and Visual Impact, Trees and Open Space;
- Flood Risk, Drainage, Ground Conditions and Contamination;
- Residential Amenity;
- Ecology and Biodiversity;
- Archaeological Impacts;
- Sustainability, Access, Transport and Parking; and
- Infrastructure Requirements and Planning Obligations.

Principle of Development:

7.6 The site is located adjacent to, but outside of the built up area of Brampton, and within the open countryside as classified in Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy 2009. The Development Plan policies seek to ensure that development is located in places well served by public transport and accessible to services so that the need to travel is minimised, thus helping to tackle climate change at a district level. For this reason, and to restrict the loss of high quality agricultural land and to help protect the character of the countryside, development outside the built up area is carefully controlled.

7.7 Development outside the built up area is restricted, for example to dwellings required for the efficient management of agriculture, forestry or horticulture enterprises (policies En17 and H23 of the 1995 Local Plan apply). Building on this, policy CS3 of the Adopted Core Strategy continues the strategic aim of concentrating development in the larger sustainable settlements and protects the character and scale of smaller villages and the countryside through limiting general housing development outside of the built up area (with the exception of essential needs housing and specific allocations).

7.8 To address the identified shortfall in housing delivery, Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 contains a significantly revised strategy from the Adopted Core Strategy (2009). The strategy for development in the District is set out in policy LP 2 of the emerging
Local Plan to 2036 and focuses on concentrating growth in the four identified Spatial Planning Areas, with approximately three quarters of the objectively assessed need for housing being focused within these areas.

7.9 Working down the settlement hierarchy identified within policy LP2, seven Key Service Centres are designated, reflecting the concentration of services and facilities in these settlements; serving not only residents of these settlements but also residents of other nearby communities. Working further down from this, the role of small settlements is identified. Policy LP2 notes that "Approximately a quarter of the objectively assessed need for housing, together with a limited amount of employment growth, will be permitted on sites dispersed across the key service centres, local service centres and small settlements to support the vitality of these communities and provide flexibility and diversity in the housing supply". Policy LP7 provides support for development proposals within the built-up area of a Spatial Planning Area. It is acknowledged that the application site is not identified for allocation within the emerging Local Plan to 2036 and falls outside the built-up area of the area. Policy LP11 states that development in the countryside will be restricted to the limited and specific opportunities as provided for in other policies of this plan.

7.10 As such, the proposals would not accord with policies within the emerging Local Plan to 2036.

7.11 In the Emerging Plan: Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission), Brampton is defined as being within the 'Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area' within Policy LP7. In this regard, Huntingdon including Brampton is considered to be a sustainable location for new development due to the availability of local facilities and services, including schools and employment opportunities, which reduces the need to travel. The settlement is also served by public transport.

7.12 Policy LP11 of the Local Plan to 2036 Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) sets out that development within the countryside will be restricted to the limited and sporadic opportunities as provided for in other policies of the plan. Amongst other requirements, this policy outlines that development must protect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and not give rise to noise, odour, obtrusive light or other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others.

7.13 As stated within Paragraph 48 of the NPPF, Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
   a) the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
   b) the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
   c) the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given). During the transitional period for emerging plans submitted for examination (set out in paragraph 214), consistency should be tested
against the previous Framework published in March 2012. Due to the advanced stage of the emerging local plan within the examination period, it is considered that these policies carry significant weight (as set out earlier in this report).

7.14 In considering the current application, the development would not be 'isolated' (referred to in para 79 of the NPPF) as it is in close proximity to other properties. However, the proposed dwellings do not meet any of the exception criteria set out in the local policies regarding development in the countryside, such as an agricultural need or exceptional design quality.

7.15 Policies H23, En17 and CS3 have environmental objectives which are all firmly aimed at protecting the environment and landscape character. Core principles of the NPPF 2019 are to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and the differing roles and character of the areas whilst supporting local communities in rural areas. The NPPF (2019) therefore has a slightly more positive approach to development in the countryside than the restrictive development plan policies, and this partial inconsistency requires a reduction in weight.

7.16 Whilst there is some difference in the wording between the policies written before the NPPF 2019 publication and the precise wording of the NPPF 2019, the countryside policies are considered to accord with one of the overarching aims of the NPPF 2019. As such, having regard to paragraph 213 of the NPPF 2019, it is considered that when assessing impacts of development upon the countryside these policies can be afforded significant (reduced from full) weight.

7.17 Paragraph 170 of the NPPF 2019 says that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst others, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils. It is also a Core Principle of the NPPF that the planning system should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

7.18 As stated above, the application site is adjacent to but outside of the built-up area of Brampton and is not allocated for development within the Local Plan 1995/2002 or the Core Strategy 2009. The site is therefore considered to be in the countryside for the purposes of the Development Plan. Being within the countryside, the development of the site, as proposed, is contrary to Development Plan policies H23 and En17 of the Local Plan (1995) and policy CS3 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2009). The proposal is also contrary to emerging policy LP7 and LP11 for the same reason (site being located outside the built up area of the Huntingdon SPA). The application has been advertised as a departure from the Development Plan as it is contrary to the Development Plan currently in place for Huntingdonshire, due to the application site being outside of the built up area of Brampton and forming part of the countryside.

7.19 In terms of the loss of the existing site as agricultural land, Agricultural Land Classification provides a framework for classifying land according to the extent to which its physical or chemical characteristics impose long term limitations on agricultural use. The classification is well established and provides an appropriate
framework for determining the physical quality of land at national, regional and local levels. Grade 1 is excellent quality agricultural land and Grade 5 is land of very poor quality. Grade 3 constitutes about half of the agricultural land in England and Wales, is subdivided into two subgrades – 3a and 3b. The NPPF 2019 advises in paragraph 170 that the economic and other benefits of best and most versatile agricultural land should be taken into account. The NPPF 2019 within paragraph 171 (footnote 53) states that where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, Local Planning Authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to those of higher quality.

7.20 The site itself covers 0.78 hectares and would involve the loss of Grade 3 agricultural land; this is regrettable, but the loss of such a small area is not considered to be significant when assessed against the remaining availability of good agricultural land in the vicinity and wider local area. The application site and loss of 0.78ha of agricultural land is not considered to be significant in this context.

7.21 There is no relevant Development Plan policy relating to loss of agricultural land. There is considered to be limited conflict with this part of the NPPF 2019 (paragraph 171, footnote 53) due to the size and scale of the site and the lack of availability of lower grade land.

7.22 It is therefore concluded that there is no in-principle policy support for the development of this countryside site. The proposed development must however be considered alongside the three dimensions of sustainable development as set out within paragraph 11 of the NPPF; economic, social and environmental. These factors are considered in detail within the proceeding sections of this report. The proposal will also be assessed against the material planning considerations discussed below.

**Indicative Layout, Landscape and Visual Impact, Impact upon Trees:**

**Indicative Layout:**

7.23 The locality of the site is characterised by existing residential development to the east, south and west of the site. To the north is open countryside and Hinchingbrooke Country Park. A mature hedgerow with sporadic trees defines the southern boundary along Thrapston Road and the garden fence and vegetation of number 66 Thrapston Road forms the western boundary of the site. The northern boundary of the site is undefined within the grassland field and the eastern boundary is formed by the access road to Poplars Farm.

7.24 As previously noted, the application is for outline consent with matters relating to appearance; landscaping; layout; and scale being reserved. To allow full evaluation and consideration of the development and to determine whether the proposed amount of development can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site, an Illustrative Masterplan for the application site has been submitted.

7.25 The Illustrative Masterplan has been subject to amendments following comments from HDC Urban Design and although some changes
have been made, concerns still remain. For confirmation, no scale parameter plans have been submitted and storey heights have not been shown on the illustrative masterplan. Written confirmation has been sought from the Applicants’ Agent that the proposed dwellings will be 2 storeys in height.

7.26 The Illustrative Masterplan for the application site shows how the development could be arranged such to accommodate the quantum of development proposed (16 dwellings) and shows the potential for development of eight pairs of semi-detached dwellings. The submitted Planning Statement sets out an indicative mix of dwellings (2, 3 and 4 bedroom semi-detached dwellings); however the proposed mix of development will be agreed at reserved matters stage. The proposed layout comprises a single row of properties arranged along a pair of private side roads, separated into two groupings by a proposed farm access track to serve land to the rear. The site would be accessed via a new junction on Thrapston Road.

7.27 The proposals would retain the majority of the hedgerow boundary and this would be supplemented with new native hedgerow planting either side of the road access, to replace sections of removed hedgerow. A new linear strip of soft landscaping / open space would be located behind the hedgerow, parallel with Thrapston Road. Hedgerow planting and trees are proposed to be located around the rear garden boundaries and wrap around the eastern side of the scheme to connect with the Thrapston Road hedgerow, to form a boundary to the new properties. An attenuation pond set within tree and shrub planting is proposed to form part of a landscape buffer approximately 15m deep on the northern boundary of the development, beyond the rear gardens of the proposed properties.

7.28 The development proposes 16 dwellings on 0.78ha of land. This equates to a gross density calculation of 20.5 dwellings per hectare which is considered to be low density and below an expected density on comparable housing sites, which are usually between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare. However, with the area identified as a landscaped buffer zone removed from the overall site area (which amounts to 0.18ha), the net density of the development increases to 27 dwellings per hectare. In respect of the density of development, whilst it is appreciated that Policy HL6 seeks to achieve a density of between 30 and 50dph, and the NPPF 2019 seeks to encourage higher densities of development, it is also noted that the NPPF 2019 advises that it depends on the appropriateness of achieving high densities on a site by site basis. Site specific constraints are taken into account through the overall layout of the site. In this respect, given landscape sensitivity and the established form and character of development in the locality (generally semi’s on wider width plots), a higher density of development would not be suitable. The lower density allows the opportunity for the site to provide effective boundary treatments and landscape buffering, particularly upon the northern edge of the site, whilst retaining the majority of the existing hedgerow along the site frontage.

7.29 In terms of the design of the scheme, HDC Urban Design have assessed the proposal and provided detailed suggestions which have resulted in changes to the Illustrative Masterplan and Illustrative Landscape Masterplan. Having reviewed the amended plans, HDC
Urban Design still maintain some concerns regarding the masterplans submitted, the details of which are set out below.

7.30 With regard to layout, concerns have been raised regarding the location of the vehicular access being ‘off line’ with a proposed farm access track, to serve land to the rear. Access to this rear land is currently via the existing farm track to the east which connects to Thrapston Road. Clarification has been sought from the Applicants’ Agent regarding access and the need for the farm access track. The agent has confirmed that the existing access arrangements are based upon cooperation rather than any legal right and the applicants are therefore securing longer term access to the area to the north of the application site.

7.31 Concerns have also been raised with regard to the access location into the site being directly opposite the side drive for proposed plot 7, which results in a poor vista stop and sense of arrival to the development. However, having considered in the context of development in the locality, the arrangement as shown is comparable with the private drive arrangement at number 76 Thrapston Road. Whilst it is considered that the Illustrative Masterplan creates a poor sense of arrival and does not create an attractive vista, this can be further negotiated as part of any reserved matters submission, should outline permission be granted.

7.32 There are also concerns relating to the need to consider cyclist priority, as the proposed access gives priority to the motor car. As detailed later in this report, the detailed access arrangements have been subject to negotiations with the County Council as part of application reference 16/01255/OUT. The Highways Safety Audit agreed as part of these previous proposals (although the subsequent appeal was dismissed) required that priority is given to motorised vehicles rather than cyclists. The submitted plans for this current application therefore illustrate an access arrangement whereby cyclists have to give priority to motor vehicles, which is consistent with the cycle crossing points along Thrapston Road in close proximity to the site. The proposed edge alignment and partial removal of hedgerow along the southern boundary of the site is required for the junction and inter-visibility purposes, and is therefore required to ensure safety for all users.

7.33 Concerns have also been raised by both HDC Urban Design and the Landscape officer regarding the structural landscaping outside the boundary of proposed plot number 16, on grounds that sufficient space is required to allow soft landscaping along this boundary to integrate the plot / development with adjacent land and views into the site from the adjacent farm access and Thrapston Road. The Applicants’ Agent has suggested this could be secured through a condition requiring details of land ownership along this boundary. As no parameter plans have been submitted with this application, it is considered that this should be secured through any reserved matters landscape condition, specifying that there should be a 2m wide belt of trees and hedging outside the eastern boundary of plot 16 (as indicatively shown on the Illustrative Masterplan). It is envisaged that this landscaping would be incorporated into a management company as per the attenuation ponds and landscaping to the rear of the dwellings. It is noted that any development adjacent to this structural
landscape belt may require specialist foundations or be moved further back from the centre line of the landscaping belt to avoid potential root damage to the trees.

7.34 HDC Urban Design have however confirmed that the indicative roof plans of the dwellings as shown on the illustrative masterplan, with front projecting features are acceptable as there are examples of other semi-detached dwellings along Thrapston Road with forward projecting elements. As noted, a landscape buffer is proposed to the rear of the dwellings with attenuation ponds; subject to detailing HDC Urban Design have confirmed these are acceptable in principle. The application proposes an off-site contribution towards public open space, which is considered acceptable as the site is located close to the Memorial Playing Fields.

7.35 In relation to the refuse collection points proposed, whilst these are not specified there is sufficient space to accommodate this provision within the site and can be agreed as part of any collection point at the vehicular entrance, and also one further east adjacent to a pedestrian connection through the hedgerow from Thrapston Road to the eastern end of the private drive.

7.36 The HDC Urban Design comments therefore conclude that with regard to the layout of the proposals (submitted as an Illustrative Masterplan), whilst concerns remain, the site constraints (which include an agricultural access track which is excluded from the red line area) is likely to preclude an alternative layout arrangement, however the detailed layout will therefore be considered as part of any reserved matters submission, should outline permission be granted.

**Landscape and Visual Impact:**

7.37 An assessment has been undertaken on landscape character and visual amenity (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) and the resulting landscape and visual effects of the proposed development. This assessment concludes that the development of part of a grass field on the edge of Brampton and the removal of a section of hedgerow would result in the relatively minor loss of typical landscape features of the Ouse Valley character area. However, the proposals would not result in significant harm to visual amenity. Although some views from upper floor windows of neighbouring residential properties in close proximity would undergo a significant change, the LVIA states that the proposed development would be of a similar character to the residential districts of the village and would be characteristic of the urban fringe context and would replicate the scale, type and spacing of the properties and pattern of linear development within adjacent areas along Thrapston Road.

7.38 Of material consideration for the determination of this application is appeal reference APP/H0520/NW/17/3172571 (following refusal of application reference 16/01255/OUT) which is referenced earlier in this report and proposed the erection of 63 dwellings which included part of the application site. This appeal was dismissed on the 11 December 2017 on the basis of the harmful impact on the local townscape and character.
7.39 With regard to the location of the site within the Ouse Valley, paragraph 14 of the appeal decision states that: "This combination of the distinctive land form, tranquillity, and partial public access, gives this section of the valley an importance significantly exceeding that of 'ordinary' countryside. As such, the area falls within the scope of the advice in paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), relating to valued landscapes. The appeal site forms an integral part of this landscape compartment, and of the valued landscape that it represents."

7.40 Paragraphs 15 and 16 of the appeal decision explain that: "Although not part of the Country Park itself, the appeal site forms part of the block of undeveloped countryside which gives the Park its visual setting and provides a buffer to its outer edge. The eastern half of the appeal site is open to view from Thrapston Road, and forms part of a sequence of views from that direction towards the valley. Although the Brook and lakes are not directly visible from here, the land form makes it evident that the valley floor is just beyond the immediate view. The western part of the appeal site is not directly visible, but its openness and absence of development is readily perceived, in views through the wide gaps between the houses in Thrapston Road, and also from the allotments and from footpath 24. The appeal site therefore contributes positively to the landscape value of this part of the valley.

7.41 Housing development, as now proposed, would be highly visible from all of these viewpoints, and would intrude into this important area of open countryside. To my mind this would apply particularly to the rear part of the site, where development would extend further into the undeveloped valley slope, and the presence of built development on this part of the site would be especially intrusive. At night, this harm would be further exacerbated by lighting. The proposed development would thus erode and urbanise the valley’s most visible and vulnerable edge, and damage the integrity of the landscape block as a whole. As such, the development would conflict with the aims of HCS Policy CS1, HLP Policies H23 and En17, and with the NPPF advice that I have identified.

7.42 Paragraph 17 of the appeal decision notes that: "Although there is some limited development along Thrapston Road’s northern side, this is intermittent and mainly confined to the frontage. Consequently, Thrapston Road acts mainly as a village edge, rather than as part of the settlement itself. Development in depth on the appeal site would breach this clear visual boundary, and would be poorly related to the village as a whole. The proposed development would therefore be at odds with the village form and settlement pattern, and detract from the semi-rural character of the village edge and its setting.”

7.43 Paragraph 20 of the appeal decision states that: "Overall, I conclude that the proposed development would cause serious harm to the character and appearance of the area’s landscape and townscape."
The HDC Landscape Officer notes that the appeal decision for the previous, and much larger, scheme (planning ref 16/01255/OUT) accepted the LPA’s argument that the land extending north from Thrapston Road to the Alconbury Brook corridor and beyond to Hinchingbrooke Country Park was a ‘valued landscape’ in terms of NPPF (2012) para 109. The current proposal occupies a smaller part of that valued landscape than the previous application, but its development will still result in adverse landscape and visual impacts, albeit on a reduced scale.

The HDC Landscape Officer notes that the application site contributes to the relative openness of the northern edge of the settlement, where currently there is a rough balance of alternating development and open space having views through and perception of the open broad Alconbury Brook corridor and Hinchingbrooke Country Park beyond. The Landscape Officer considers that the proposal would result in a significant change to this balance with development now predominant at the northern edge of Brampton, which would have an adverse landscape and visual impact.

However, the HDC Landscape Officer has confirmed that subject to conditions relating to landscaping, including a 2m wide landscaped belt adjacent plot number 16, the proposal is acceptable and would not give rise to any significant unacceptable landscape and visual harm.

With regard to the previous appeal decision, the Inspector states that the proposals would be highly visible and protrude into open countryside, noting that this would apply particularly to the rear part of the site where development would extend further into the undeveloped valley slope and the presence of built development on this part of the site would be especially intrusive (paragraph 16). The current proposals do not extend into the countryside in depth (unlike the previous proposals), and as a reduced size allows for the views through the wide gaps between the existing houses along Thrapston Road. The submitted illustrative masterplan for the site allows for views through the application site to the land to the rear between the proposed houses and whilst this plan is illustrative, this will be secured as part of any reserved matters submission, should outline permission be granted.

**Impact upon Trees:**

The site currently hosts trees and hedging around its southern and western perimeter. The application is supported by a Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (dated November 2018) which confirms that 3 trees and 1 group of trees will require removal to accommodate the proposals. 1 further group of trees will require partial removal to accommodate the vehicular entrance and 4 further trees are recommended for removal for reasons of good arboricultural practice. All trees requiring or recommended for removal were rated as category C of the BS5837 tree grading criteria. Tree protection measures including establishing a Construction Exclusion Zone through Tree Protection Fencing are proposed.

The HDC Landscape Officer notes that the loss of a significant part of the frontage hedge and trees will have an adverse impact on visual
amenity and landscape character, but has confirmed that the tree protection proposals set out are acceptable.

7.50 Whilst the loss of any trees is regrettable, the trees proposed to be removed are not considered to be of particular merit such to resist their loss. On balance, it is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable with regards to the impact upon trees, subject to the imposition of conditions to ensure that tree protection measures are put in place to protect the retained trees during the construction process.

Open Space:

7.51 With regard to open space, a contribution towards public open space is proposed by the applicants, given the village Memorial Playing Fields are situated on the opposite side of Thrapston Road close to the application site. HDC Urban Design and Green Spaces are content with this arrangement, and the Parish Council have identified that the contribution can be used towards a new cricket wicket. Further details of the formula based approach to this contribution are set out later in this report.

7.52 In conclusion, although the site is considered outside of the settlement of Brampton, it is well related to the existing built form with only one side (northern edge) bordering the countryside and land to the south of Hinchingbrooke Country Park. It is considered that the proposal effectively addresses this relationship through a landscape buffer. Therefore on balance it is deemed that the proposal will not have a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with the aims of the NPPF (2019), policies En18, En20 and EN25 of the Local Plan (1995), policies HL5 and HL6 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration (2002) and policies LP12, LP13, LP14 and LP33 of the Proposed Submission 2017 Local Plan to 2036 (as amended).

7.53 In taking account of paragraphs 47 and 213 of the NPPF (2019), it is considered that policies En18, En20 and En25 of the Local Plan 1995, policies HL5 and HL6 of the Local Plan Alteration 2002 and policy CS1 of the Core Strategy 2009 are all broadly consistent with the NPPF (2019) and can therefore be afforded full weight. Policies LP12, LP13, LP14 and LP33 of the emerging Local Plan to 2036 have been subjected to Examination and the Inspector's initial findings are that the plan can be made sound by main modifications. None of these modifications relate to Policies LP12, LP13, LP14 or LP33, therefore when taking account of paragraph 48 and footnote 22 of the NPPF (2019); it is considered that these policies can be attributed significant weight.

Flooding, Drainage, Ground Conditions and Contamination:

Flood Risk and Drainage:

7.54 The overall approach to the consideration of flooding in the planning process is given in paragraphs 148-169 of the NPPF (2019) and these paragraphs set out a sequential, risk-based approach to the location of development. This approach is intended to ensure that areas at little or no risk of flooding are developed in preference to
areas at higher risk. It involves applying a Sequential Test to steer development away from medium and high flood risk areas (FZ2 and FZ3 land respectively), to land with a low probability of flooding (FZ1).

The NPPF 2019 recognises that flood risk and other environmental damage can be managed by minimising changes in the volume and rate of surface run-off from development sites though the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs). Further the accepted principles are that surface water arising from a developed area should, as far as practicable, be managed in a sustainable manner to minimise the surface water flows arising from the site prior to the proposed development, while reducing the flood risk to the site itself and elsewhere, taking climate change into account.

A Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared in support of this application. The report states that based on the Environment Agency Flood zone maps, the application site is located within Flood Zone 1 (less than 1 in 1000 annual probability of river or sea flooding in any year) which is defined as having a low probability of flooding in the Planning Practice Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). As the site lies within Flood Risk Zone 1, a Sequential Test is not required.

In terms of SuDS, an attenuation pond has been proposed in the buffer zone in the northern area of the site. It is proposed that surface water runoff will be stored within the pond during storm events prior to discharge into a pond north west of the site, or via ground infiltration. As a result of recent changes to the Illustrative Masterplan, the proposed impermeable area has decreased as there is now additional landscaping. Revised water drainage calculations have been submitted to support the revisions.

The County Council as LLFA reviewed the revised information and advised that they raised no objection to the proposed development, subject to the imposition of conditions. The LLFA request that conditions be appended requiring an investigation into the capacity and condition of the pond to the north west of the site (as identified within the Flood Risk Assessment) and the submission of detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site and requiring details for the long term maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage system to be provided. These conditions are considered to meet the statutory tests and are therefore acceptable.

Accordingly the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of flood risk and drainage, subject to a condition requiring a surface water drainage scheme for the site and an investigation into the capacity and condition of the pond to the north west of the site.

Ground conditions and contamination:

Paragraph 170 of the NPPF (2019) outlines that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
"e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve
local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking
into account relevant information such as river basin management
plans;" and
"f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict,
contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate".

7.61 Policies H37 of the Local Plan (1995), Policy CS1 of the Core
Strategy (2009) and Policy LP39 of Huntingdonshire Local Plan to
2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for
submission) require land to be remediated where necessary, such to
ensure the best use of land and to protect the amenities of future
residents.

7.62 The HDC Environmental Health Team raise no objection to the
proposals on grounds of contamination.

7.63 Overall, subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposed
development is therefore considered acceptable with regards to
drainage arrangements, flood risk and contamination, and accords
with the NPPF (2019), Planning Practice Guidance and local policies
in this regard. The relevant Development Plan policies relating to
flooding, drainage and contamination impacts of the proposal are
H37, CS8 and CS9 of the Local Plan 1995 and policy CS1 of the
Core Strategy 2009. The proposed development complies with these
policies and does not create a conflict. There is considered to be no
conflict with the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Proposed
Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) emerging
policies LP5, LP16 or LP39.

7.64 In terms of policy weighting, policies H37, CS8 and CS9 of the Local
Plan 1995 and policy CS1 of the Core Strategy 2009 are broadly
consistent with the NPPF (2019) and when taking account of
paragraphs 47 and 213 of the NPPF (2019), can be afforded full
weight. Policies LP5, LP16 and LP39 of the Huntingdonshire Local
Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018
for submission) are considered to be consistent with the NPPF
(2019). Policy LP16 and Policy LP39 of the emerging Local Plan to
2036 have no modifications to them and therefore when taking
account of paragraph 48 and footnote 22 of the NPPF (2019), it is
considered that these policies can be attributed significant weight.
Policy LP5 of the emerging Local Plan to 2036 is to be amended as
agreed with the Environment Agency and County Council and
therefore when taking account of paragraph 48 and footnote 22 of the
NPPF (2019) it is considered that this policy can be afforded
moderate weight.

Residential Amenity:

seek to ensure developments do not have an unacceptable impact
upon residential amenity for both existing and future occupiers. Policy
H31 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 states that new
dwellings will only be permitted where appropriate standards of
privacy and amenity can be maintained and adequate parking
provision provided. Policy H37 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan
1995 confirms that housing development will not be permitted in
locations where there is a known source of environmental pollution
which would be detrimental to residential amenity. Policy LP15 of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) also seeks to protect amenity of neighbouring occupiers and ensure a high standard of amenity for future occupiers of new developments.

7.66 The application has been submitted in outline form, with all matters reserved except access, therefore the submitted Illustrative Masterplan is indicative only. The site is not adjacent to any sources of environmental pollution.

7.67 Given the plans submitted (although illustrative) as set out earlier in the report, it is considered that the overall quantum of development sought could be accommodated without significant harm to residential amenity. The reserved matters application(s) will however fully assess the impacts of matters such as overlooking, overbearing, overshadowing and loss of light.

7.68 It is acknowledged that the closest residents to the application site will experience a change in outlook and view, but it should be noted that change does not necessarily equate to harm. Overall, based on the submitted Illustrative Masterplan, it is considered that the quantum of development sought could be accommodated by the application site without significant harm to residential amenity.

7.69 It is acknowledged that the proposals could lead to an increase in traffic movements and associated noise disturbance. However, in the context of the site and the existing uses in the locality and the location of the proposed access point from Thrapston Road, it is considered that the proposal would not have a significant detrimental impact upon the amenities of adjacent and neighbouring properties as a result of additional vehicle movements and activities within the site as proposed.

7.70 It is therefore considered that the proposed development would not have a significantly detrimental impact upon the amenities of neighbouring properties, and would ensure a high standard of amenity is provided for all users and occupiers of the proposed development.

7.71 The relevant Development Plan policy relating to residential amenity impacts of the proposal are policies H31 and H37 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995. The proposed development complies with these policies and does not create a conflict. There is considered to be no conflict with the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) emerging policy LP15.

7.72 In taking account of paragraphs 48 and 213 of the NPPF (2019), policies H31 and H37 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 are broadly consistent with the NPPF (2019) and can be afforded full weight. Policy LP15 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) follows a similar vein and is also considered to be consistent with the NPPF (2019). Policy LP15 of the emerging Local Plan to 2036 has been subject to Examination and the Inspector has not requested any modifications to this policy, therefore when taking
account of paragraph 48 and footnote 22 of the NPPF (2019), it is considered that this policy can be attributed significant weight.

Ecology and biodiversity:

7.73 With regards to biodiversity, paragraph 170 of the NPPF (2019) outlines that "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

"a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services - including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; ...

"d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;".

7.74 Policy En22 of the Local Plan (1995) requires appropriate account to be taken of nature and wildlife conservation. Policy CS1 of the Adopted Core Strategy (2009) seeks to protect, maintain and enhance the range and vitality of characteristic habitats and species and policy LP32 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity and advises that opportunities should be taken to achieve beneficial measures within the design and layout of development and that existing features of biodiversity value should be maintained and enhanced. LP32 goes on to state that large scale development proposals should provide an audit of losses and gains in biodiversity produced according to a recognised methodology. Policy LP2 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) confirms that the strategy for Huntingdonshire is to provide complementary green infrastructure enhancement and provision to balance recreational and biodiversity needs and to support climate change adaptation. Policy LP3 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) states that proposals will be expected to support green infrastructure and that within Green Infrastructure Priority Areas proposals will be supported where they contributes to the landscape, wildlife, cultural and historical value of the area. Policy LP12 Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) notes that a proposal will be supported where it is demonstrated that it responds positively to its context and has drawn inspiration from the key characteristics of its surroundings, including amongst others, the natural environment.

7.75 The application is supported by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which also details survey results in respect of bats, reptiles and Great Crested Newts.

7.76 The PEA report confirms that there are three statutory and five non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation value within 2 km of the site. The closest of these is Hinchingbrooke Gravel Pits County Wildlife Site (CWS) located approximately 93 m north of the site. This designated site could be affected by dust, debris, light and noise
during construction although the 93 m distance from the site reduces the likelihood of significant impacts occurring. It is noted that these impacts will be further minimised through adoption of best practice construction measures, formalised through the production of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan.

7.77 It is noted that the site has the potential to support invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, breeding birds, foraging and commuting bats, and hedgehogs. A reptile survey found no evidence of reptiles on site. No signs of Badger presence have been found.

7.78 An eDNA analysis of a pond located on the south boundary of the Hinchingbrooke Gravel Pits CWS, approximately 93 m from the site, confirmed presence of Great Crested Newts (GCN) in 2016 and 2018. The pond containing GCN is not directly affected. However, the development of the site will result in the loss of approximately 0.8 ha of terrestrial habitat. The majority of the habitat available to GCN is outside of the site boundary and will therefore be retained, but the loss of the habitat on site does represent an impact that would require a licence and appropriate mitigation. Mitigation would comprise management of the pond to improve its suitability for GCN by removal of shading scrub. Habitat enhancements will be provided on land around the pond, which would involve management of the grassland to maintain a rough grassland sward, combined with additional scrub planting and provision of log pile and rubble mound refugia. Given the above measures, including improving the quality of the pond, the applicant considers that the development would not adversely affect GCN and potentially an increase in population size could be achieved.

7.79 Bat activity surveys comprising transect surveys and static monitoring of the site have been undertaken to determine whether the habitats on site are used by foraging or commuting bats. As part of the mitigation measures proposed, it is noted that lighting should be carefully modelled and designed to ensure that the habitats that provide feeding and commuting habitat around the proposed development are not lit to avoid disturbing bats and their invertebrate prey. The development would not result in fragmentation of bat flightlines given that the land to the north of the site will not be directly affected.

7.80 The PEA states that measures should be undertaken to avoid damaging or destroying active bird nests during tree, hedgerow and scrub clearance works on site and that hedgehogs should be protected during construction.

7.81 The PEA details opportunities for other ecological enhancements, which include the provision of bat and bird boxes on retained trees or new buildings and the removal of scrub and creation of log piles from cleared vegetation in landscaping plans around the pond north of the site.

7.82 The Wildlife Trust has reviewed the submitted documents and note that the Great Crested Newt and reptile report is similar to the 2016 report; this confirmed that Great Crested Newt habitat would be lost and therefore mitigation is required. The Wildlife Trust confirm that the proposed translocation of newts to land adjacent the pond to the
north of the application site and future management of this pond as Great Crested Newt habitat should be suitable mitigation, but as noted within the submitted report, an EPS license will be required and the exact details of mitigation should be agreed as part of the licensing process.

7.83 With regard to bats, a revisit in July 2018 found that the habitats had not changed from 2016 and the levels of bat activity were therefore not likely to have changed. Therefore the Wildlife Trust consider that the mitigation and enhancements proposed for bats (i.e. sensitive lighting scheme, provision of bat boxes and inclusion of nature flowering plants within the landscaping scheme) should be secured by condition.

7.84 The Wildlife Trust note that there is a need to consider the availability of suitable accessible natural greenspace to meet the recreational needs to be the new residents and the likely timescale of the delivery of the extension to Hinchingbrooke Country Park. On this particular matter, it should be noted that there are currently no details of the proposed extension to Hinchingbrooke Country Park available and given the nature of these proposals (for 16 dwellings) it is considered that the proposed development of the site would not give rise to significant additional impacts from visitor pressure.

7.85 The Wildlife Trust has advised that the recommendations for mitigation and enhancement in section 5 of the PEA are suitable and appropriate for the site. It is suggested that these be incorporated into the detailed design and secured by conditions. These conditions are considered to be reasonable and necessary.

7.86 With regard to biodiversity net gain, the Wildlife Trust has confirmed that the proposals, with the recommendations of the submitted PEA, should demonstrate a net gain. In this instance it is acknowledged that there is some conflict between LP32 and the NPPF 2019 where the NPPF now sets out that developments should demonstrate a net gain, however LP32 sets out that development should look to provide a net gain where possible, with only large scale proposals (over 50 dwellings) required to provide an audit of losses and gains; this approach is consistent with NPPF 2012.

7.87 Overall, subject to the imposition of conditions, it is considered that the impacts on biodiversity would be minimised, such that the proposed development would not have a significant adverse impacts on biodiversity; in accordance with paragraph 170 of the NPPF (2019), policies En18 and En22 of the Local Plan (1995), policy CS1 of the Core Strategy 2009 and policy LP 32 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission).

7.88 NPPF 2019 provides that planning decisions should enhance the natural and local environment by providing net gains for biodiversity. The NPPF 2019 removes the previous ‘where possible’ reference to providing net gains within the NPPF 2012. The ecological and biodiversity impacts of the proposed development are considered to be compliant with policies En18 and En22 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and policy CS1 of the Core Strategy 2009. These Development Plan policies are not considered to be fully compliant
with the NPPF 2019 as they do not make specific reference to providing net gains for biodiversity. As such they can be afforded only significant rather than full weight.

7.89 The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) policies LP2, LP12 and LP32 relate to biodiversity considerations as part of development proposals. The proposed development is considered to comply with these policies. The proposed main modification to policy LP2 as set out earlier in this report has been subject to further consultation. The Local Planning Authority has agreed the changes. In light of this, it is considered that moderate rather than significant weight should be afforded to this policy as modified. The Inspector has not required any main modifications to LP12 and LP32 and therefore significant weight is afforded to these.

**Archaeological Impacts:**

7.90 Cambridgeshire County Council has advised that the site has been previously subject to geophysical survey and a preliminary evaluation carried out in conjunction with the prior (refused) application 16/01255/OUT for the wider site (Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record reference ECB5078). The scale of this initial evaluation was much reduced by access issues, with only one of the trenches (Trench 6) being opened within the bounds of this latest application, towards the eastern end of the area proposed for development, due to this area appearing archaeologically ‘quieter’ on the geophysical survey. In spite of this, the evaluation identified significant archaeology, confirming the presence of a Bronze Age ring ditch which was identified during the earlier geophysical survey, as well as settlement evidence relating to the middle Iron Age and Roman periods.

7.91 The Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Officer has therefore advised that they do not object to the proposed development, but consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation and request a condition to secure this accordingly. This is considered reasonable and necessary and should therefore be secured by condition.

7.92 Taking the above into account, subject to the imposition of conditions, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable with regards to archaeological impacts. In this regards, the proposed development is considered to be compliant with the NPPF (2019), policies En12 and En13 of the Local Plan 1995, policy CS1 of the Core Strategy (2009) and policy LP36 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission).

7.93 The impacts of the development on the identified heritage assets are considered to conflict with policy En11 of the Local Plan 1995. However, they would accord with policy En12 of the Local Plan 1995 and CS1 of the Core Strategy 2009. It is considered that En12 and CS1 are compliant with the NPPF 2019 and can therefore be afforded full weight. However it is acknowledged that in respect of the specific wording of En11, there is a degree of inconsistency with the NPPF
2019 in so far as it does not allow for justification of any harm (paragraph 194) or include the balancing of harm with public benefits.

7.94 Policy LP36 of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) is also considered to be broadly consistent with the NPPF, has been subject to Examination and the Inspector has not requested any modifications to this policy, therefore when taking account of paragraph 48 and footnote 22 of the NPPF (2019), it is considered that this policy can be attributed significant weight.

Sustainability, Access, Transport and Parking

7.95 Section 9 of the NPPF 2019 discusses the importance of promoting sustainable transport. Paragraph 108 of the NPPF (2019) advises that in assessing applications for development, it should be ensured that 'appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be - or have been - taken up, given the type of development and its location' and that 'safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users', and that any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree. Paragraph 109 goes on to state that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, and paragraph 110 explains that applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas.

7.96 Policies T18 and T19 of the Local Plan (1995) seek to ensure all new development would be accessed by highways of an acceptable design and construction, and that safe and convenient pedestrian routes would be provided, having due regard to the existing and planned footpath routes in the area.

7.97 Policies LP17 and LP18 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) seek to promote sustainable travel and ensure that development proposals incorporate appropriate space for vehicle movements, facilitate accessibility for service and emergency vehicles and incorporate adequate parking for vehicles and cycles.

7.98 The application proposals include detailed access design to be agreed at this outline stage. The submitted Transport Statement details that scoping discussions were held in 2016 with CCC Highways as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) and Highways England (HE) as part of a larger 63 dwelling development on the site plus land located immediately to the north (planning ref: 16/01255/OUT). This application was refused planning permission (as set out earlier), but not on highway grounds. The 2016 submission agreed the person trip rates to be applied to the development, multi-modal split, trip distribution and assessment years including traffic growth on the local highway network. The Transport Statement accompanying the current planning application is based on the scope and methodology agreed as part of the 63 unit application, which has been reviewed and updated accordingly.
As part of this current application, a new vehicular access to the development from Thrapston Road via a new access point is proposed by way of a simple priority junction. The access point is to be located where the southern boundary meets Thrapston Road and the access will operate as two-way. The proposed access will include a raised pedestrian / cycle crossing, recessed from Thrapston Road as part of the development. Two metre wide footways are proposed alongside the shared surface area for a short distance beyond the raised pedestrian / cycle crossing to provide for a safe transition for pedestrians between traditional carriageway / shared surface.

The submitted Transport Statement concludes that the proposals would not have a severe residual impact on the local highway network in accordance with the requirements of national and local policy. Furthermore the development will provide a safe means of access to the site.

The main issue is whether there would be any severe adverse impacts on highway safety or on the transport network, as a result of traffic flows arising from the proposed development. In determining whether the development would have severe residual cumulative impacts or adverse highway safety impacts, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) as Local Highways Authority has been consulted on the proposals.

The CCC as Local Highway Authority has advised that the submitted access plan has been through a safety audit process and been deemed acceptable in relation to the best design taking into account highway safety for all users of the highway. The Local Highway Authority concludes that given the above, they raise no objections to the proposal, but recommended that conditions be appended to any permission granted requiring visibility splays to be provided each side of the access prior to occupation and that off-site highway improvement works shall be completed prior to occupation. These are considered reasonable and necessary and should therefore be secured by condition.

It is noted that the NPPF 2019 states that applications for development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements. The current proposals do not allow for this priority at the point of access into the site. However, the proposals do allow for a 5m space from the junction to the cycle path to allow a car to wait to exit the junction onto Thrapston Road and a cycle to manoeuvre past the stationary car. The junction arrangement and alignment of the cycle path will also slow cyclists down. Further discussions have taken place with County Highways where it has been confirmed that there are no other examples of cyclist priority routes in the immediate area and the scheme has been subject to a full and detailed road safety audit.

The Parish Council have requested a traffic calming scheme be considered along Brampton Road, similar to the one being carried out in Ermine Street, Great Stukeley. Following discussions with County Highways it has been confirmed to the Parish Council that the proposed access has appropriate visibility for the speed of the road, thus there is no basis on which to request traffic calming as it would not be reasonable and necessary for this development.
At this stage, it is considered that based on the submitted Proposed Access Plan (JNY8798-01 Rev K), submitted for approval, it has been demonstrated that a safe means of access could be provided to serve the development and therefore the proposed development is acceptable with regards to highway safety.

Whilst the previous scheme for 63 dwellings was refused and dismissed at appeal, the fact that neither the LPA or the Inspector objected to the larger scheme on highway grounds is considered to be a material consideration when assessing the current application as there have been no ‘on the ground’ changes since those decisions.

Parking:

Precise details will be submitted and considered at the reserved matters application stage. It is however anticipated that the site can accommodate the quantum of development sought with sufficient parking provision; as indicatively shown on the Illustrative Masterplan submitted for the site.

Sustainability:

With regards to sustainability, Brampton is identified as a ‘Key Service Centre’ in Policy CS3 of the Core Strategy (2009) which notes that such settlements consist of large villages which benefit from a good level of services such as a primary school within the village, a secondary school within the village or easily accessible by public transport, primary health care facilities, such as a GP surgery, a range of shops and services that can meet day-to-day needs, local employment opportunities and a reasonable public transport service to higher order settlements. Policy LP7 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) identifies Brampton as part of the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area. The pre-text to this policy notes that within the settlements around the Market Towns, such as Brampton, residents enjoy greater opportunities for a sustainable lifestyle given the range of accessible services available within the Market Towns.

At the current time there are existing shared footway / cycleways provided on both sides of the B1514 Thrapston Road adjacent to the proposed site. These footways / cycleways provide a link to the High Street and Brampton village centre. The footway / cycleway on the northern side of Thrapston Road is approximately 2.4 metres in width and the footway / cycleway on the southern side is approximately 1.5 metres in width.

There is a controlled pedestrian crossing provided on Thrapston Road between Grove Lane and Orchard Lane, which assists with connecting pedestrians requiring access to Brampton village centre and Brampton Village Primary School. There is also a pedestrian refuge island between the proposed site and the skate park and recreation facilities.

The nearest bus stops to the site are located on the B1514 Thrapston Road 200 metres west and 240 metres east of the proposed site access. These bus stops are marked by a flag and pole and are provided with shelters, seating, bins and good lighting. Bus route 66
operates six days a week (excluding Sunday) providing a direct service to the centres of Brampton and Huntingdon as well as St Neots. Bus route 400 operates four services per day Monday-Friday in either direction between Huntingdon and Grafham, and bus route 401 operates two services per day Monday-Friday in either direction between Huntingdon and Great Gidding. The Busway A operates one service per day in either direction between Brampton and Cambridge. The site therefore benefits from public transport links close by, which would provide opportunities for occupiers of the site to travel by sustainable transport modes, rather than by private car.

7.112 Overall, given the location of the site adjacent the built up area of Brampton and the proximity to a range of services and facilities within Brampton and Huntingdon, it is considered that occupiers of the proposed development would have a good level of access to services and facilities; either on foot, by cycle or by bus. It is therefore considered that the proposed development is sustainable when having regard to the level of service and infrastructure provision within Brampton itself and within Huntingdon when taking account of the opportunities for future occupiers of the proposed development to access everyday services and facilities by sustainable modes of travel (including walking, cycling and public transport).

7.113 Taking all the above into account, it is considered that a safe means of access could be achieved and that the traffic generated by the proposal would not have a severe impact upon the highway network. Therefore, in accordance with paragraph 109 of the NPPF (2019), the development should not be refused on transport grounds.

7.114 The proposed development would therefore accord with policies T18 and T19 of the Local Plan (1995), policy CS1 of the Core Strategy (2009) and policies LP17 and LP18 of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission). Policies T18 and T19 of the Local Plan (1995) and CS1 of the Core Strategy (2009) are broadly consistent with the aims of the NPPF (2019) to promote use of sustainable transport modes and ensure safe access for all users. In taking account of paragraphs 48 and 213 of the NPPF (2019), it is considered that these policies can therefore be afforded full weight in this regard. Policies LP17 and LP18 of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission) are also considered to be broadly consistent with the NPPF, have been subject to Examination and the Inspector has not requested any modifications to these policies, therefore when taking account of paragraph 48 and footnote 22 of the NPPF (2019), it is considered that these emerging policies can be attributed significant weight.

Sustainable Development:

7.115 The three objectives to sustainable development are identified as the social, environmental and economic objectives. Each objective is summarised below.

7.116 Social: The development will provide new residential dwellings and a suitable mix of market and affordable house types and tenures will be achieved. This includes 40% affordable homes (6 units).
The proposal would make provision for any other required contributions towards healthcare, education and community facilities through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The proposal also provides an off-site contribution towards public open space (a cricket wicket), which will be secured through S106.

Environmental: There will be environmental harm caused by the proposals, however the majority of trees and hedgerows are to be retained where possible, along with the addition of further tree planting and landscaping including the rear landscape buffer on the northern boundary of the site.

Economic: In accordance with Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) LPAs must have regard to any local financial considerations when determining planning applications in so far as they are a material consideration. In this respect, the proposal will generate economic benefits via the provision of construction jobs, indirect jobs in the housebuilding supply chain, increased expenditure in the local area associated with the furnishing of new homes, as well as revenue for Huntingdonshire District Council via council tax payments and New Homes Bonus payments. The local economy would also benefit from increased footfall and expenditure at local shops and businesses.

Information taken from the HBF report “The Labour Needs of Extra Housing Output: Can the Housebuilding Industry Cope” identifies that about 1.5 construction jobs per dwelling is associated with the build of houses. On this basis, the proposal will result in the creation of circa 24 local full time equivalent jobs associated with the construction of the development and more in the supply chain.

Other Matters:

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA):

According to the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), ‘Screening’ is the procedure used to determine if a proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment.

It is for the Local Planning Authority to determine whether a development is of a type listed in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The PPG sets out the criteria and thresholds representing ‘exclusion thresholds’ in Schedule 2 of the Regulations, below which an Environmental Impact Assessment does not need to be considered (subject to the proposal not being in a ‘sensitive area’). It also provides indicative criteria and thresholds to help to determine whether significant effects are likely.

Under Schedule 2 the proposal is considered to comprise an Urban Development Project (development type 10b in the PPG Annex). Schedule 2 sets out the assessment criteria for these types of development as follows:

(i) includes more than 1 hectare of urban development which is not dwellinghouse development; or

(ii) The development includes more than 150 dwellings; or
(iii) The overall area of the development exceeds 5 hectares.

7.125 The overall site area is 0.78ha and fewer than 150 dwellings are proposed. The development therefore falls below the thresholds set out in the assessment criteria in Schedule 2. EIA Screening has taken place, but as the proposed development falls beneath the thresholds and is not in a sensitive area, it is not EIA development.

**Infrastructure Requirements and Planning Obligations:**

7.126 The Infrastructure Business Plan 2013/2014 (2013) was developed by the Growth and Infrastructure Group of the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership. It helps to identify the infrastructure needs arising from development proposed to 2036 through the Core Strategy 2009.

7.127 Statutory tests set out in the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (Regulation 122) require that S.106 planning obligations must be necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development and fairly and reasonable related in scale and kind to the development. S.106 obligations are intended to make development acceptable which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.

7.128 Without prejudice to the eventual determination of the planning application, discussions have been held with the Applicants in order to determine the extent of the obligations required to make the development acceptable. These negotiations have been held in line with the advice within the Regulations and the outcome is summarised below. Other relevant matters will be addressed via specific planning conditions.

7.129 The Planning Obligations SPD sets out within Part 2 that in determining infrastructure needs, the Council and partners have had to translate dwelling numbers into population generation. This has been undertaken utilising the anticipated change in average household sizes. For the purposes of calculating the likely infrastructure requirements, the 2016 average household size has been used (2.25 people per household). With the application seeking permission for 16 dwellings this equates to (16 x 2.25) 36 people.

7.130 The Planning Obligations sought and as agreed by the Applicant, are summarised below:

**Affordable Housing:**

7.131 The site is over 0.5 hectares in size and Core Strategy Policy CS4, the Developer Contributions SPD (part A) and Draft Local Plan 2036 and policy LP25 of Huntingdonshire’s Local Plan to 2036: Proposed Submission 2017 (as amended March 2018 for submission), seek to achieve a target of 40% affordable housing on sites of this size.

7.132 With the proposed number of dwellings being 16, this would equate to a maximum total of 6 units. The policies indicate that provision should be made on site and should seek to achieve a target tenure split of 70% social/affordable rented and 30% made up of other tenures. Policy does however acknowledge that, in determining the amount
and mix of affordable housing to be delivered, site specific considerations and other material considerations, including viability, will be taken into account.

7.133 The application proposes affordable housing provision at 40% to be secured through a Section 106 Agreement. Although the 40% affordable housing provision is welcomed, it is highlighted that it is a policy compliant provision and therefore accords with what should be expected on all qualifying sites.

7.134 Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy (2009) is based upon identified need and it is therefore considered that policy CS4 can be given significant weight given the consistency with section 5 of the NPPF 2019. Emerging Policy LP25 also identifies a 40% target of affordable homes, but with a lower threshold for qualifying development (11 homes/over 1000m2 of residential floor space). Both policies are therefore afforded significant weight.

7.135 In this instance no site specific considerations have been submitted provision. Should the pursuant Reserved Matters applications seek approval for fewer dwellings, then the number of affordable dwellings would reduce accordingly; but the target of 40% would remain applicable.

Green Space:

7.136 In accordance with policies R7 and R8 of the Local Plan 1995 and policy CS10 Core Strategy 2009 and the Developer Contributions SPD (Part B), proposals are required to provide the development specific land for public open space or provide contributions towards improving recreation facilities in the vicinity of the proposed development. Saved policy OB2 of the HLPA 2002 advises that financial contributions for the maintenance of green space may be sought to benefit the development.

7.137 As set out earlier in this report, a contribution towards public open space is proposed, given the village Memorial Playing Fields are situated on the opposite side of Thrapston Road close to the application site. HDC Urban Design and Green Spaces are content with this arrangement, and the Parish Council have requested this contribution goes towards an identified project being a new cricket wicket.

7.138 Discussions have been held with the Applicants’ Agent regarding this contribution and it has been agreed that a formula based approach will secure this, as the proposals are in outline form and there may be scope to include some element of public open space at reserved matters stage, if outline consent is granted.

7.139 Given the above, an off-site contribution towards a new cricket wicket is considered reasonable and necessary and should therefore be secured by S106, utilising a formula based approach.

7.140 Policies R7 and R8 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 policy OB2 of the Huntingdon Local Plan Alteration (2002) are considered to be consistent with the social dimension of the NPPF and as such are afforded significant weight. Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy (2009)
along with the Developer Contributions SPD (2011) and emerging policy LP4 are considered to be consistent with paragraphs 54 and 56 of the NPPF 2019 and are also afforded significant weight.

**Residential Wheeled Bins:**

7.141 Each dwelling will require the provision of one black, blue and green wheeled bin. For flats, communal 1100 litre bins could be provided rather than individual bins for each dwelling. As such, a formula based approach is suggested with the scheme to cover these costs, with details to be secured through the S106 Agreement.

**CIL:**

7.142 As this application site is for a small-scale major development (under 200 dwellings) the development will be CIL liable in accordance with the Council’s adopted charging schedule; CIL payments could cover infrastructure relating to footpath and access, health, community facilities, libraries and lifelong learning, and education.

**Response to representations:**

7.143 With regard to the representations which have been submitted in respect of these current proposals, these are covered earlier in this report.

**Conclusion and Planning Balance**

7.144 This proposal would result in development outside of the built-up area of the settlement and would conflict with policies H23, En17 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 and CS3 of the Core Strategy. Paragraph 47 of the NPPF is clear that the Framework can override Development Plan policies which are not consistent with provisions of the NPPF and this is a material consideration in the determination of the application. Given the inconsistencies of the adopted housing supply policies with the NPPF, the 'tilted balance' set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF is engaged and shifts the planning balance in favour of the grant of consent, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

7.145 The presumption in favour of sustainable development requires proposals to achieve economic, social and environmental gains; as such a balancing exercise has to be undertaken to weigh the benefits of the scheme against its disadvantages. Consideration has been given to the points previously in this report but can be summarised as below:

7.146 In terms of the economic dimension of sustainable development, the proposal would contribute towards economic growth, including job creation - during the construction phase and in the longer term through the additional population assisting the local economy through spending on local services/facilities. There will also be Council Tax and New Homes Bonus receipts arising from the development.
Regarding the social dimension, the site appears to have no significant constraints and is deliverable. It would also increase the supply of housing. There is a local and district wide identified need for both private and affordable housing and whilst the Council can demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land, the provision of market housing and a 40% affordable provision on the application site (6 dwellings) would amount to a moderate benefit in terms of providing a greater flexibility to the supply of housing. The proposals would also make provision for contributions towards healthcare, education and community facilities through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

In terms of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, the proposal retains the majority of trees on the site where possible and offers a rear landscape buffer to the north and the majority of trees are retained where possible.

The application site constitutes a sustainable location for the scale of development proposed in respect of access to local employment opportunities, services and facilities within Brampton and the wider Spatial Planning Area of Huntingdon; accessible by sustainable transport mode. This is a further factor in support of the proposal.

In terms of harm identified, this is limited to the impact of the proposal upon the landscape and character and appearance of the area, and specifically the landscape value of this part of the Ouse Valley. To mitigate against this harm, the northern edge includes a landscape buffer that helps the site transition softly into this countryside edge and landscape, and the quantum of development sought can maintain views through the site.

Having fully assessed all three objectives of sustainable development; economic, social and environmental within this report it is concluded that the development of this site will:
* Provide a supply of affordable and market housing within a sustainable location to help meet needs from current and future generations;
* Promote healthy, active lifestyle through an off–site contribution towards a new cricket wicket;
* Be acceptable in terms of highways safety and maximise opportunities for use of public transport, walking and cycling;
* Minimise pollution;
* Manage flood risk, drainage and contamination effectively;
* Have no significant negative impacts upon residential amenity;
* Have no significant adverse impacts on features of ecological value;
* Satisfactorily safeguard impacts upon archaeological assets;
* Provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs generated by the development.

It is accepted that the proposed development would result in some harm as the proposal would not accord with development plan policies that seek to restrict development in the countryside and there would be an adverse landscape and visual impact. It is also noted that there is local opposition to the proposal.

Overall, the harm identified is not considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the scheme's benefits when assessed against
the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. This is a significant material consideration which outweighs the conflict with the Development Plan and therefore it is recommended that permission should be granted.

8. **RECOMMENDATION - APPROVAL** subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 obligation relating to affordable housing, provision of an off-site open space and maintenance contribution, wheeled bins, and subject to conditions to include those listed below.

OR

8. **RECOMMENDATION - REFUSAL** in the event that the obligation referred to above has not been completed and the applicant is unwilling to agree to an extended period for determination, or on the grounds that the applicant is unwilling to complete the obligation necessary to make the development acceptable.

**Conditions**

- Timing of permission and submission of Reserved Matters.
- Approved plans in so far as they relate to access.
- Scale parameters - maximum of 16 dwellings and 2 storeys.
- Site access arrangements (see drawing JNY8798-01 Rev K).
- Site levels and finished floor levels.
- Surface water drainage scheme.
- Details of maintenance arrangements for the surface water drainage scheme.
- Investigation into capacity and condition of the pond to the north west of the site.
- Foul Water drainage scheme.
- Hours of work.
- Construction and Environmental Management Plan.
- Archaeological investigation.
- Development carried out in accordance with ecological mitigation and enhancement measures.
- European Protected Species Licence.
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment adhered to.
- Tree Protection measures alongside any application for reserved matters.
- Landscaping including boundary treatments and 2m wide belt of trees and hedging outside the eastern boundary of plot 16.
- Waste Management.
- Visibility splays to be provided.
- Off-site highway improvement works.

**Informatives**

- Works to the Public Highway

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.
CONTACT OFFICER:
Enquiries about this report to Laura Fisher Senior Development Management Officer 01480 388365
Proposal: Proposed residential development involving the erection of 16 dwellings at land east of No. 66 Thrapston Road, Brampton, proposed access arrangements and associated works

Location: Land East of 66 Thrapston Road, Brampton

Please ✓ box as appropriate

✓ Recommend approval because …..(please give relevant planning reasons in space below)

Brampton Parish Council has concerns over additional vehicular movements into and out of the proposed development. The junction shown on Drawing No. 2100 will not be adequate in dealing with the new traffic flow. Although the transport statement indicates a reduction in overall traffic flow along Thrapston Road, Brampton Parish Council is not convinced this will be the case. A traffic calming scheme, similar to the one currently being carried out in Ermine Street, Great Stukeley, will go some way towards slowing the traffic using this route and reduce “rat running” with vehicles taking short cuts to Huntingdon and the station. In view of this Brampton Parish Council recommends HDC is asked if any traffic calming scheme is planned.

Partly dependent on an answer from HDC re a traffic calming scheme,
1. Brampton Parish Council recommends approval for the proposed 16 no dwellings subject to modification of the new junction with a revised layout submitted to Brampton Parish Council.
2. Recommend approval subject to the existing hedge at the southern/road boundary being retained.

☐ Recommend refusal because….(please give relevant planning reasons in space below)

☐ No observations either in favour or against the proposal

D Steel, Assistant Clerk to Brampton Town/Parish Council. (For GDPR purposes please do not sign)

Date : 19 Dec 18

Failure to return this form within the time indicated will be taken as an indication that the Town or Parish Council do not express any opinion either for or against the application.

Please send response to email address

Development.control@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

(Development Management)
Dear Laura

Further to your email regarding the above application, Brampton Parish Council notes the comments from County Highways relating to this application.

Many thanks
Debbie

--
Debbie Steel
Assistant Clerk
Brampton Parish Council
Brampton Memorial Centre
Thrapston Road
Brampton
Huntingdon
Cambs  PE28 4TB
Tel: 01480 454441
Fax: 01480 454441
Application Number: 18/02569/OUT
Case Officer: Laura Fisher

Proposal: Proposed residential development involving the erection of 16 dwellings at land east of No. 66 Thrapston Road, Brampton, proposed access arrangements and associated work

Location: Land East of 66 Thrapston Road, Brampton

Please ✓ box as appropriate

Recommend **approval** because ….(please give relevant planning reasons in space below)

✓ Recommend **refusal** because…(please give relevant planning reasons in space below)

Brampton Parish Council recommends refusal as there are concerns regarding the access onto Thrapston Road.

There is too much development going on in Brampton at this point in time.

No observations either in favour or against the proposal

D Steel, Assistant Clerk to Brampton Town/Parish Council. (For GDPR purposes please do not sign)

Date : 26 Feb 19

Failure to return this form within the time indicated will be taken as an indication that the Town or Parish Council do not express any opinion either for or against the application.

Please send response to email address below:-

Development.control@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

(Development Management)
Proposed residential development off Thrapston Road, Brampton, Cambridgeshire.

 Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire Ltd
 Patricia Findlay, Peter Marden-Findlay
 Nicola Findlay, Georgina Blantern

 BLOCK PLAN 1:500
 LOCATION PLAN 1:1250
GREEN PAPERS FOLLOW
Appeal Decision
Inquiry Held on 10-13 and 18 October 2017
Site visits made on 9 and 13 October 2017

by John Felgate BA(Hons) MA MRTPI
an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 11 December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/17/3172571
Land adjacent to Nos 66-100, Thrapston Road, Brampton

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Abbey Properties Cambridgeshire Ltd, Patricia Findlay, Peter Marden-Findlay, Nicola Findlay and Georgina Blantern, against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
- The application Ref 16/01255/OUT, dated 13 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2017.
- The development proposed is residential development, involving the erection of 63 dwellings, access arrangements and associated works.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On the application form, the site address is missing. For the avoidance of doubt, the site comprises land adjacent to No 66 Thrapston Road, and to the rear of Nos 66-100.

3. The appeal seeks outline permission with all details reserved except for access. The proposed access arrangement is shown on revised Drawing JNY8798-01, which was before the Council when it made its decision on the application. In so far as the submitted plans also include other details, it is agreed that these are illustrative.

4. The Council’s decision to refuse permission cited four refusal reasons. Reason No 2, relating to archaeology, and No 3 relating to odour, were withdrawn prior to the inquiry, in response to further evidence. In the case of archaeology, the withdrawal was contingent on the imposition of a relevant planning condition.

5. Refusal reason No 4 was based on the lack of provision for affordable housing, on-site greenspace, wheeled refuse bins, and the translocation of Great Crested Newts. Subsequently, a Section 106 legal agreement has been entered into by the appellants, with the District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), which deals with these matters. At the inquiry, it was confirmed that this agreement overcomes refusal reason No 4 to both Councils’ satisfaction. In the light of the evidence, I am also satisfied that the terms of the agreement accord with the relevant legal and policy tests for planning obligations1.

1 Regs 122 and 123 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010; and NPPF paragraph 204

https://www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate
Relevant Planning Policies

Development Plan policies

6. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan (the HLP), adopted in December 1995, defines village boundaries, also known as environmental limits. The appeal site lies outside the boundary thus defined around Brampton. In such areas, HLP Policy H23 states that there will be a general presumption against housing development, except where required for agriculture or similar purposes. HLP Policy En17 contains a similar restriction on all development outside environmental limits. The reasons for these policies include protecting the landscape and rural amenity, and avoiding visual intrusion in the countryside.²

7. In the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy (the HCS), adopted in September 2009, Policy CS1 sets out criteria by which proposals will be judged for the purposes of assessing whether they contribute to the pursuit of sustainable development. These include preserving and enhancing the diversity and distinctiveness of the District’s towns, villages and landscapes.

8. Policy CS3 of the same plan sets out a settlement hierarchy. Brampton is listed as a key service centre, where schemes of up to moderate scale may be appropriate, within the built-up area. Moderate is defined indicatively as 10-59 dwellings, although larger schemes may be allowed where this would secure the most sustainable option for the site. Paragraph 5.15 states that built-up areas will be defined in a future DPD, but in the meantime they are assumed to be the settlement’s existing built form. It is not disputed that the appeal site lies outside that area.

9. In the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan (the HWAAP), adopted in February 2011, Policy HW6 identifies land immediately to the north of the appeal site as a potential extension to the Hinchingbrooke Country Park.

Emerging policies

10. The emerging ‘Draft Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036’ (the DHLP), has passed through several stages, the most recent being the ‘Consultation Draft 2017’, published in June 2017, which is referred to unofficially as the ‘Stage 5’ version. However, the DHLP is not yet at the stage of submission for examination, and in the present appeal both the appellants and the Council agree that it should be given limited weight. Having regard to the stage that it has reached, and the scope for further changes and objections, I agree.

Main Issues

11. In the light of all the submissions made at the inquiry, and in writing, I consider that the main issues in the appeal are:

   ▪ the proposed development’s effects on the character and appearance of the local landscape and townscape;

   ▪ whether it has been demonstrated that the District has an adequate supply of land for housing development;

   ▪ and in the light of all the relevant considerations, whether the appeal proposal represents sustainable development.

² HLP paragraphs 2.81 and 7.31

https://www.gov.uk/planning-inspectorate
Reasons for Decision

Landscape and townscape impact

12. The appeal site lies on the upper slopes of the valley of the Alconbury Brook, close to its confluence with the River Ouse. The Ouse valley is the dominant landscape feature of the area, and to my mind this includes its main tributaries such as the Alconbury Brook. The gently shelving side slopes, together with the many flooded gravel pits in the valley floor, give this part of the valley a distinctive land form and landscape character.

13. The section of the valley in which the appeal site is located is bounded by the B1514 Thrapston Road to the south, and by the main A14 to the north, east and west, forming a discrete landscape compartment. As well as the appeal site, this stretch of the valley also contains the Hinchingbrooke Country Park, which is a popular area for walking, fishing, camping, bird-watching and other similar pursuits. The Country Park and adjoining land is also designated as a County Wildlife Site. This juxtaposition between the distant traffic outside, and the relative quiet of the Park itself, with its woodlands, fields and lakes, enhances the sense of tranquillity and escape which is experienced in this enclosed block of countryside. These observations are also broadly in line with the character assessment in the Council’s SPD3.

14. To my mind, this combination of the distinctive land form, tranquillity, and partial public access, gives this section of the valley an importance significantly exceeding that of ‘ordinary’ countryside. As such, the area falls within the scope of the advice in paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), relating to valued landscapes. The appeal site forms an integral part of this landscape compartment, and of the valued landscape that it represents.

15. Although not part of the Country Park itself, the appeal site forms part of the block of undeveloped countryside which gives the Park its visual setting and provides a buffer to its outer edge. The eastern half of the appeal site is open to view from Thrapston Road, and forms part of a sequence of views from that direction towards the valley. Although the Brook and lakes are not directly visible from here, the land form makes it evident that the valley floor is just beyond the immediate view. The western part of the appeal site is not directly visible, but its openness and absence of development is readily perceived, in views through the wide gaps between the houses in Thrapston Road, and also from the allotments and from footpath 24. The appeal site therefore contributes positively to the landscape value of this part of the valley.

16. Housing development, as now proposed, would be highly visible from all of these viewpoints, and would intrude into this important area of open countryside. To my mind this would apply particularly to the rear part of the site, where development would extend further into the undeveloped valley slope, and the presence of built development on this part of the site would be especially intrusive. At night, this harm would be further exacerbated by lighting. The proposed development would thus erode and urbanise the valley’s most visible and vulnerable edge, and damage the integrity of the landscape block as a whole. As such, the development would conflict with the aims of HCS Policy CS1, HLP Policies H23 and En17, and with the NPPF advice that I have identified.

3 Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, June 2007
17. In addition, at present the village of Brampton lies almost wholly to the south of Thrapston Road. Most of the main village facilities are concentrated around its historic centre in Church Road and the High Street, with only limited connections between these streets and Thrapston Road. Moreover, the major development now taking place at the former RAF Brampton site will have the effect of pulling the village’s centre of gravity further to the south, rather than towards the appeal site. Although there is some limited development along Thrapston Road's northern side, this is intermittent and mainly confined to the frontage. Consequently, Thrapston Road acts mainly as a village edge, rather than as part of the settlement itself. Development in depth on the appeal site would breach this clear visual boundary, and would be poorly related to the village as a whole. The proposed development would therefore be at odds with the village form and settlement pattern, and detract from the semi-rural character of the village edge and its setting. This reinforces my view regarding the scheme’s conflict with relevant policies, and particularly Policy CS1.

18. I agree that if the appeal site is looked at purely in isolation, it has few, if any, special qualities of its own. But in this case, for the reasons that I have explained, I consider that approach to be flawed, in that it fails to acknowledge the importance of the site’s role as part of a wider, and highly valued, landscape context. The fact that the area has no special landscape designation does not preclude it from being valued. I have taken account of the existing trees and hedges on the appeal site’s boundaries, and the presence of the buildings at Poplars Farm, but these do not change my view that the site forms an integral part of the valley landscape. I also note the comments made regarding the nature of the existing rear garden boundaries along Thrapston Road, but to my mind any benefits that could be gained by either strengthening or softening this boundary, are outweighed by the harmful impact of the incursion into the countryside. I accept that the claimed visual link between the appeal site and the Memorial Recreation Ground is weak at best, but this does not change my view as to the proposed development’s adverse impact on the village setting.

19. I appreciate that there is no certainty as to whether the proposed extension to the Country Park will go ahead as envisaged in the HWAAP. However, I have made no assumptions on that matter. My findings on the value of the landscape, and the appeal site’s contribution, are based on the extent of the Country Park as it is now. The possibility of the Park being extended up to the appeal site’s boundary adds some further weight to the harm that I have identified. But, for the reasons that I have already explained, that harm would weigh heavily in any event.

20. Overall, I conclude that the proposed development would cause serious harm to the character and appearance of the area’s landscape and townscape. In this respect it would conflict with Policies CS1, H23 and En17 of the adopted development plan, and with relevant advice in paragraph 109 of the NPPF. The weight to be attributed to the harm by reason of that conflict I shall return to later in this decision.

The supply of land for housing

21. There is agreement between the Council and the appellants on several elements of the five-year land supply. Both parties agree that the relevant 5-year period for the assessment is April 2017 to March 2022. The period over

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which the accumulated backlog is to be counted is agreed to start from 2011, and the number of completions since then is 3,675 dwellings. There is no dispute over the use of the ‘Sedgefield method’, or that the size of the buffer should be 20%, or that the buffer is to be applied to the backlog as well as to the basic requirement. Importantly, it is common ground that the housing figures in the HCS are out of date, and that the supply should therefore be measured against objectively assessed need (OAN), following the guidance set out in Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). The main areas of dispute relate to how the OAN should be assessed, and the deliverability of the identified supply.

22. The Council’s position is based on the OAN report by CCC’s Cambridgeshire Research Group, dated April 2017. This is essentially an update of key elements of the earlier SHMA4 report by the same authors in May 2013, taking account of more recent evidence. The 2017 report takes as its starting point the 2014-based DCLG Household Projections, published in July 2016, which are the most up-to-date official projections currently available. For Huntingdonshire, during the period 2011-36, these projections show a projected growth of 18,590 new households, which translates to a need for 19,140 dwellings. After sensitivity-testing and consideration of other available evidence, the report finds no need for any adjustment to the housing requirement based solely on demographic grounds. However, it does find grounds for adjustments based on employment trends and market signals. In relation to employment, taking account of the economic forecasts generated by the East of England Forecasting Model (EEFM), the adjustment would be an upward one in the order of 4%, increasing the housing requirement to 19,910 dwellings. In the case of market signals, after taking account of comparative data on house prices, house sales, rents, completions, affordability ratios, overcrowding, concealed households, and other indicators, the report concludes that an adjustment of 5% is justified, producing an alternative requirement of 20,100 dwellings. The report recommends that the higher of these two adjustments be preferred. The Council therefore contends that the basis for assessing the 5-year land supply should be 20,100 dwellings for 2011-36, equating to 804 units per annum. After taking account of completions to date and the necessary buffer, this produces a 5-year requirement of 6,203 dwellings.

23. The appellants argue for a further adjustment, of about 25 extra dwellings per annum, to counter the possible effects of the post-2008 recession and reduced housing delivery in previous decades. There is little doubt that the rate of household formation among the 25-34 age group has declined, and I agree that the cost and availability of housing is likely to have played a significant part in this. However, as Dr Gomez’s evidence acknowledges, there are also other factors, such as rising levels of student debt, and changing employment patterns, which are equally likely to have had some influence5. The correlation is therefore not necessarily as simple as it might seem. Although in Huntingdonshire the fall in the headship rate has been slightly greater than some other areas, the District falls well within the range for the Housing Market Area (HMA)6, and also close to the national average. In any event, in so far as the decline in household formation results at least partly from reduced

4 Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Cambridgeshire Research Group, May 2013
5 Dr Gomez’s Appendix D, paras D29-30
6 The Cambridgeshire and West Suffolk HMA, which also includes Cambridge, Fenland, Forest Heath, St Edmundsbury and South Cambs Districts
affordability, it seems to me that this is already reflected in the OAN report’s adjustment for market signals. The further adjustment that the appellants seek would therefore appear to involve a risk of double counting. On the evidence before me, the case for this additional adjustment is not persuasive.

24. Secondly the appellants contend that the OAN report understates the adjustment that should be made for economic factors. I note that EEFM’s forecast for the local rate of job growth, at 0.6%, is less than that achieved prior to the recession. But there is no real evidence for a return to pre-recession growth levels. The Experian study commissioned by the appellants suggests 0.8%, but there is no clear reason for preferring that figure to any other. Although the EEFM forecasts are at the lower end of the range considered by Mr Gomez, most of the other studies that he refers to date from 2013. The EEFM work is not only more up-to-date than this, it is also derived from, and consistent with, the national-level forecasts produced by ONS. I agree it is important that the local economy should not be constrained by a shortage of housing, but there is no evidence that this is likely. The appellants’ evidence highlights the fact that Huntingdonshire has a net commuting outflow\(^7\), and also that nationally there is a trend towards older people extending their working careers beyond what would once have been seen as retirement age\(^8\). To my mind, these factors suggest that, if employment growth were to exceed expectations, due to the Alconbury Enterprise Zone or for any other reason, the prospects for filling any surplus job opportunities would not necessarily be dependent solely on additional house-building. Consequently, I do not find a compelling case to increase the adjustment in respect of employment trends or other economic factors.

25. Thirdly the appellants make a case for increasing the market signals adjustment. The affordability ratio in Huntingdonshire has worsened since 2011 by more than the national average, and this trend may be accelerating. There is no empirical evidence that an adjustment of only 5% will significantly improve that situation. But equally there is no substantive evidence to the contrary, nor to support any other alternative figure. Despite its upward trend, Huntingdonshire’s affordability ratio remains one of the better ones in the HMA\(^9\). In that context, an adjustment of 5% would not be inconsistent with the levels adopted or proposed in some other local plans\(^10\). The proposed new national standard methodology is still only at the consultation stage, and thus carries limited weight. Consequently, in my view, the Council’s cautious approach has some merit. Over the period of the emerging DHLP, a 5% adjustment would amount to around an additional 960 dwellings, and no reason has been advanced as to why an increase on that scale should not have some beneficial impact on prices, rents and affordability. Overall, I find insufficient evidence to justify increasing the market signals adjustment from the level proposed by the Council.

26. I appreciate that in the DHLP the Council envisages a slightly higher housing requirement of 21,000 over the plan period, equating to 840 dwellings per annum. But that figure is clearly intended as a ‘policy-on’ target, rather than an OAN. As the DHLP has yet to be tested at examination, this draft policy figure carries little weight. The PPG advises that where the adopted plan is out

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\(^7\) Dr Gomez’s proof, paras 7.56 – 7.60
\(^8\) Dr Gomez’s proof, para 7.41
\(^9\) Mrs Roebuck’s Figure 3
\(^10\) Mrs Roebuck’s Table 2

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of date, and the emerging plan is not yet capable of carrying sufficient weight, the correct course is to refer to the latest assessment of housing needs. In the present case that is the April 2017 OAN report. The PPG goes on to say that where the housing needs assessment has not yet been tested or moderated, this should be reflected in the weight given to it. However, this does not change the fact that it is the needs assessment, rather than any untested policy figure that should be used. In the light of all the evidence, I am satisfied that the Council’s requirement figure of 6,203 dwellings is an appropriate one to use in this appeal for the purposes of assessing the 5-year supply.

27. On the supply side, the Council claims a deliverable supply of 6,582 dwellings, within the relevant 5-year period. The appellants contest the start dates and/or build rates on 13 sites. One of these is Wintringham Park, a large scheme for 2,800 units, of which the Council hopes to see 650 completed within the 5-year period. The site does not have planning permission, and indeed at the close of the present inquiry, an outline planning application was still awaited. Consequently, on the information available, the Council’s delivery programme for the site, with completions starting in 2018/19, looks unlikely to be achievable. To my mind the appellants’ suggestion that the timing be pushed back by 12 months seems more realistic. This reduces the overall deliverable supply by 250 dwellings, to around 6,332 units.

28. However most of the other disputed sites are further advanced in the planning process. Four of these sites, at Alconbury Weald, Brampton Park, RAF Upwood, and Windmill Row, all have planning permission for at least as many units as the numbers relied on for the 5-year supply. Although some reserved matters and other conditions remain to be discharged, there seems no reason to doubt that these can be dealt with in the time available. In the case of Alconbury, the Council’s delivery programme is challenging, but the development is already well under way, and a number of different house builders are involved. Upwood apparently has some specific issues relating to the timing of handover from the RAF, and the need for demolition, but the Council does not rely on any completions here until 2020/21, and there is no evidence that these cannot be achieved. In the case of Brampton Park and Windmill Row, the numbers in dispute are fairly small, and in the context of a 5-year programme there appears more than adequate time for the issues identified by the appellants to be resolved and the required completions achieved. All of these sites are therefore deliverable.

29. Similarly, the disputed sites at Mill Cottage, Newlands and west of Station Road all appear to be approaching the successful completion of legal agreements, and Loves Farm East seems to be close to a resolution to grant outline permission. The site at George Street also has a current application running, and is an allocated housing site in the adopted development plan. As such, although none of these sites yet has planning permission, all are reasonably well advanced towards that position. If all goes as expected, the dwelling completions that the Council wishes to see on these sites look eminently achievable. This is not to say that they are certain to be achieved, but neither the NPPF nor the PPG requires such a degree of certainty. From the evidence given at the inquiry, it seems to me that all of these sites have a realistic prospect of delivery within the required period.

11 ID 3-030-20140306
30. With regard to the sites at Cromwell Road, Ramsey Road, and the former car showroom at London Road, none of these has planning permission, nor are allocated except in the emerging DHLP, nor is any the subject of a current application. But in none of these cases do the appellants challenge the principle of their inclusion in the 5-year supply, and I therefore have no reason to doubt that they will come forward for development within that period. In all these three cases the only dispute is how many of the proposed dwellings are deliverable within the 5-year period. Two are said to have potential technical issues and another having a split ownership. However, all are relatively small sites and there is no evidence that these issues are so serious as to prevent them from being counted as fully deliverable within 5 years.

31. I accept that the Council’s previous forecasts of site delivery have often proved to be over-optimistic. I appreciate that on some sites a great deal of time can be taken up in protracted negotiations, not only over planning permission, Section 106 agreements and discharging conditions, but also in marketing, land disposals, subdivision and site preparation works. I also agree that officers often need to be wary of the estimates provided by parties with an interest in the land. But identifying and testing a 5-year supply can rarely be an exercise in precision. Rather, the aim is to establish what is reasonably possible and therefore realistic. With the one exception that I have identified, I am satisfied that the Council’s delivery programme meets this aim.

32. The deliverable land supply is therefore not as high as the 6,582 units claimed by the Council. But nonetheless, a realistic supply of around 6,332 units has been identified. This is more than the 6,203 that are needed for the relevant five-year period, so the Council has demonstrated an adequate land supply.

Sustainable development

33. Due to its location outside the Brampton village limits, and the harm that it would cause to the landscape of the Ouse valley, the proposed development would conflict with Policies H23 and En17 of the adopted HLP. This harm to the landscape, and also to the townscape character of the village itself, also involves a further conflict with Policy CS1 of the adopted HCS. Although HCS Policy CS3 is broadly supportive of development at Brampton, the appeal proposal fails to accord with that policy, due to its location and size. Taking the development plan as a whole therefore, the appeal scheme would be contrary to all of the main relevant policies.

34. Although I have found that Huntingdonshire currently has a 5-year supply of housing land, I agree that this is to some extent despite the adopted HLP and HCS, rather than because of them. Both of these plans pre-date the NPPF, and their policies were therefore never intended to address the District’s full OAN. The current 5-year supply depends on sites outside settlement boundaries, or exceeding the size thresholds in the settlement hierarchy. I therefore agree that Policies H23, En17 and CS3 are no longer fully up-to-date or consistent with the NPPF in terms of its aims for housing, and as such these policies carry reduced weight. However, this does not mean they have none at all. H23 and En17 in particular still serve an important purpose, in recognising and protecting the countryside, and this remains a relevant planning consideration. Consequently it seems to me that, in this appeal, HLP Policies H23 and En17 should continue to carry significant weight in this regard. In this context, HCS Policy CS3 adds little to these, and accordingly I give it little weight here, but
this is of no consequence in view of my conclusion above regarding Policies H23 and En17.

35. HCS Policy CS1 is neither a housing policy nor does it depend on settlement boundaries. The weight that I shall give it is therefore not affected by any of the above considerations. The concept of sustainable development which underlies HCS Policy CS1 is not the same as that set out in the NPPF, but this does not invalidate the aims behind CS1’s individual criteria, including that of protecting the diversity and distinctiveness of the landscape and villages, which is relevant to the present appeal. Indeed this particular policy aim is fully consistent with the NPPF’s core principles and other relevant policies. I therefore see no reason to make any reduction in weight to Policy CS1 in this appeal. Consequently, I give substantial weight to the conflict with it that I have identified.

36. Given that some relevant policies are out of date, and the development plan is silent on how current and future housing needs are to be met, I agree that the fourth bullet-point of NPPF paragraph 14’s ‘tilted balance’ is engaged. Despite the existence of a 5-year supply, the provision of 63 additional dwellings counts as a potential social benefit, not least because 25 of the units would be affordable housing, for which there is a significant unmet need. The development would also have benefits for the local and national economy, including the creation of construction jobs, stimulating consumer spending, boosting the local labour supply, supporting local services, and CIL and Council Tax payments. Although none of these social and economic benefits would be unique to the present proposal, they would be additional to other planned developments, and therefore carry some weight. However, any measures relating to wildlife and ecology would be primarily mitigation rather than net benefits. Weighing against these would be the serious and permanent damage that the development would cause to a valued landscape, and to the character and setting of the village.

37. Overall, I consider that this visual harm significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits that have been identified. Accordingly, the appeal proposal would not constitute sustainable development.

Conclusion

38. To sum up, the appeal proposal conflicts with the development plan, because of its unacceptably harmful impact on the local landscape and townscape. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the 1990 Act, the appeal must be determined in accordance with the relevant development plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

39. I have considered all the matters raised, including the scheme’s social and economic benefits. But even after giving reduced weight to some of the relevant policies, and carrying out the NPPF paragraph 14 tilted balance, the appeal scheme does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The conflict with the development plan therefore stands. It follows that the appeal must be dismissed.

John Felgate
INSPECTOR

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APPEARANCES

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

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Ms Charlotte Fox BSc, MA, LicRTPI Team Leader, Development Management
Mrs Rebecca Roebuck, MEng Research Manager, Cambs Research Group
Ms Michelle Bolger CMLI, DipLA, BA, PGCE Expert Landscape Consultancy

FOR THE APPELLANT:

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He called:
Mr Mark Buxton BSc, MRTPI RPS Group
Mr Paul Ellis BA(Hons), DipLA RPS Group
Mr Ricardo Gomez BA, MA, PhD Regeneris Consulting

OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS WHO SPOKE AT THE INQUIRY:

Cllr Jon Chitty Brampton Parish Council
Mr Tim Fryer Adjoining resident
DOCUMENTS TABLED AT THE INQUIRY:

TABLED BY THE COUNCIL

CO/1 List of appearances
CO/2 Opening submissions
CO/3 Cawrey Ltd v SoS and Hinckley & Bosworth BC, [2016]EWHC1198(Admin)
CO/5 Gladman Developments v Daventry DC and SoS, [2016]EWCA Civ1146
CO/6 Shropshire v SoS, BDW Trading Ltd and others, [2016]EWHC2733(Admin)
CO/7 PPG extract re landscape assessment
CO/8 Email from Charlotte Fox re landscape evidence, dated 15 September 2017
CO/9 Email from Claire Bond re Hinchingbrooke Country Park, dated 10 Oct 2017
CO/10 Plan showing route of the new A14
CO/11 Email from M Evans, Highways England, dated 10 Oct 2017
CO/12 Email from D Abbott, Highways England, dated 12 Oct 2017
CO/13 Email from Gavin Sylvester, re Alconbury Weald, dated 12 Oct 2017
CO/14 Reg 122 Compliance Statement
CO/15 Stroud DC v SoS and Gladman, [2015]EWHC488(Admin)
CO/16 SoS decision and Inspector’s report re: Kidnappers Lane, Leckhampton, APP/B1605/W/14/3001717
CO/17 Bovis & Miller Homes v SoS and others – Court Order dated 28 July 2016
CO/18 Bovis & Miller Homes v SoS and others – judgement dated 2 Sept 2016
[2016]EWHC2952(Admin)
CO/19 Closing submissions

TABLED BY THE APPELLANTS

AP/1 Opening submissions and list of appearances
AP/2 Extract from ‘Environmental Capacity Study: Additional Site Assessments’, Nov 2013
AP/3 Extract from ‘Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment’, June 2017
AP/4 Table: dwelling completions compared to predictions (extended version of Mrs Bond’s Table 1)
AP/5 Wintringham Park leaflet
AP/6 Copy of Council’s submissions to Lucks Lane inquiry
AP/7 Copy letter from adjoining owners re Country Park extension, 16 March 2011
AP/8 Table: illustrative 5-year supply based on 840 pa requirement
AP/9 Table: comparison of AMR site forecasts, 2015, 2016 and 2017
AP/10 Extract from Highways England’s A14 Traffic Impact Report, August 2015
AP/11 Email from A Brand re additional text for S.106 agreement
AP/12 Copy letter from adjoining owners re Country Park extension, 16 March 2011

OTHER DOCUMENTS RECEIVED DURING THE INQUIRY

OD/1 Draft S.106 agreement, tabled on Day 2 of the inquiry
OD/2 Executed S.106 agreement, completed on Day 5 of the inquiry
OD/3 Councillor Chitty’s speaking notes
OD/4 Letter from Mr Fryer, dated 11 October 2017