

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Planning Committee

10 May 2017

AUTHOR/S: Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

Application Number:	S/3391/16/OL
Parish(es):	Swavesey
Proposal:	Outline planning permission for demolition of farm outbuildings and erection of up to 90 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system and vehicular access point from Boxworth End. All matters reserved except for access.
Site address:	Land off Boxworth End Swavesey
Applicant(s):	Gladman Developments and Burgess
Recommendation:	Delegated approval (to complete section 106 agreement)
Key material considerations:	Five year supply of housing land Principle of development Sustainability of the location Density of development and affordable housing Character of the village edge and surrounding landscape Ecology Highway safety Residential amenity of neighbouring properties Surface water and foul water drainage Provision of formal and informal open space Section 106 Contributions
Committee Site Visit:	09 May 2017
Departure Application:	Yes
Presenting Officer:	David Thompson, Principal Planning Officer
Application brought to Committee because:	The officer recommendation of approval conflicts with the recommendation of Swavesey Parish Council and approval would represent a departure from the Local Plan
Date by which decision due:	10 May 2017 (extension of time agreed)

Executive Summary

1. The application site is located outside of the Swavesey village framework, the boundary of which skirts the northern, western and southern boundaries of the site.

Residential development is located to the north (Ramper Road), south (the units at Pine Grove Park) and west (on the opposite side of Boxworth End) of the site.

The application is outline only and the only matters to be decided at this stage are the means of access and the principle of the erection of up to 90 dwellings and the other facilities listed in the description of development on the site. It is considered that the illustrative masterplan submitted with the application demonstrates that a maximum of 90 units could be provided on the site, within adequately sized plots along with the required access routes, level of formal and informal open space and surface water attenuation measures. It is considered that the illustrative layout indicates that this could be achieved without having an adverse impact on the character of the surrounding landscape, with the need for housing considered to outweigh the limited harm that would arise in relation to the Important Countryside Frontage designation along the roadside frontage.

As assessed in the main body of the report, officers consider that recent appeal decisions have given specific guidance on the limited weight to be attached to the settlement hierarchy contained within the LDF Core Strategy and assessing the connectivity of development to public transport links, which are factors relevant to the determination of this application. These considerations are material to the determination of this application, for the reasons explained in the main body of the report.

There are no objections to the proposals from the Local Highway Authority, the Lead Local Flood Risk Authority or the Environment Agency following the receipt of additional information and none of the Council's internal consultees have recommended refusal. The indicative proposals are considered to demonstrate that the residential amenity of neighbouring properties would be preserved and the density of development would allow sufficient space to be retained between the buildings to preserve the residential amenity of the future occupants of the development.

Overall, it is considered that the significant contribution the proposal would make to the deficit in the Council's five year housing land supply and the social benefits that would result from the development outweigh the potential landscape and environmental disbenefits. None of these disbenefits are considered to result in significant and demonstrable harm and therefore, it is considered that the proposal achieves the definition of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

Planning History

2. Relevant planning history on the application site:

S/1531/15/FL – conversion of barns to single dwelling, including replacement of modern building, new access to Dairy Farm House and change of use of land to domestic curtilage – approved.

S/0480/90/F – change of use of agricultural buildings to workshops, storage and existing dwelling to offices – approved.

C/1110/73/O – erection of 11 detached dwellings – refused.

National Guidance

3. National Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF)

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

Development Plan Policies

4. The extent to which any of the following policies are out of date and the weight to be attached to them is addressed later in the report.
5. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Core Strategy DPD, 2007**
ST/2 Housing Provision
ST/6 Group Villages
6. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies DPD, 2007:**
DP/1 Sustainable Development
DP/2 Design of New Development
DP/3 Development Criteria
DP/4 Infrastructure and New Developments
DP/7 Development Frameworks
HG/1 Housing Density
HG/2 Housing Mix
HG/3 Affordable Housing
NE/1 Energy Efficiency
NE/3 Renewable Energy Technologies in New Development
NE/4 Landscape Character Areas
NE/6 Biodiversity
NE/8 Groundwater
NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure
NE/11 Flood Risk
NE/12 Water Conservation
NE/14 Lighting Proposals
NE/15 Noise Pollution
NE/17 Protecting High Quality Agricultural Land
CH/2 Archaeological Sites
CH/4 Development within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building
CH/7 Important Countryside Frontages
SC/9 Protection of existing Recreation Areas, Allotments and Community Orchards
SF/10 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments
SF/11 Open Space Standards
TR/1 Planning For More Sustainable Travel
TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards
TR/3 Mitigating Travel Impact
7. **South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):**
Open Space in New Developments SPD - Adopted January 2009
Affordable Housing SPD - Adopted March 2010
Trees & Development Sites SPD - Adopted January 2009
Landscape in New Developments SPD - Adopted March 2010
Biodiversity SPD - Adopted July 2009
District Design Guide SPD - Adopted March 2010
Health Impact Assessment SPD – Adopted March 2011
Listed Buildings SPD – adopted July 2009
8. **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission - March 2014**
S/1 Vision
S/2 Objectives of the Local Plan

S//3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 S/5 Provision of New Jobs and Homes
 S/6 The Development Strategy to 2031
 S/7 Development Frameworks
 S/9 Minor Rural Centres
 HQ/1 Design Principles
 H/7 Housing Density
 H/8 Housing Mix
 H/9 Affordable Housing
 NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character
 NH/3 Protecting Agricultural Land
 NH/4 Biodiversity
 NH/13 Important Countryside Frontages
 NH/14 Heritage Assets
 CC/1 Mitigation and Adaptation to Climate Change
 CC/3 Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments
 CC/4 Sustainable Design and Construction
 CC/6 Construction Methods
 CC/7 Water Quality
 CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems
 CC/9 Managing Flood Risk
 SC/2 Heath Impact Assessment
 SC/6 Indoor Community Facilities
 SC/7 Outdoor Playspace, Informal Open Space, and New Developments
 SC/8 Open Space Standards
 SC/10 Lighting Proposals
 SC/11 Noise Pollution
 TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel
 TI/3 Parking Provision
 TI/8 Infrastructure and New Developments

Consultation

9. **Swavesey Parish Council** – the Parish Council recommend refusal of the application for the following reasons:

- Concerns regarding surface water drainage. Swavesey is the last densely populated area on the River Great Ouse to discharge by gravity. A system of flood banks and non-return doors is employed to prevent water discharging to the Great Ouse during times of high rainfall. This ensures that surface water run off from development sites must be able to be stored on site for prolonged periods (up to 3 weeks) as water cannot be discharged into the drainage system without increasing flood risk during periods when discharge from the drains to the Great Ouse is prevented. There are repeated examples of drainage issues along Middle Watch and across the village and the cumulative impact of additional development increases the likelihood of further flooding.
- The Over Sewage Treatment Works is at capacity and therefore cannot accommodate the foul water flows that will result from the proposed development.
- The proposal will have an adverse impact on highway safety through increasing traffic volumes on Boxworth End. Congestion is a major concern on this arterial route through the village, which passes the primary school and additional traffic will exacerbate this situation further.

- The cumulative impact of the development of other sites within the village and neighbouring villages will have an adverse impact on congestion on the wider highway network, including the A14.
- The Parish Council considers that the proposed highway improvements should be extended to the junction with Pine Grove Park junction and further south to link to the bus shelter.
- The footpaths along Boxworth End are in a poor state of repair and this would be made worse by the additional volumes of pedestrian traffic in this part of the village should the development be approved.
- There is insufficient capacity in the primary school, secondary school and the doctors' surgery to accommodate the demands of this development and the cumulative pressure of other sites being developed in Swavesey and neighbouring villages.
- There is a need to provide low cost starter homes as part of the scheme, as well as bungalows to make provision for elderly persons.
- The Parish Council objects to the proposal for buildings of up to 2.5 storeys in height. This is considered detrimental to the character of the area, where buildings are predominantly lower in height than this.
- Although Swavesey is proposed to be upgraded to a Minor Rural Centre in the emerging Local Plan, the indicative maximum size of appropriate schemes is 30 dwellings. This scheme, along with the proposed large developments on Middle Watch and Fen Drayton Road would go far beyond this and the cumulative impact would be severe.
- The density of development is considered to be too high in this edge of village location and would have an adverse impact on the character of the landscape.
- It is not clear who will be responsible for the management and maintenance of the proposed on site open space.

10. **District Council Environmental Health Officer (EHO)** – The Public Health Specialist has commented that the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is acceptable and the scale of the scheme and the resulting impacts can be assessed without requiring the revision of the HIA.

Further assessment of the potential noise generated by the noise of traffic on the A14 and primary routes adjacent to the site and the impact that this may have on the residential amenity of the occupants of the dwellings will be required to ensure that adequate attenuation measures are put in place, if required. Details of any lighting to be installed will also need to be provided.

Noise, vibration and dust minimisation plans will be required to ensure that the construction phase of the scheme would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents. These details shall be secured by condition, along with a restriction on the hours during which power operated machinery should be used during the construction phase of the development and details of the phasing of the development.

The applicant will be required to complete a Waste Design Toolkit at the reserved matters stage in order to show how it is intended to address the waste management infrastructure, and technical requirements within the RECAP Waste Design Management Design Guide. In addition conditions should secure the submission of a Site Waste Management Plan. Provision of domestic waste receptacles by the developer will be secured via the Section 106 agreement.

11. **District Council Urban Design Officer** – has raised no objection to the principle of development. The parameter plans submitted indicate that development on the edges of the site can be reduced to below 30 units per hectare and this grading of the density would reduce the landscape impact of the scheme. The plans have been amended to demonstrate that the central part of the site (indicative density of 40 dwellings per hectare) would not be overly reliant on flatted development and as such, parking courts would not be a dominant feature on the streetscene.
12. **Natural England** - no comments to make on the application.
13. **District Council Landscape Design Officer (LDO)** – No objection to the principle of development. The site is not subject to any national designations. It is classified on a regional level as being part of the Bedfordshire and Claylands Landscape Character Area and at a local level, the site is within the Lowland Village Farmlands Character Area.

Concerns raised relating to the permeability of the development and views through to the open landscape beyond the site. The indicative plan has been amended to show a larger area of open space in front of the farm house and buildings by moving the internal access road closer to the entrance to the site. The tree and shrub planting initially shown to the south of the pond has been removed and this would allow views through the central part of the site, between the existing buildings, to the landscape beyond. The open space has been reconfigured to allow a view through the site to the north of the farm buildings. These alterations to the indicative layout have improved the permeability of the scheme. The retention of the hedge along the front of the site is welcomed.

14. **Cambridgeshire County Council Local Highway Authority** – following the submission of additional information, no objection to the proposals subject to the securing of footpath improvements and additional cycle stands at Swavesey Guided Busway. Details of the footway improvements scheme can be conditioned and a commuted sum for the provision of the cycle stands can be secured through a Section 106 Agreement. The impact of traffic on the Ramper Road routes to Cottenham and Girton has been considered in the revised information. The proposed upgrading of bus shelters adjacent to the site includes seating and shelters should be secured. Real Time Passenger Information displays would also need to be installed as part of the upgrade, at a cost of £54,000 and this should also be included in the Section 106 Agreement.
15. **Cambridgeshire County Council Historic Environment Team (Archaeology)** – The site is considered to be of potential archaeological interest. The site is located in the southern part of the village, in an area which has seen little previous archaeological investigation, although it is apparent that the current settlement had expanded into this area by at least the late 17th century. The County HER records earthworks within the proposed development area, interpreted as possible holloways. Lidar data contained within the heritage statement submitted in support of the application suggests that this is a field boundary, but this would not be consistent with

the form and extent of the feature. A geophysical survey has also been undertaken which has not added to our understanding of this feature. This however is simply an indication that the feature has proved unresponsive to this technique and should not be taken as evidence for lack of significance of this, or any other archaeological assets which are likely survive within the site. Details of any mitigation required will be provided in a written update in advance of the planning committee meeting.

16. **Cambridgeshire County Council Flood & Water Team (LLFRA)** – no objection to the application on the basis of compliance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). The FRA confirms that the mitigation measures would attenuate a volume of surface water to accommodate a 1 in 100 annual probability level of flood risk, with zero discharge for 3 weeks of the year. Both swales and an attenuation basins would be included within the development to provide a sustainable drainage system. Surface water would be discharged into the watercourse on the eastern boundary of the site. Specific details of the surface water drainage strategy can be secured by condition and details of management and maintenance can be secured via the Section 106 Agreement.
17. **Swavesey Internal Drainage Board** – no objection to the amended flood risk assessment on the basis that all mitigation measures and details of the surface water level controlling mechanism are secured by condition.
18. **Environment Agency** - The western part of the site lies in Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding). The north eastern part of the site lies within Flood Zone 2 (higher risk of flooding). The Environment Agency has no objection to the scheme, highlighting the need for the LLFRA to be consulted on the contents of the drainage strategy submitted with the application. Informatives are suggested relating to the details of the surface water and foul water drainage strategies and pollution control.
19. **Anglian Water** - Anglian Water (AW) has commented that in relation to foul drainage, waste water from the development would be treated at Over Water Recycling Centre. On the basis of a recent review, the facility does currently have capacity to deal with flows from the development. The sewerage system is considered to have available capacity to accommodate the additional demands placed on the infrastructure by the proposed development. Advise that the Environment Agency and the LLFRA should be consulted with regard to surface water drainage.
20. **Contaminated Land Officer** - low risk in relation to land contamination and as such it is considered that a phase I contaminated land assessment can be required by condition at this outline stage, to ensure that the detailed layout does not result in any adverse impact in this regard, acknowledging the sensitive end use proposed for the site.
21. **Air Quality Officer** – No objection and no further assessment of air quality is considered to be necessary. To ensure that sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the development are not affected by the negative impact of construction work such as dust and noise, as well as ensuring that the applicant complies with the Council's low emission strategy for a development of this scale, conditions should be included that require the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan/Dust Management Plan, and an electronic vehicle charging infrastructure strategy
22. **Affordable Housing Officer** - The proposed site is located outside the development framework and should therefore be considered on the basis of an exception site for the provision of 100% affordable housing only to meet the local housing need. This would be in accordance with Policy H/10 of the emerging Local Plan.

However, should this application not be determined as an exception site, then the council will seek to secure at least 40% affordable housing, which is in line with policy H/9 of the emerging Local Plan.

The developer is proposing 90 dwellings, which consists of 54 market dwellings and 36 affordable dwellings which meets the 40% requirement. There are currently 41 people within Swavesey Parish on the Housing Register.

There are approximately 1,700 applicants on the housing register and our greatest demand is for 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings.

The district wide tenure split is 70% rented and 30% shared ownership – equating to 26 for affordable rent and 10 for shared ownership. The mix across the 36 affordable units would be:

Affordable Rented:

11 x 1 beds
11 x 2 beds
3 x 3 beds
1 x 4 bed

Intermediate/Shared Ownership:

5 x 2 beds
2 x 3 beds
3 x 4 bed

8 properties should be allocated to those with a local connection to Swavesey and the remaining 20 should be allocated on a 50/50 split basis between applicants with a local connection to Swavesey and those with a District wide connection.

A registered provider should be appointed to manage the affordable housing; we would like to be informed when a Registered Provider has been appointed so that we can discuss the delivery of the affordable housing with them.

The rented properties should be advertised through homelink and be open to all applicants registered in South Cambs. The shared ownership properties should be advertised through BPHA (Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association) who are currently the government's appointed home buy agent in this region.

23. **Section 106 Officer** – details of the summary of section 106 requirements are discussed in detail in the main body of the report. Specific policy compliant contributions (final figure dependent on housing mix to be determined at the reserved matters stage under scale of development) are requested by the District Council towards the preparation of the new recreation ground (to provide sports pitches and the upgrading of the Memorial Hall building which is used as an indoor community facility).
24. **Cambridgeshire County Council Growth Team** – This proposal would result in an anticipated 27 early years children, 14 of which would qualify for free provision and the 2 pre-school classroom element of the extension already completed, but not fully funded, is the project against which contributions for this element can be sought.

In relation to primary provision, combining this proposal and the application for up to

70 dwellings on land at Middle Watch (ref. S/1605/16/OL – subject of an appeal), the anticipated population increase of the village would include approximately 55 children. This scheme alone would generate 32 primary school age children. The project identified to mitigate this impact is space within the 3 classroom extension which has already been completed to the primary school, but for which a funding shortfall has been identified and the County Council.

The County Council have calculated that 56% of the anticipated increase in primary school pupils would come from this scheme, 44% from the Middle Watch development. These are the development proposals within the village that are at an advanced stage in the determination process. The contribution being sought in relation to this application is £248,814.

In relation to secondary school provision, an extension to increase capacity at the Village College by 150 pupils has been completed, as a result of an identified shortfall in capacity in 2012. The total cost of the extension project was £3,900,000. Of this amount, a total of £3,150,000 was secured through grant funding sourced by the Village College and the County Council, leaving a shortfall of £750,000. This extension has accommodated the developments at 18 Boxworth End, The Ridgeway in Papworth, Mill Road in Over and would be able to accommodate the pupils from the refused applications at Middle Watch Swavesey and Bar Hill which are currently the subject of appeals.

After accommodating these schemes, on the basis of catchment forecasts from January 2016, the Village College would be at capacity. As such, in consultation with the school, an extension that would provide 150 additional places has been identified by the County Council. The estimated costs for this project is £4,250,000.

The school currently has a capacity of 1350 places for students aged 11-15. The 11-15 pupil roll was 1260 in January 2015 and 1255 in September 2015. In September 2016 the pupil roll was 1207. The forecasts show that there are 1258 children living in catchment in 2016/17. Of these 107 attended other secondary schools in the county however 56 children from out of the catchment attended the college. The school is forecast to admit up to its admission number of 270 for the foreseeable future when taking into account existing planned growth in the catchment.

The forecasts (from January 2016) confirm the population within the catchment area is set to increase. This is due to a growing secondary-aged population in the catchment area arising from natural growth in the population and the impact of new housing developments, including this site. However, Northstowe secondary school is set to open in 2019/20 which will remove the Hatton Park cohort of children from the Swavesey Village College catchment area.

Due to the fact that the appeals at Middle Watch and Bar Hill remain undetermined there are a number of scenarios. If both appeals are allowed, then this application would contribute to the second project (total costs £4.25 million – cost for this proposal £651,659 - £28,333 per pupil x 23). If either Middle Watch and/or Bar Hill appeals are dismissed, the contribution would reduce as there would still be some available capacity within the existing extended school. The figure would reduce to £581,660 if the Bar Hill appeal is dismissed but Middle Watch allowed, £377,824 if that scenario is reversed. If both appeals are dismissed, the contribution would be £307,825.

In relation to lifelong learning, a figure of £28.92 per the additional residents (approx. 225 in the Council's calculation) is based on the standard charge approach adopted

by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and is considered to be CIL compliant to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. The total contribution from this application is approximately £6,507.00 (depending upon final housing mix).

25. **Historic England** – no objection.
26. **District Council Historic Buildings Officer** – no objections raised
27. **NHS England** – request a sum of £34,063 to provide an additional 14.81 square metres of floorspace to accommodate the additional 216 anticipated population increase (nb. Different projection to the County Council figures above). The NHS response indicates that this figure does not include an assessment of any additional car parking capacity and have indicated that they do not have the evidence base to make a request for extension/reconfiguration of the site in this regard.
28. **District Council Ecology Officer** – no objection, subject to the attachment of conditions to the outline planning permission.

The ecological surveys submitted with the planning application are considered to be suitable. Overall, the mitigation measures proposed in relation to Great Crested Newts (GCN) are considered to be acceptable but further details are required in relation to the location and size of the proposed Receptor site for GCN, details of the amount of habitat to be lost and details of the management of rough grassland areas will be required to ensure that adequate suitable habitat for GCN is retained on the site. Details of the seasonal timing for the erection of fencing, the translocation process and site clearance will be required. Details of mitigation measures to be implemented to prevent harm being caused to amphibians as a result of the sustainable drainage measures to be installed will also need to be secured.

29. **Highways England** – no objection raised.
30. **District Council Tree Officer** – no objection to the proposals. The Arboricultural Report submitted with the planning application provides a comprehensive overview of the nature of the tree cover on the site. An updated arboricultural impact assessment and a tree protection plan will be required at the reserved matters stage to inform the proposed layout. These requirements can be secured by condition at this outline stage.
31. **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue** – No objection to the proposals subject to adequate provision being made within the development for fire hydrants which could be secured by a condition or through a Section 106 agreement.
32. **Cambridgeshire Constabulary** – no comments to make in relation to ‘Secured by Design’ standards at this outline stage.

Representations

33. 24 letters of objection (including representations made via the Council’s website) have been received which raise the following concerns (summarised):
 - There is evidence of recent flooding of the existing properties in this part of Swavesey. Surface water drains along Middle Watch and Boxworth End do not have capacity to deal with existing flows and the problem would be exacerbated by this development.
 - Ramper Road would not be able to cope with additional traffic, it is already

congested.

- The proposals will have an unacceptable impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties
- The density of the proposal is considered to restrict the amount of green space possible within the gardens of the properties. This ensures that the volume of surface water will be high and add further problems to the capacity of the existing network.
- The measures that have been included to manage surface water are considered to be insufficient.
- There are concerns regarding the capacity of the foul drainage system also – foul water from the development will be transferred to the Over treatment plant and this presents risk in terms of further flooding.
- The amount of traffic on Boxworth End and Middle Watch already causes congestion. This site would introduce more traffic to the network in close proximity to the junction with Ramper Road, presenting a further highway safety hazard.
- The existing site is greenfield and of biodiversity value. There will be a detrimental impact on species of wildflowers, badgers, newts etc.
- The local doctor's surgery and primary school are at capacity. There is no room within the school site to add further extensions and therefore the development will have an unsustainable impact on these services. The capacity issue needs to be addressed before more development is approved. The doctor's surgery is also located on a physically constrained site, which limits the potential for expansion to accommodate additional demand.
- The development would be contrary to the linear form of this historic part of the village.
- The inclusion of 2 storey development and the noise associated with the proposed development during the construction phase and on occupation would have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties.
- This site was considered to be of 'limited development potential' in the formulation of the Local Plan and development on this scale should be confined to Northstowe and the other new settlements. This is not a sustainable location for 90 dwellings.
- The village has limited retail and other services to be able to facilitate new large scale development in a sustainable way.
- The proposal would have an adverse impact on property values in the locality.
- The Guided busway is at capacity and this development will make that situation worse. This service is therefore not a viable alternative to commuting via the private car.
- The benefit of a shop/resource would not be outweighed by the large number of units proposed in this part of the village, where access to and from the settlement is funnelled along Boxworth End.
- The proposals may result in the loss of the existing trees and hedgerows on the boundaries of the site.
- Whilst the village is served by the guided busway, this is at the opposite end of the village to the application site and therefore reliance of the car for transport is likely and makes this scheme less sustainable.
- The village has already accommodated development above what has been planned for. This site is outside of the village framework and therefore approval of the scheme would be contrary to the policies of the Local Plan.
- This proposal must be considered alongside the other planning applications for large scale development and the recently approved schemes in Over and Papworth, which will have an impact on the capacity of services and facilities in Swavesey. The cumulative impact is considered to be unsustainable.

- The footpaths in the village are poorly maintained. This is a highway safety concern and limits the ability of pedestrians to access services and facilities, a situation that would be made worse by the impact of the additional population generated by the proposed development.
- The access to the proposed development would be detrimental to highway safety. The driveways of adjacent properties are tight and result in vehicles reversing on to Boxworth End, within close proximity to the access to a large scale residential development. This would be an unacceptable situation.
- The proposed development would result in the loss of open views into the open countryside.
- The site is of high archaeological potential which could potentially be detrimentally affected by the development.

In addition to these representations, objection letters have been received from Swavesey Primary School and Swavesey Village College.

The letters from both schools has been considered by officers and the County Council as Education Authority are aware of the concerns expressed. The objection from the primary school raises the following concerns:

- The school has undergone a 24% increase in pupil intake in the last 3 years and has struggled to maintain standards of provision as a result.
- The extension recently completed has not increased capacity, it has simply replaced the space previously provided through temporary classrooms.
- There are already families in Swavesey with one child at Swavesey Primary School with other children who are having to attend schools in other villages.
- The numbers of children will increase further once the approved scheme for 30 dwellings approved at Boxworth End is built out.
- Primary school age children from the development would have to attend schools in neighbouring villages which will add to congestion on the roads, presenting a highway safety hazard which is likely to affect the school given its location on the main highway route through the village.
- Overall, the development would result in serious harm to the ability of the primary school to function properly. The standard of education as well as the health and safety of school children would be adversely affected if the development is approved.

The letter submitted by Swavesey Village College raises the following concerns:

- The Village College will already be increasing in size by 20% in the next (sic) five years and has struggled to maintain standards.
- Expansion has already taken place and there will be a need to accommodate children who will attend school in Northstowe following a temporary period – this presents the school with a serious capacity issue.
- Were the development to go ahead, a number of the pupils would be required to attend the Village Colleges in neighbouring villages.
- There are site constraints which ensure that expansion of the school significantly beyond the existing capacity is not a viable option.
- Swavesey Village College currently has capacity for 270 students in each year group and the projected demography in the academic year 2018-19 is well above this, with nearly 350 students in each year in the catchment area primary schools. Pupils of secondary school age that have moved into the catchment area have been refused places due to lack of capacity for the last 3 years.
- The approval of 86 dwellings in the past 2 years in the village will further add to

the capacity problems at the school once these properties are occupied.

Site and Surroundings

34. The application site is land surrounding the farm house and buildings at Dairy Farm, located in the southern part of the village of Swavesey. The site is located outside of the village framework and in the open countryside. The Swavesey framework boundary skirts the northern, southern and western boundaries of the site. The site is situated between residential development on Ramper Road to the north and Pine Grove caravan park to the south. An established hedgerow runs along the western boundary of the site, with the only break in this being at the point of vehicular access into the site. This frontage is designated as Important Open Frontage in the LDF and would retain this status in the emerging Local Plan. The existing group of buildings on the site include the farm house, agricultural buildings and a barn which is the subject of an extant planning permission for conversion to residential use.

Proposal

35. The applicant seeks outline planning permission for demolition of farm outbuildings (to the north east of the farm house and barn) and erection of up to 90 dwellings with public open space, landscaping, sustainable drainage system and vehicular access point from Boxworth End. All matters reserved except for access.

Planning Assessment

36. The key issues to consider in the determination of this application in terms of the principle of development are the implications of the five year supply of housing land deficit on the proposals. An assessment is required in relation to the impact of the proposals on the character of the village edge and surrounding landscape, highway safety, the residential amenity of neighbouring properties, environmental health, surface water and foul water drainage capacity, the provision of formal and informal open space and other section 106 contributions.

Principle of Development

37. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires councils to boost significantly the supply of housing and to identify and maintain a five-year housing land supply with an additional buffer as set out in paragraph 47.
38. The Council accepts that it cannot currently demonstrate a five year housing land supply in the district as required by the NPPF, having a 4.1 year supply using the methodology identified by the Inspector in the Waterbeach appeals in 2014. This shortfall is based on an objectively assessed housing need of 19,500 homes for the period 2011 to 2031 (as identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2013 and updated by the latest update undertaken for the Council in November 2015 as part of the evidence responding to the Local Plan Inspectors' preliminary conclusions) and latest assessment of housing delivery (in the housing trajectory March 2017). In these circumstances any adopted or emerging policy which can be considered to restrict the supply of housing land is considered 'out of date' in respect of paragraph 49 of the NPPF.
39. Unless circumstances change, those conclusions should inform, in particular, the Council's approach to paragraph 49 of the NPPF, which states that adopted policies "for the supply of housing" cannot be considered up to date where there is not a five year housing land supply. Those policies were listed in the decision letters and are:

Core Strategy DPD policies ST/2 and ST/5 and Development Control Policies DPD policy DP/7 (relating to village frameworks and indicative limits on the scale of development in villages). The Inspector did not have to consider policies ST/6 and ST/7 but as a logical consequence of the decision these should also be policies “for the supply of housing”.

40. Further guidance as to which policies should be considered as ‘relevant policies for the supply of housing’ emerged from a recent Court of Appeal decision (*Richborough v Cheshire East and Suffolk Coastal DC v Hopkins Homes*). The Court defined ‘relevant policies for the supply of housing’ widely so not to be restricted ‘merely policies in the Development Plan that provide positively for the delivery of new housing in terms of numbers and distribution or the allocation of sites,’ but also to include, ‘plan policies whose effect is to influence the supply of housing by restricting the locations where new housing may be developed.’ Therefore all policies which have the potential to restrict or affect housing supply may be considered out of date in respect of the NPPF. However even where policies are considered ‘out of date’ for the purposes of NPPF paragraph 49, a decision maker is required to consider what (if any) weight should attach to such relevant policies, having regard to, amongst other matters, the purpose of the particular policy.
41. Where a Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land, paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It says that where relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted for development unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or where specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.
42. This means that where planning permission is sought which would be contrary to the policies listed above, such applications must be determined against paragraph 14 of the NPPF, unless other national policies indicate an exception to this, Green Belt land is one such exception. Sustainable development is defined in paragraph 7 of the NPPF as having environmental, economic and social strands. When assessed against these objectives, unless the harm arising from the proposal ‘significantly and demonstrably’ outweighs the benefits of the proposals, planning permission should be granted (in accordance with paragraph 14).
43. The site is located outside the Swavesey village framework, although adjacent to the south eastern boundary of the village, and in the countryside, where policy DP/7 of the LDF and Policy S/7 of the Draft Local Plan state that only development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside will be permitted. The erection of a residential development of up to 90 dwellings would therefore not under normal circumstances be considered acceptable in principle. However, this policy is considered out of date due to the current lack of a 5 year housing land supply as set out above.
44. It falls to the Council as decision maker to assess the weight that should be given to the existing policy. Officers consider this assessment should, in the present application, have regard to whether the policy continues to perform a material planning objective and whether it is consistent with the policies of the NPPF.
45. Development in Group Villages (the current status of Swavesey) is normally limited to schemes of up to 8 dwellings, or in exceptional cases 15, where development would make best use of a single brownfield site. This planning objective remains important and is consistent with the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development, by

limiting the scale of development in less sustainable rural settlements with a limited range of services to meet the needs of new residents in a sustainable manner.

46. It is proposed to elevate Swavesey from a Group Village to a Minor Rural Centre in the emerging Local Plan. Existing Core Strategy policy ST/5 normally limits development in Minor Rural Centres to schemes of up to 30 dwellings and this threshold would be retained in the emerging Local Plan Policy S/9.
47. However, the existing policy is considered to be out of date and the emerging policy worthy of only limited weight in the decision making process, due to the Council's inability to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land. The principal consideration is therefore that the NPPF requires development to be assessed against the definition of sustainable development. Specifically in relation to the size of development in or on the edge of Group Villages, the Inspector in the recent Over appeal decision (18 January 2017) stated that '...the strict application of the existing settlement hierarchy and blanket restriction on development outside those areas would significantly restrain housing delivery.....this would frustrate the aim of boosting the supply of housing.'
48. In light of the above, it is not appropriate, in the case of all Group Villages, to attach the same weight to policy DP/7 and DP/1(a) in the 'blanket' way.
49. Within the context of the lack of a five year housing land supply, Officers are of the view that sites on the edges of these Swavesey can, in principle, accommodate more than the indicative maximum of 30 units and still achieve the definition of sustainable development due to the level of services and facilities provided in these villages, for the reasons set out in the following paragraphs.
50. The Village Classification Report of 2012 assessed the status of a number of the villages in the District and considered whether the hierarchy as set out in the LDF Core Strategy was still suitable in light of the requirement to provide an additional 19,500 houses during the lifetime of the emerging Local Plan. The Report considered 4 categories which led to an overall score for each of the settlements considered. Swavesey scored the maximum 3 points in relation to education, 1 point was given for employment opportunities in the village, with 0 points awarded for public transport and village services and facilities.
51. In this assessment, Swavesey scored higher than Papworth Everard, Willingham and Waterbeach, all of which are classified as Minor Rural Centres in the current LDF and would retain the same status under the emerging Local Plan. In relation to Swavesey, the Classification Report concluded that the village 'has a secondary school and Doctors Surgery but apart from that services and facilities are limited. It lies near Willingham Minor Rural Centre and will be near Northstowe. It does not perform a Minor Rural Centre function, but it does have a better range of services than most villages.' However, the concluding remarks of the Report state that 'Bassingbourn, Comberton and Swavesey have a distinctly different level of services from the other Group Villages, primarily due to the presence of a village college. They have a wider range of services than some existing Minor Rural Centres.'
52. It is considered that the fact that Swavesey was considered suitable for upgrading to a Minor Rural Centre through the 2012 Village Classification Report should be afforded significant weight in the determination of this application. The Report provides an evidence based assessment of the relative sustainability of the larger villages within the District and Swavesey scores comparably with a number of the existing Minor Rural Centres. No objections were received to the proposed elevation of the status of the village during the Local Plan consultation process. Whilst the emerging policy can

only be afforded limited weight in relation to the indicative upper limit on the size of development within the framework, the proposal to upgrade the village's status is indicative of the level and services within Swavesey. Given the District wide need for housing, the fact that Swavesey has been classified as one of the better served villages in terms of access to services and facilities is considered to be a key material factor in assessing any proposals for residential development against the definition of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

53. As part of the case of the applicant rests on the current five year housing land supply deficit, the developer is required to demonstrate that the dwellings would be delivered within a 5 year period. Officers are of the view that the applicant has demonstrated that the site can be delivered within a timescale whereby weight can be given to the contribution the proposal could make to the 5 year housing land supply.
54. The environmental issues, including impact on the open countryside, are assessed in the following sections of the report. In relation to the loss of higher grade agricultural land, policy NE/17 states that the District Council will not grant planning permission for development which would lead to the irreversible loss of grades 1, 2 or 3a. Part of this site is classified as grade 3 agricultural land.
55. Whilst the substantive issues are discussed in detail in the remainder of this report, it is the case that the land is not allocated or proposed to be allocated for housing, in contravention of part a. of the policy. However, given the current housing land supply deficit, it is considered that there are material considerations which could be argued to override the need to preserve the agricultural value of the land, given the sustainable location of the site for residential development.
56. The proposals are assessed below against the social and economic criteria of the definition of sustainable development.

Social Sustainability:

57. Paragraph 55 of the NPPF seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas advising 'housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities', and recognises that where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.
58. The development would provide a clear benefit in helping to meet the current housing shortfall in South Cambridgeshire through delivering up to an additional 90 residential dwellings, 40% of which would be affordable (36 units). Ensuring that the housing mix in the market element of the scheme would accord with emerging policy H/8 (discussed in detail later in this report) is a matter to be dealt with at the reserved matters stage.
59. The affordable housing can be secured through a Section 106 Agreement. Officers are of the view that the provision of up to 90 additional houses, including the affordable dwellings, is a social benefit and significant weight should be attributed this in the decision making process, particularly in light of the Housing Officer's confirmation that there is a significant need for affordable housing in Swavesey.
60. The adopted Open Space SPD requires the provision of approximately 2700 square metres of public open space on site for a development on the scale proposed. The scheme exceeds this amount by a significant margin (approximately 7000 square metres would be provided in this proposal) and would include sufficient space for the inclusion of an equipped play area with land surrounding it, as required by the SPD.

Given that Swavesey has an identified shortfall in play space (a substantial deficit in this area according to the 2013 Recreation and Open Space Study) and informal open space when compared to the required levels of provision, the fact that this amount of space can be provided at the density of development indicated is considered to be a significant social benefit of the proposal.

61. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the social dimension of sustainable development includes the creation of a high quality built environment with accessible local services. The indicative layout plan demonstrates that the site can be developed for the number of dwellings proposed, although there are aspects which require further consideration at the reserved matters stage.

Impact on services and facilities:

62. Paragraph 204 of the NPPF relates to the tests that local planning authorities should apply to assess whether planning obligations should be sought to mitigate the impacts of development. In the line with the CIL regulations 2010, the contributions must be:
- necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms
 - directly related to the development
 - fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development proposed.
63. In applying this guidance this planning application, officers consider that the contributions sought through the Section 106 agreement, in addition to the facilities required by the emerging allocation policy, should be based upon an assessment of the availability and capacity of services in Swavesey.
64. As already stated, it is considered that significant weight should be attributed to the evidence base behind the elevated status of Swavesey as a Minor Rural Centre in the emerging Local Plan. Emerging policy S/9 states that residential development of up to a maximum indicative size of 30 dwellings will be permitted, subject to the satisfaction of all material planning consideration. The proposal would significantly exceed this number and would not be within the existing framework boundary. This scale of development must be considered in light of the facilities in Swavesey and the impact of the scheme on the capacity of public services.
65. There are bus stops to the north of the site on Middle Watch, in close proximity to the entrance to the site (within 250 metres to the north.) Mitigation measures are listed in the amended Transport Statement and this would include the provision of a footway along the eastern edge of Boxworth End to provide a pedestrian link to the bus service. This would be a benefit of the scheme, enhancing the social sustainability of the proposals.
66. The citi 5 bus service provides regular transport to and from Cambridge at commuting times and throughout the day during the week. A regular service also runs on this line on a Saturday but there is no service on a Sunday.
67. The Guided Busway is approximately 1.7 kilometres further north and so travel to this service on foot may reasonably be considered less likely but that provides a regular bus service to Cambridge and St. Ives 7 days a week. However, the footway improvements and the contribution to additional cycle stands at the Swavesey Guided Busway stop would also enhance the ability to access the Swavesey stop on this service by bicycle. This would enhance the social sustainability of the scheme and provide an incentive to access the Guided Busway by an alternative means of transport to the car. Access to the Guided Busway from Swavesey was identified as a

key reason for recommending the re-classification of the village to a Minor Rural Centre in the emerging Local Plan and therefore improving connectivity to this facilities would be an environmental benefit of the scheme.

68. Given the relatively close proximity of the site to the Citi 5 bus service, the fact that the service operates at commuting times as well as during the day and that the connectivity to the Guided Busway is to be improved, it is considered that the site is well served by public transport, which enhances the environmental sustainability of the scheme by reducing reliance on car travel. Whilst the concerns regarding the capacity of the Guided Busway are noted, the service operates at least every 10 minutes to and from Cambridge at peak times and is therefore an extremely regular service which still provides a viable alternative to making the full journey by private car.
69. It is considered that even in a situation where occupants of the proposed development made a single occupancy car journey up to the Guided Busway stop and then used the service to commute to Cambridge, the vast majority of that journey would be made by the bus, which represents a more sustainable mode of transport. This was a key factor in the determination of a recent appeal for 55 dwellings on a site in Over. Whilst this is a larger proposal, Swavesey is a larger village with more facilities than Over and the distance to the Busway from this site is approximately 1km shorter than the distance between the Over site and the Busway. As such, the substantive point is relevant and worthy of significant weight in assessing this application as the distance to Cambridge is materially similar.
70. Cambridgeshire County Council is the Education Authority. This proposal would result in an anticipated 27 early years children, 14 of which would qualify for free provision and the 2 pre-school classroom element of the extension is the combined primary and early years project against which contributions for this element can be sought.
71. In relation to primary provision, combining this proposal and the application for up to 70 dwellings on land at Middle Watch (ref. S/1605/16/OL – subject of an appeal), the anticipated population increase of the village would include approximately 55 children. This scheme alone would generate 32 primary school age children. The project identified to mitigate this impact is space within the 3 classroom extension which has already been completed to the primary school, but for which a funding shortfall has been identified and the County Council.
72. The County Council have calculated that 56% of the anticipated increase in primary school pupils would come from this scheme, 44% from the Middle Watch development. These are the two live applications within the village that are at an advanced stage in the determination process. The contribution being sought in relation to this application is £248,814.
73. In relation to secondary school provision, an extension to increase capacity at the Village College by 150 pupils has been completed, as a result of an identified shortfall in capacity in 2012. The total cost of the extension project was £3,900,000. Of this amount, a total of £3,150,000 was secured through grant funding sourced by the Village College and the County Council, leaving a shortfall of £750,000. This extension has accommodated the developments at 18 Boxworth End, The Ridgeway in Papworth, Mill Road in Over and could also accommodate children from the refused applications at Middle Watch Swavesey and Bar Hill which are currently the subject of appeals.
74. These schemes, on the basis of catchment forecasts from January 2016, would take

up the additional capacity created by that project. Following discussions with the Village College, an extension that would provide 150 additional places has been identified. The estimated costs for this project is £4,250,000.

75. The school currently has a capacity of 1350 places for students aged 11-15. The 11-15 pupil roll was 1260 in January 2015 and 1255 in September 2015. In September 2016 the pupil roll was 1207. The forecasts show that there are 1258 children living in catchment in 2016/17. Of these 107 attended other secondary schools in the county however 56 children from out of the catchment attended the college. The school is forecast to admit up to its admission number of 270 for the foreseeable future when taking into account existing planned growth in the catchment.
76. The forecasts (from January 2016) confirm the population within the catchment area is set to increase. This is due to a growing secondary-aged population in the catchment area arising from natural growth in the population and the impact of new housing developments, including this site. However, Northstowe secondary school is set to open in 2019/20 which will remove the Hatton Park cohort of children from the Swavesey Village College catchment area.
77. Due to the fact that the appeals at Middle Watch and Bar Hill remain undetermined there are a number of scenarios. If both appeals are allowed, then this application would contribute to the second project (total costs £4.25 million – cost for this proposal £651,659 - £28,333 per pupil x 23). If either Middle Watch and/or Bar Hill appeals are dismissed, the contribution would reduce as there would still be some available capacity within the existing extended school. The figure would reduce to £581,660 if the Bar Hill appeal is dismissed but Middle Watch allowed, £377,824 if that scenario is reversed. If both appeals are dismissed, the contribution would be £307,825.
78. In relation to lifelong learning, a figure of £28.92 per the additional residents (approx. 225 in the Council's calculation) is based on the standard charge approach adopted by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and is considered to be CIL compliant to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. The total contribution from this application is approximately £6,507.00 (depending upon final housing mix). This sum is required to improve the provision of library services. This would finance the provision of an additional mobile library route within the village and an increase in the range of materials offered by the library service, to accommodate the additional population resulting from the development.
79. In terms of health impact, the applicant has submitted an Impact Assessment in this regard. This Assessment acknowledges that there may need to be an upgrade in public service facilities to accommodate the needs of the occupants of the development to ensure that the high standards of public health in locality are maintained. The report identifies that Swavesey surgery is currently operating above the Royal College of General Practitioners guideline of 1 doctor per 1,800 enrolled patients.
80. NHS England has commented on the application and has stated that their assessment of capacity is based on the amount of floorspace required to run a practice as opposed to the number of GP's. On the basis of their calculation, NHS England have requested a sum of £34,063 to provide an additional 14.81 square metres of floorspace to accommodate the additional 216 anticipated population increase (nb. Different projection to the County Council figures above). The NHS response indicates that this figure does not include an assessment of any additional car parking capacity and have indicated that they do not have the evidence base to

make a request for extension/reconfiguration of the site in this regard.

81. NHS England have indicated in their response that they consider the requested sum to meet the tests for seeking contributions as set out in the NPPF, quoted above. This sum is considered necessary to mitigate the deficit in the capacity of Swavesey surgery that would result from the projected population increase from the development and subject to this being secured through the section 106 agreement, the development would not be socially unsustainable in this regard.
82. The fact that the developer has agreed to the principle of paying the contributions to fund the additional infrastructure required to offset the impact of the development in this regard ensures that the impact of the scheme on the capacity of these facilities could be adequately mitigated, weighing in favour of the social sustainability of the scheme.
83. In addition to the primary, secondary schools and a GP surgery, Swavesey has a post office and village store, a newsagent, library access point and mobile library and a better range of shops and services than most Group Villages. There are a number of business office units, including the Cygnus Business Park on Middle Watch.
84. The Memorial Hall provides a main hall of 155 square metres and meeting rooms. There is a recreation ground which includes an equipped area of play space, a pavilion and football pitches for both junior and senior levels. The village college also offers a number of sports facilities and there are two sites of allotments in the village.
85. Cumulatively, it is considered that Swavesey offers a range of services beyond meeting day to day needs and this is reflected in the proposed status of the village as a Minor Rural Centre i.e. second in the list of sustainable groups of villages in the district.
86. Given the above assessment and the supporting evidence submitted with the planning application, it is considered that the adverse impacts of the development in terms of social sustainability could be mitigated through the contributions towards expanded education, library and NHS provision, to be secured via a Section 106 agreement.

Economic sustainability:

87. The provision of up to 90 new dwellings will give rise to employment during the construction phase of the development, and has the potential to result in an increase in the use of local services and facilities, both of which will be of benefit to the local economy.
88. Overall, it is considered that the proposed development would achieve the social and economic elements of the definition of sustainable development, subject to the mitigation measures quoted above, which the applicant has agreed to in principle and can be secured via a Section 106 agreement.

Density of development and housing mix

89. The scheme would be of a lower density than required by policy HG/1 of the LDF and emerging Local Plan policy H/7 (30 dwellings per hectare) when taking the site as whole (approx. 4.7 hectares in area). The density equates to approximately 19 dwellings per hectare. However, both policies include the caveat that a lower density may be acceptable if this can be justified in relation to the character of the surrounding locality. Given that the application site is located on the edge of the settlement and the

fact that the north eastern portion of the site is in a zone of higher flood risk, it is considered that this proposal meets the exception tests of the current and emerging policy with regard to the density of development.

90. The density of the developed area in the indicative layout would be higher than this figure, approximately 32 dwellings per hectare, due to the retention of a significant amount of undeveloped space in the north eastern corner and the front portion of the site, between the entrance to the site and the existing farm buildings. Whilst this layout is not fixed, the illustrative masterplan is considered to demonstrate that 90 units could be accommodated on the site without resulting in a density of development that would be out of character with the edge of village location. Matters of design and landscape impact are discussed in detail in the following section of the report.
91. Under the provisions of policy HG/2, the market housing provision of proposed schemes is required to include a minimum of 40% 1 or 2 bed properties. Policy H/8 of the emerging Local Plan is less prescriptive and states that the mix of properties within developments of 10 or more dwellings should achieve at least 30% for each of the 3 categories, with the 10% margin to be applied flexibly across the scheme.
92. This policy is being given considerable weight in the determination of planning applications due to the nature of the unresolved objections, in accordance with the guidance within paragraph 216 of the NPPF quoted above. As the application is outline only, a condition requiring this mix is recommended to ensure that the scheme policy compliant. The illustrative layout indicates that development on the eastern edge of the scheme would be limited to single storey in height. Whilst this is a matter to be finalised as part of the scale of development at the reserved matter stage, this would help to secure a number of smaller properties and accommodation suitable for a range of ages and needs within the final scheme, enhancing the social sustainability of the development.

Character of the village edge and surrounding landscape

Landscape Impact

93. The application site was included within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) which formed part of the evidence to support the emerging Local Plan. Site 050 proposed 80 dwellings on the land that forms the main body of the application site. The north eastern portion of the site was included as part of a separate site although this would not be developed as part of the indicative scheme submitted in this application.
94. In relation to landscape and townscape character, the report assessing the potential of this site for development confirms that Swavesey lies within a predominantly flat arable landscape with some hedgerows and clumps of trees breaking up long views across the countryside, as is typical of the Fen Edge character area. Views of the village from the east indicate a strong, virtually continuous edge of groups of buildings, interspersed with clumps of trees and hedgerows. The prevailing pattern of development at the southern end of the village is a linear arrangement of buildings along Main Street, Middle Watch and Boxworth End.
95. The report considered that the site is very rural and open, with a strong countryside character, which sweeps into the built up area, providing a connection between the streetscene and the surrounding rural area. The report concluded that 'development of this greenfield site will completely alter the rural character of this relatively undeveloped part of the village' and that development of the site could not

satisfactorily be mitigated from a landscape or townscape character perspective.

96. The applicant has submitted a Landscape Visual Impact assessment (LVIA) with the application. The report highlights the importance of the approximately 2 metre high hedgerow along the frontage of the site as a landscape feature. The report highlights that only 3% of the hedgerow would be removed to facilitate access to the development and at the density of development proposed, a 15 metre deep 'buffer' area could be retained between the hedgerow and the building line of the nearest properties. The report acknowledges that there would be a significant magnitude of change to the character of the landscape due to the erection of buildings beyond this hedgerow and considers the significance of this change to be moderate in landscape character terms.
97. In relation to the loss of the gap between developed parts of the village, the key reason for the designation of the site as important countryside frontage in the LDF and the emerging Local Plan, the LVIA concludes that whilst there would be high degree of significance of change to the character of the landscape, the magnitude of this change is considered to be limited by the inclusion of a significant amount of open space adjacent to the entrance of the site and the retention of views through from the access point, which due to the height of the existing hedge, is the only point where expansive views of the open countryside beyond the buildings can be readily appreciated.
98. In terms of impact on the predominantly linear character of the southern end of the village, the LVIA considers that the harm in this respect is limited by the fact that the site is sandwiched between two elements of residential development which extend eastwards from Boxworth End – those being the properties on Ramper Road to the north and the mobile home park to the south. The southern edge of the developable area on the indicative masterplan would not extend as far eastward as the mobile home park and the northern portion of the development would not extend beyond the edge of the plots on the northern side of Ramper Road, thereby reducing the overall landscape impact. The prevailing linear character of the southern edge of Boxworth End would therefore not be significantly harmed by the proposed development. A material consideration in assessing the significance of the linear form of this end of the village is the fact that 30 dwellings to the rear of 18 Boxworth End were approved on appeal along a stretch of the road, where the appeal Inspector concluded the benefit of reducing the shortage of housing outweighed the landscape harm of that scheme.
99. Another key feature of this site which would limit the wider landscape impact of the proposals is the containment provided by the hedgerows on the eastern boundary of the field, particularly the north eastern section which is of a density and height that provides a natural boundary to the wider landscape and lines through with the existing buildings on Ramper Road. In approaches to the village from further east along Ramper Road, the development would still be visible despite this screening, which is to be thinned out but supplemented by new planting in the indicative proposal. However, they would be viewed within close proximity of the existing houses on Ramper Road. The eastern most extent of the development would also be limited to single storey development on the density parameter plan submitted with the application, which could be conditioned as an approved plan at this outline stage.
100. Policy CH/7 of the LDF relates to the protection of Important Countryside Frontages, a designation which applies along the western edge of this site. The policy states that 'Important Countryside Frontages are defined where land with a strong countryside character either:

- a. Penetrates or sweeps into the built up area providing a significant connection between the streetscene and the surrounding rural area; or
- b. Provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of the village framework

Planning permission will be refused if it would compromise these purposes.'

Policy NH/13 of the emerging Local Plan repeats the same objectives.

- 101. As a policy which seeks to restrict the supply of housing, in line with the judgements in the cases of *Richborough v Cheshire East* and *Suffolk Coastal DC v Hopkins Homes*, policy CH/7 should be considered out of date and therefore be afforded limited weight in the decision making process. The same limited weighting applies to policy NH/13 given its emerging status. Nevertheless, it is considered that the proposals would allow for the retention of the vast majority of the hedgerow frontage and would allow for the retention of a view through the central part of the site, to the existing buildings and beyond. As a result, prominent views of the development would be limited to the local context within close proximity of the site and adjacent buildings. The tall hedgerow would remain the dominant feature on the approach to the village along Boxworth End and setting the building line of properties back 15 metres into the site would retain a contrast between the frontage of this site and adjacent development along the main road, which is predominantly closer to the roadside.
- 102. The Council's Landscape and Design Officers have raised no objections to the principle of the development from a landscape or townscape perspective. The site is not subject to any national designations. It is classified on a regional level as being part of the Bedfordshire and Claylands Landscape Character Area and at a local level, the site is within the Lowland Village Farmlands Character Area.
- 103. The indicative plan has been amended to show a larger area of open space in front of the farm house and buildings by moving the internal access road closer to the entrance to the site. The tree and shrub planting initially shown to the south of the pond has been removed and this would allow views through the central part of the site, between the existing buildings, to the landscape beyond. The open space has been reconfigured to allow a view through the site to the north of the farm buildings. These alterations to the indicative layout have improved the permeability of the scheme. The retention of the hedge along the front of the site is welcomed.
- 104. The plans have been amended to demonstrate that the central part of the site (indicative density of 40 dwellings per hectare) would not be overly reliant on flatted development and as such, parking courts would not be a dominant feature on the streetscene. The arrangement of buildings would be graded out so that at the front, rear, northern and southern edges would all be below a density of 30 dwellings per hectare.
- 105. Within the context of a lack of five year housing land supply, the Inspector for the New Road, Melbourn appeal (199 dwellings and a care home) provided guidance in a case where landscape harm is identified and balancing this against the need to address the lack of housing land supply. In that case the Inspector concluded in relation to landscape harm that 'while the development of this site would cause very limited harm to the wider landscape, there would be a greater localised harm to the character of the village and its countryside setting, in conflict with development control policies. This carries fairly significant weight (in the planning balance).' In weighing this harm

against the benefit of housing provision in that location, the Inspector concluded that '...while there would be some notable adverse impacts, they would not be sufficient to outweigh the very significant benefits of the proposal (i.e. the provision of additional housing in the District).'

106. Officers acknowledge that each site must be assessed on its own merits and that the number of houses proposed at Melbourn was greater than the 90 proposed in this scheme. However, the Inspector acknowledged that there would be 'screening' of open views from the edge of the village and a loss of views over open fields in that case. This harm applies in a similar way to this scheme, due to the Important Countryside Frontage designation and has been commented upon by local residents and reflects the concern in terms of the scale of the development.
107. In light of the above assessment, it is considered that, on balance, the harm to the landscape arising from this proposal would not itself outweigh the benefits of providing additional housing (including 40% affordable) in a settlement which the Village Classification Report considered suitable to be elevated to Minor Rural Centre status i.e. one of the more sustainable villages in the District. As such, the degree of conflict with adopted policy CH/7 is not considered to cause sufficient harm to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposals.

Trees

108. The District Council Tree Officer has raised no objections to the proposals. The Arboricultural Report submitted with the planning application provides a comprehensive overview of the nature of the tree cover on the site. An updated arboricultural impact assessment and a tree protection plan will be required at the reserved matters stage to inform the proposed layout. These requirements can be secured by condition at this outline stage.

Ecology

109. The ecological surveys submitted with the planning application are considered to be suitable. Overall, the mitigation measures proposed in relation to Great Crested Newts (GCN) are considered to be acceptable but further details are required in relation to the location and size of the proposed Receptor site for GCN, details of the amount of habitat to be lost and details of the management of rough grassland areas will be required to ensure that adequate suitable habitat for GCN is retained on the site.
110. Details of the seasonal timing for the erection of fencing, the translocation process and site clearance will be required. Details of mitigation measures to be implemented to prevent harm being caused to amphibians as a result of the sustainable drainage measures to be installed will also need to be secured.
111. It is considered that the submission and approval of a detailed mitigation strategy for the protection of Great Crested Newts can be secured by condition as the location of receptor sites will not be established until the reserved matter stage when the layout is to be fixed. This approach is considered to be reasonable as the Ecology Officer has stated that no further survey work is required i.e. the overall risk to protected species has been fully assessed and does not give rise to any concerns. Conditions requiring compliance with the mitigation measures in the ecological report and details of biodiversity enhancements are all considered reasonable and can be secured at this outline stage.

Highway safety and parking

112. The Local Highway Authority has removed its objection following the submission of additional information, subject to the securing of footpath improvements and additional cycle stands at Swavesey Guided Busway being secured. Details of these schemes should be secured through conditions at this outline stage. The traffic survey data is considered to have been collected in a neutral month and is therefore acceptable.
113. The impact of traffic on the Ramper Road routes to Cottenham and Girton has been considered in the revised information. The proposed upgrading of bus shelters adjacent to the site includes seating and shelters. A scheme for these improvements can be secured by condition. Real Time Passenger Information displays will also need to be installed at a cost of £54,000 and this should also be included in the Section 106 Agreement. Swavesey Parish Council has agreed in principle to taking on the provision and ongoing maintenance of the improved facilities. Details of improvements of the footpaths and a pedestrian crossing across Middle Watch, in addition to the provision of additional cycle stands at the Swavesey Guided Busway stop are schemes that the applicant has agreed to in principle. Details of the footpath improvement scheme can be conditioned, a commuted sum can be secured via the Section 106 Agreement for additional cycle stand provision at the Guided Busway stop.
114. There is no objection to the new access on highway safety grounds, with adequate visibility splays being achieved along Boxworth End in both directions from the proposed access. Given the low density of the scheme, it is considered that there would be sufficient space to locate 2 car parking spaces on each plot, meeting the requirements of the LDF standards of 1.5 spaces per dwelling across developments with additional room for visitor parking.

Residential amenity

115. The application is for outline planning permission and therefore the layout plan submitted is for illustrative purposes only. However, officers need to be satisfied at this stage that the site is capable of accommodating the amount of development proposed, without having a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties. The indicative layout plan is considered to indicate that the separation distances as prescribed in the adopted design guide (25 metres between elevations with habitable windows, 12 metres from elevations with windows facing blank elevations) can be achieved in terms of loss of light, overbearing and overlooking issues. It is considered that sufficient separation could be retained to the rear elevations of the plots on Ramper Road to the north and the mobile home park to the south could be adequately preserved at the detailed stage.
116. At approximately 32 dwellings per hectare within the developed area, the average plot size of would be approximately 312 square metres in size (although space for the internal roads would need to be deducted from this). This is considered sufficient to achieve a dwelling size greater than the minimum residential space standards proposed in policy H/11 of the emerging Local Plan (85 square metres for a 3 bed house with 5 occupants) and allow sufficient space for 80 square metres of garden space (the upper limit of the standards within the adopted Design Guide) along with the required space for driveways etc to the front of the plots. Given this situation, it is considered that the concerns expressed regarding the proximity of development to the rear of the existing dwellings on Ramper Road could be addressed satisfactorily when the detailed layout is to be fixed at the reserved matter stage.
117. Standard conditions relating to the construction phase of the development have been

recommended by the EHO and these can be attached to the decision notice. It is considered that the proposed number of units can be accommodated on the site without having any adverse impact on the residential amenity of neighbouring properties or the occupants of the proposed development.

Surface water and foul water drainage

Surface water drainage

118. Cambridgeshire County Council as LLFRA and Swavesey IDB have not objected to the proposals.
119. The applicant has submitted a Flood Risk Assessment with the application. Surface water would be discharged into the watercourse on the eastern boundary of the site. Specific details of the surface water drainage strategy can be secured by condition and details of management and maintenance can be secured via the Section 106 Agreement.
120. The information confirms that the measures would attenuate a volume of surface water to accommodate a 1 in 100 annual probability level of flood risk, with zero discharge for 3 weeks of the year. Both swales and attenuation basins would be included within the development to provide a sustainable drainage system. Compliance with the flood risk assessment, including full details of all attenuation measures (including the mechanism for monitoring surface water levels on the site) can be secured by condition at this outline stage.
121. The north eastern part of the site that is located within flood zone 2 (higher risk of flooding) would not be developed in the indicative scheme and this space would not be required to achieve the 90 units proposed to ensure that development is of an appropriate density. As such, subject to the details of the surface water drainage system and foul water drainage being secured by condition and informatives relating to pollution control, the Environment Agency have no objection to the proposals.

Foul water drainage

122. Anglian Water has no objected to the proposals. In their consultation response, Anglian Water confirm that waste water from the development would be treated at Over Water Recycling Centre. On the basis of a recent review, the facility does currently have capacity to deal with flows from the development.
123. The sewerage system is considered to have available capacity to accommodate the additional demands placed on the infrastructure by the proposed development.
124. In terms of foul water, Anglian Water has confirmed that there is capacity within the sewage network to cope with the additional demands placed on the existing infrastructure.

Section 106 contributions

125. In addition to the requirements of the County Council as Education Authority and the NHS already identified in this report, the Section 106 Officer has confirmed that the level of open space to be provided is compliant with the Open Space SPD for developments of this size and the LEAP satisfies provision for children aged 2-8. This assumption is made on the basis that the majority of the proposed SUDS basin is

predominantly dry. If this was not to be the case, once the layout is to be fixed at the reserved matters stage, a contribution for off site provision of open space would be sought.

126. To meet the needs of older children, a contribution of approximately £15,000 towards a youth facility on the sports ground (or alternative site if a more suitable location is identified) is required. A contribution of approximately £100,000 (made up of a tariff based contribution based on housing mix) is considered necessary to provide a contribution towards preparing the agricultural land acquired by the Parish Council through the appeal on land to the south of this site (approval of 30 dwellings) for use as formal sports space. As there have not been 5 pooled contributions made towards this infrastructure previously, this contribution is considered to be compliant with the CIL regulations. The on site informal public open space provision is considered to be sufficient to ensure that no offsite requirement should be sought.
127. It is considered that a contribution of approximately £45,000 towards the upgrading of the facilities and physical condition of the Memorial Hall community facility would allow the scheme to comply with current and emerging local policies which require the impact of development on the capacity of community indoor facilities to be mitigated. As there have not been five pooled contributions made towards this infrastructure previously, this contribution is considered to be compliant with the CIL regulations.
128. Household Waste Receptacles charged at £73.50 per house, £150 per flat and a monitoring fee of £1,500 (flat fee) are required by the District Council The County Council's requirements as Highway Authority in terms of the upgrading works to pedestrian facilities along High Street would be in addition to this.

Other matters

Archaeology and Heritage

129. The site is considered to be of potential archaeological interest. The site is located in the southern part of the village, in an area which has seen little previous archaeological investigation, although it is apparent that the current settlement had expanded into this area by at least the late 17th century. The County Historic Environment Record (HER) details evidence of earthworks within the proposed development area, interpreted as possible holloways. Lidar data contained within the heritage statement submitted in support of the application suggests that this is a field boundary, but this would not be consistent with the form and extent of the feature.
130. A geophysical survey has also been undertaken which has not added to understanding of the significance of the site. This however is simply an indication that the feature has proved unresponsive to this technique and should not be taken as evidence for lack of significance of this, or any other archaeological assets which are likely survive within the site. Details of any mitigation required will be provided in a written update in advance of the planning committee meeting.
131. Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires decision-makers to pay "special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."
132. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF, in the section dealing with the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, states that "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great

weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification".

133. Paragraph 133 of the NPPF states that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm or to a total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
134. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF says that "(where) a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use".
135. Recent planning case law has confirmed that having "special regard" to the desirability of preserving the setting of a listed building under section 66 involves more than merely giving weight to those matters in the planning balance. In particular, case law has confirmed that "preserving" in the context of Listed Buildings means doing no harm.
136. No. 36 Boxwoth End is a grade II listed property which is located opposite the land which would form the southern portion of the development. The proposal would be visible in views above the hedgerow along the front of the site and directly opposite the listed building. However, the height of that hedge, the extent of the 'buffer' area to be retained between the rear of the hedge and the building line of the western edge of the development and the fact that the road separates the listed building from the site are all factors which are considered to mitigate any harm to the setting of that listed building.
137. There is a group of listed buildings on the eastern side of Middle Watch, approximately 350 metres north of the entrance to the development. Given the separation distance to be retained and the fact that existing dwellings on Ramper Road dissect any direct view within the intervening distance, it is considered that the proposals would not result in any harm to the setting of that listed building.
138. The site is a significant distance from the southern boundary of the Swavesey conservation area and would be separated from it by a substantial amount of modern and relatively dense development. The proposed development would not extend eastwards for a distance significant enough to have an adverse impact on the setting of the conservation area.
139. Neither Historic England nor the District Council Historic Buildings Officer have raised any objections to the outline proposals.

Environmental Health

140. The Public Health Specialist has commented that the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is acceptable and that the scale of the scheme and the resulting impacts can be assessed without requiring the revision of the HIA.
141. There is no objection to the proposal in respect of air quality. However, to ensure that sensitive receptors in the vicinity of the development are not affected by the negative

impact of construction work such as dust and noise, as well as ensuring that the applicant complies with the Council's low emission strategy for a development of this scale, conditions should be included that require the submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan/Dust Management Plan, and an electronic vehicle charging infrastructure strategy.

142. It is considered that further assessment of the potential noise generated by traffic and vehicle movements on the A14 and closer primary routes, including Middle Watch, is required and the implications of this in terms of sound insulation measures which may need to be incorporated into the buildings that would front onto the highway. This assessment can be secured by condition at the outline stage. An assessment of the impact of artificial lighting resulting from the development can also be secured by condition in order to ensure that the strength of such light does not have any adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties or the surrounding area.
143. The site is considered to be a low risk in relation to land contamination and as such it is considered that a scheme of investigation into any potential harm and suitable remediation can be secured by condition at this outline stage, to ensure that the detailed layout does not result in any adverse impact in this regard, acknowledging the sensitive end use proposed for the site.
144. Noise, vibration and dust minimisation plans will be required to ensure that the construction phase of the scheme would not have an adverse impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents. These details shall be secured by condition, along with a restriction on the hours during which power operated machinery should be used during the construction phase of the development and details of the phasing of the development.
145. The applicant will be required to complete a Waste Design Toolkit at the reserved matters stage in order to show how it is intended to address the waste management infrastructure, and technical requirements within the RECAP Waste Design Management Design Guide. In addition conditions should secure the submission of a Site Waste Management Plan. Provision of domestic waste receptacles by the developer will be secured via the Section 106 agreement. The developer should ensure that the highway design allows for the use of waste collection vehicles and this is a detailed matter relating to the layout of the scheme at the reserved matters stage.
146. The applicant has indicated that a minimum of 10% of the energy needs generated by the development can be secured through renewable sources. A condition will be required to ensure that the noise impact of any plant or equipment for any renewable energy provision such as air source heat pumps is fully assessed and any impact mitigated.

Cumulative Impact

147. Officers are aware that there are other large scale applications for residential development in Swavesey where the principle of development relies on the District Council's deficit in five year housing land supply. These are the applications listed in paragraphs in relation to education provision. Each planning application has to be assessed in its own merits. Whilst officers realise that all development has the potential to contribute to a cumulative impact, the CIL regulations require that each applicant must only be responsible for mitigating the impact of that specific scheme.
148. The following paragraphs are split into the four areas identified in the reason for refusal of similar scale schemes in Swavesey to the development proposed in this

application, where it was considered that the cumulative impact of recently approved dwellings within the village alongside these schemes would have a detrimental impact upon: the capacity of the highway network, the capacity of the primary and secondary schools, the capacity of the doctors surgery and the capacity of the foul sewage drainage network.

149. Firstly, officers are of the view that only schemes of a size that would attract contributions to increasing education and health provision can be reasonably included in the assessment of cumulative impact. Officers have considered the cumulative impact of these schemes (those that have been approved and those at an advanced stage in the determination process) on the capacity of services and facilities in Swavesey and have worked with consultees to ensure that they have done the same, including in relation to education provision.

Highway network

150. The Local Highway Authority have considered the impact of the development on the capacity of all affected roads, including the impact of additional traffic on Ramper Road routes to Cottenham and Girton. The Local Highway Authority as statutory consultee consider that the level of trip generation in the morning and evening peak traffic periods arising from this development would not have an adverse impact on highway safety. Traffic surveying has been undertaken during neutral months of the year and indicate that the road network has capacity to cope with the additional flows from the development.

Education:

151. The County Council as Education Authority has considered the cumulative anticipated population increase of this proposal, the scheme east of Boxworth End (at an advanced stage in the determination process) and the recently approved schemes for 30 dwellings at land rear of 18 Boxworth End, the site at Mill Lane in Over and The Ridgeway at Papworth Everard. The County Council has concluded that the extensions already built at the Primary School is sufficient to accommodate the additional demand and that a viable project to further extend the Village College can mitigate the impact of all of these developments, subject to funding being secured via Section 106 agreements.
152. The County Council have made this assessment with knowledge that the Primary School and the Village College have written in objection to this application and the proposed schemes on Fen Drayton Road and Middle Watch (both refused). The key issue to be taken into account is that the development will not be occupied and the population increase realised immediately on the granting of outline planning permission.
153. Whilst the concerns expressed by the primary and secondary schools are noted, County and District Council officers have factored in the forecasted changes in the catchment population during the build out and phased impact of different age groups in reaching this assessment, not just the immediate context. In Swavesey, this includes the significant changes in catchment areas that will be brought about through the development of schools at Northstowe, where the secondary school will be taking in pupils from 2018 (expected), before this development will be fully occupied. Even if the opening of the Northstowe school was delayed, this development would not be fully occupied until 2020 on the developers projected timetable and so the overall impact of the population increase would not be realised until that date.

Health:

154. In relation to the capacity of health services, whilst a specific scheme is not identified, the amount of space required to mitigate the population increase arising from this proposal amounts to one tenth of the space required per GP according to the NHS England guidelines. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is insufficient room to extend to the front of the surgery (due to the impact this would have on parking capacity), there is space at the rear of the site for an extension to the building. Given the modest nature of the required increase in floorspace required, it is considered that this could be achieved through internal modification rather than relying on a physical extension of the building. In relation to this application, the site is within walking distance of the surgery, which would reduce the likely level of additional pressure on the parking capacity of the surgery resulting from the proposed development.

Drainage:

155. In relation to surface water drainage, it is considered that the information submitted with this application would achieve the requirement not to result in additional surface water on the site once the development has been constructed. This is evidenced by the lack of objection to the proposals from the LLFRA and the IDB. In relation to foul water drainage, as explained previously in this report, Anglian Water have not objected and have confirmed that recent data collected indicated that there is capacity at the Over recycling Centre and within the foul drainage network to deal with the additional flows that will result from this development.
156. In relation to landscape impact, it is considered that this development would be sufficiently separated from other sites where large scale development is proposed to avoid cumulative impact in this regard.
157. Whilst concerns expressed by the Parish Council, the schools and local residents are fully recognised, there has to be harm identified for a planning application to be refused. For the reasons explained throughout this report, there is no such harm identified by any of the statutory consultees.
158. Following this assessment, officers are content that the sustainability credentials of this proposal have been demonstrated satisfactorily when assessed alongside the other sites identified in this report and that approval of this application would not prejudice the outcome of the other application.

Overall sustainability:

159. The Sustainability Appraisal which accompanied the SHLAA exercise on the site concluded that in 14 of the 46 categories, this site was considered unsustainable. The fact that the site is not within 800 metres of Cambridge City Centre and is not previously developed land are two factors apply to the vast majority of sites coming forward on the edge of settlements within the District due to the lack of five year housing land supply and the former applies to a number of sites within village frameworks. The northern edge of the site is just within 800 metres of the public house and newspaper shop but there is a convenience store and post office closer to the site. The lack of a train station within 800 metres of the site is a situation which likewise applies to a large number of settlements within the District.
160. The nearest main employment centre (Bar Hill) is more than 3 kilometres from the site. However, the Cygnus Business Park and Buckingway Business Park provide sources of employment within 3 kilometres and it is considered reasonable to factor in

access to the Guided busway, which is approximately 1.7 kilometres from the site (given that it is possible to cycle from the site to the Busway and there is an area designated for car drop off.) This service provides regular journeys to sources of employment in Cambridge and St. Ives. The site is within walking distance of a bus service which operates throughout the main part of the day Monday to Saturday and does allow commuting to and from Cambridge. It would be possible to connect to cycle routes via the pedestrian link to Middle Watch This includes the route along the Guided Busway route and there is a lit cycle path which runs from the southern edge of Swavesey to Buckingway Business Park.

161. The County Council as Education Authority consider that the issues relating to the capacity of the Primary School and Village College have been addressed through recently completed extension projects (completed since the publication of the SHLAA report and associated Sustainability appraisal).
162. Whilst the site is in excess of 800 metres to the primary school, this applies to all of the existing properties on Boxworth End and the extant scheme for 30 units recently granted on appeal (further away from the school than this site) and it would still be possible to walk from the development to the school, with the additional footway proposed. The same applies in relation to the distance to the existing recreation ground, although this site is much closer to the land that has been secured as a public recreation space as part of the 30 dwelling scheme and this proposal would contribute to the facilities to equip that new recreation ground. This land has been secured since the completion of the SHLAA process.
163. The other key area of assessment considered to be unsustainable in the Appraisal was landscape impact. However, as assessed in the main body of the report, there are no objections from the relevant consultees to this application and it is considered that, within the context of a lack of a five year housing land supply, this harm can be mitigated to a point where the negative impacts of the development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

Conclusion

164. In considering this application, the following relevant (to varying degrees, as assessed in the report) adopted Core Strategy and Development Plan policies are to be regarded as out of date while there is no five year housing land supply:

Core Strategy

ST/2: Housing Provision

ST/6: Group Villages

Development Plan

DP/1: Sustainable Development

DP/7: Village Frameworks

HG/1: Housing Density

HG/2: Housing Mix

NE/6: Biodiversity

NE/17: Protecting High Quality Agricultural Land

CH/2: Archaeological Sites

CH/4: Development Within the Setting of a Listed Building

CH/5: Conservation Areas

CH/7 Important Countryside Frontages

165. Policies ST/6 and DP/7 of the LDF are considered to carry some weight in the

determination of this application. Despite being considered out of date, the purpose of these policies is to restrict the number of residential units permitted in Group Villages as third behind Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres in the hierarchy of settlements. Whilst the purpose of guiding development to the most sustainable locations is consistent with the NPPF, the blanket application of the village hierarchy is considered to be flawed in assessing applications against the definition of sustainable development in the NPPF, as was highlighted in the recent appeal decision to allow 55 dwellings in Over.

166. Emerging policy S/9 is considered to limited weight in the determination of this application. However, the 2012 Village Classification Report, which is part of the evidence base behind the emerging Local Plan, acknowledges that Swavesey has a greater range of services and facilities than most Group Villages, including sources of employment. The evidence points to the Village College in this assessment but also a doctor's surgery and the Guided Busway in relatively close proximity. This is considered to be important evidence in assessing the suitability of Swavesey to accommodate larger scale development in a predominantly rural District that cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land.
167. Within the context of a lack of five year housing land supply and the consequent status of ST/6 and DP/7 as out of date, it is considered that the fact that this site is not within the existing village framework is not sufficient to warrant refusal, unless harm is identified in relation to the definition of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.
168. Policies HG/1, HG/2 and HG/3 are all housing policies which are considered to carry some weight in the decision making process as these relate to the density of development, housing mix and affordable housing, all of which contribute to sustainable development. In relation to the other relevant policies of the LDF quoted in this report are considered to be consistent with the definition of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF and therefore have been given some weight in the assessment of this application.
169. The site is located close to existing amenities, including a GP surgery and pre school, primary and secondary school provision all which are considered to have capacity to accommodate the population increase arising from the development. The developer has agreed to a package of enhancements including the upgrading of pedestrian facilities on the Boxworth End and the provision of additional cycle stands at the Guided Busway stop. The fact that bus services exist close to the site which would allow commuting to and from Cambridge is both a social and an environmental benefit of the scheme.
170. It is considered that the scheme includes positive elements which enhance social sustainability. These include the provision of 40% affordable housing within the development and public open space, including equipped areas of play. The package of contributions to be secured through the Section 106 towards the enhancement of offsite community facilities would be a wider benefit of the proposals, further enhancing the social sustainability of the scheme.
171. It is considered that the illustrative masterplan sufficiently demonstrates that up to 90 units could be located on the site in a manner that would allow grading of the density out toward the sensitive edges of the development and allow the retention of a substantial 'buffer' to the rear of the hedgerow along the front part of the site. The Important Countryside Frontage policy in the LDF is considered to be out of date given the lack of a five year housing land supply and can only therefore be afforded

limited weight in the decision making process, in accordance with the guidance within the NPPF. For the reasons stated in the main body of the report, it is considered, on balance, that the proposals would not have a significantly adverse impact on the character of this part of the village and as such, this harm would not meet the test of 'significantly and demonstrably' outweigh the benefits that 90 dwellings would make the reduction in the supply deficit and the provision of affordable housing in a District with a substantial need in this regard.

172. The illustrative layout is therefore considered to demonstrate that the density of development proposed would preserve the character of the landscape and the residential amenity of neighbouring properties. The layout at this stage is indicative only and it is considered that the detailed landscape and design comments can be addressed at the reserved matter stage as the principle of development at the quantum proposed is accepted.
173. It is considered that the issues raised in relation to environmental health, trees and ecology can be dealt with by condition.
174. It is considered that the scheme includes positive elements which enhance social sustainability. These include:
- the positive contribution of up to 90 dwellings towards the housing land supply in the district based on the objectively assessed need for 19,500 dwellings and the method of calculation and buffer identified by the Waterbeach Inspector
 - the contribution of 40% affordable housing in the context of a significant level of district wide housing need
 - public open space, including equipped areas of play.
 - the package of contributions to be secured through the Section 106 agreement towards the enhancement of offsite community facilities and pedestrian links
 - potential for access to public transport, services, facilities and employment
 - employment during construction to benefit the local economy.
 - potential to result in an increase in the use of local services and facilities
175. Overall, it is considered that the significant contribution the proposal would make to the deficit in the Council's five year housing land supply and the social benefits that would result from the development outweigh the potential landscape and environmental disbenefits. None of these disbenefits are considered to result in significant and demonstrable harm and therefore, it is considered that the proposal achieves the definition of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF.

Recommendation

176. Officers recommend that the Committee grants planning permission, subject to the following

177. **Section 106 Agreement**

To secure provision of onsite affordable housing, the provision of public open space, the management of the public open space and surface water drainage within the development and the community benefits and education contributions listed in Appendix 1, which shall be included in a written update prior to the meeting.

178. **Conditions**

- (a) Outline planning permission
- (b) Time limit for submission of reserved matters
- (c) Time limit for implementation (within 2 years of approval of reserved matters)
- (d) Approved plans
- (e) Landscaping details
- (f) Contaminated land assessment
- (g) Dust, noise, vibration mitigation strategy
- (h) Noise assessment relating to impact of road traffic on the A14 and primary routes adjacent to the site on the amenity of the occupants of the proposed development– including necessary mitigation measures
- (i) Details of renewable energy generation (including water efficiency/conservation measures) and within the development and associated noise assessment and mitigation measures – 10% renewables and compliance.
- (j) Scheme to detail upgrading of highway facilities on Boxworth End
- (k) Foul water drainage scheme
- (l) Surface water drainage scheme (including technical specification of surface water monitoring device)
- (m) Sustainable drainage strategy
- (n) Tree Protection measures including
- (o) Retention of boundary hedges
- (p) Compliance with flood risk assessment
- (q) Traffic Management Plan
- (r) Time restriction on the removal of trees
- (s) Detailed plans of the construction of the accesses
- (t) Pedestrian visibility splays
- (u) Site waste management plan
- (v) Restriction on the hours of power operated machinery during construction
- (w) Phasing of construction
- (x) Mitigation measures relating to Great Crested Newts
- (y) Compliance with ecological survey submitted
- (z) External lighting to be agreed
- (aa) Cycle storage
- (bb) Housing mix within market element to be policy compliant
- (cc) Boundary treatments
- (dd) Waste water management plan
- (ee) Construction environment management plan
- (ff) Details of piled foundations
- (gg) Fire hydrant locations
- (hh) Screened storage for refuse
- (ii) Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy

Informatives

- (a) Environmental health informatives
- (b) Exclusion of indicative plans from approval

Background Papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies

DPD 2007

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Submission 2014
- Planning File Reference: S/3391/16/OL

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