



Planning Committee Date	16 June 2022
Report to	South Cambridgeshire District Council Planning Committee
Lead Officer	Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development
Reference	21/05276/FUL
Site	2 Station Road, Great Shelford
Ward / Parish	Great Shelford
Proposal	Redevelopment to form 39 retirement living apartments for older persons including communal facilities, car parking and associated landscaping
Applicant	Churchill Retirement
Presenting Officer	Karen Pell-Coggins
Reason Reported to Committee	Subject of an appeal for non-determination
Member Site Visit Date	N/A
Key Issues	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Principle of development including loss of employment and location and scale of residential development2. Housing density3. Housing mix4. Affordable housing, vacant building credit and viability5. Developer contributions6. Character and appearance of the area7. Heritage assets8. Trees and landscaping9. Biodiversity10. Highway safety and parking11. Flood risk and drainage12. Neighbour amenity13. Renewable energy and water conservation14. Contamination
Recommendation	Refusal (for information only)

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This full application, as amended, seeks the development of 39 retirement living apartments for older persons including communal facilities, car parking and associated landscaping following demolition of the existing office buildings.
- 1.2 The application is currently subject of a planning appeal as it was not determined within the statutory time limit due to further information being submitted and subsequently consulted upon. The application is reported to the meeting for information only as the Council had to submit its statement of case in relation to the appeal on 27 May 2022. This was prior to it being able to be reported to the planning committee to determine whether the putative reasons for refusal were agreed.
- 1.3 The development is considered to provide community benefits in the form of a significant contribution towards specialist care housing in the district and a contribution towards affordable housing to outweigh the loss of employment on the site. These benefits carry significant weight.
- 1.4 However, it is not considered acceptable in terms of the lack of an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing taking into account vacant building credit and the economic viability of the scheme, the inadequate provision of developer contributions to mitigate the impact of the development, the density and quality of the development, and the impacts of the development upon the character and appearance of the area, amenities of neighbours and future occupiers, highway safety, and water quality.
- 1.5 The benefits of the development do not outweigh the harms identified above. In fact, the harms identified significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in this case. Therefore, officers will be recommending that the appeal is dismissed.

2.0 Site Description and Context

- 2.1 The site is located within the Great Shelford development framework. It measures approximately 0.29 of a hectare in area.
- 2.2 The site currently comprises three office buildings - The Stables, Link House/Granary House and The Maltings. The Stables is a one and a half storey building sited on the eastern boundary of the site adjacent to Station Road. Link House/Granary House is a two storey building on the southern boundary of the site. The Maltings is a one and a half storey building on the eastern boundary of the site.
- 2.3 There is a hard surfaced car park with 63 vehicle parking spaces between the buildings. A high wall aligns the northern boundary.

- 2.4 The site is situated adjacent to the boundary of the conservation area. There are no listed buildings within the vicinity of the site.
- 2.5 The site is situated in flood zone 1 (low risk). Part of the site is within a low surface water risk area.
- 2.6 Residential properties are situated to the north. The Cambridge to London Liverpool Street railway line lies to the east. Planning permission has been granted for a care home to the south. Station Road lies to the west.

3.0 Site Description and Context

- 3.1 The development would comprise 39 independent retirement living apartments (class C3) for people aged 60 years and over. It would provide a mix of 24 one bed units and 15 two bed units. A lodge manager would have an office on site to provide assistance to residents. The building would include a communal lounge.
- 3.2 The main garden would be to the south/east and would measure 700 square metres. There would be a terrace and small garden to the north outside the communal lounge.
- 3.3 16 vehicle parking spaces and 6 mobility scooter spaces would be provided to the north/ east.
- 3.4 The development would consist of a single building with an 'H' shape plan. It would be two and a half storeys in height on the Station Road frontage (approximately 9.3 metres) and partly three storeys in height to the central and rear sections (approximately between 9.3 metres and 12 metres).
- 3.5 The materials of construction for the building would be grey bricks, ivory render and standing seam metal cladding for the walls and blue/grey concrete tiles for the roofs. The windows would be grey UPVC.
- 3.6 The existing wall along the northern boundary would be retained and made good.
- 3.7 The existing trees on the site would be removed and replaced with new landscaping.

4.0 Relevant Site History

- 4.1 S/1434/00/F - Erection of two storey linking building for use as offices - Approved

S/0750/96/F - Office Extension - Approved

S/0706/83/F - Construction of covered way and change of use from stores to offices - Approved

5.0 Policy

5.1 National

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

National Planning Practice Guidance

National Design Guide 2021

5.2 South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018

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/7 – Development Frameworks

S/8 – Rural Centres

CC/1 – Mitigation and Adaption to Climate Change

CC/3 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Developments

CC/4 – Water Efficiency

CC/7 – Water Quality

CC/8 – Sustainable Drainage Systems

CC/9 – Managing Flood Risk

HQ/1 – Design Principles

HQ/2 – Public Art and New Development

NH/4 – Biodiversity

NH/6 – Green Infrastructure

NH/14 – Heritage Assets

H/8 – Housing Density

H/9 – Housing Mix

H/10 – Affordable Housing

H/12 – Residential Space Standards

SC/6 – Indoor Community Facilities

SC/7 – Outdoor Play Space, Informal Open Space & New Developments

SC/9 – Lighting Proposals

SC/10 – Noise Pollution

SC/11 – Contaminated Land

TI/2 – Planning for Sustainable Travel

TI/3 – Parking Provision

TI/8 – Infrastructure and New Developments

TI/10 – Broadband

5.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

Biodiversity SPD – Adopted February 2022

Sustainable Design and Construction SPD – Adopted January 2020

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD – Adopted November 2016

5.4 The following SPDs were adopted to provide guidance to support previously adopted Development Plan Documents that have now been superseded by the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018. These

documents are still material considerations when making planning decisions, with the weight in decision making to be determined on a case-by-case basis:

Health Impact Assessment SPD – Adopted March 2011
Development affecting Conservation Areas SPD – Adopted 2009
Landscape in New Developments SPD – Adopted March 2010
District Design Guide SPD – Adopted March 2010
Affordable Housing SPD – Adopted March 2010
Open Space in New Developments SPD – Adopted January 2009
Public Art SPD – Adopted January 2009
Trees and Development Sites SPD – Adopted January 2009

5.5 Other Guidance

5.6 Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019 – 2023

6.0 Consultations

6.1 Great Shelford Parish Council – Supports the application.

At the meeting of Great Shelford Parish Council's planning committee on 10th January, it was resolved that this application be recommended for Parish Council support as the plans show an improvement to the footpath running past the property which is currently too narrow for pedestrian usage.

That said, concern has been raised by Cllrs that there is only one lift in the development and that the mobility scooter parking is a long way from the main entrance. Both of these may be a problem for residents with mobility issues.

The parish council would also like to engage with the developer and the planning authority in discussions about the S106 Agreement.

Requests that the application is determined by the planning committee as prior to the application being made, the developers had attended a meeting of the parish council and members feel that this development addresses the need for that type of housing in the village and is of an appropriate size that it should be called in and discussed appropriately.

6.2 Urban Design Officer – Objects to the application, as amended.

Comments that the scheme will represent an unacceptable overdevelopment of the site with bulky building resulting in an adverse impact on the public realm. In addition, there has been an under provision of private amenity spaces some of which would lack privacy. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the objectives of the Policy HQ/1 (a, c-e & n) of the 'South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Plan' (2018) and the Paragraph 6.75 of the 'District Design Guide' (2010).

Character

The scheme represents over development of the site, and it appears as if the landscape and amenity spaces are left over spaces, rather than a space within which the building is placed and designed to create a positive sense of place and identity. The proposed floor area ratio is relatively high, approximately 70 % of the site is either built or highway/car dominated, with limited area left for soft landscaping and amenity space provision. This combined with the proposed height of 2.5 to 3-storeys have resulted in an out of context-built form which will adversely affect the existing context character. Such approach has also resulted in other issues such as the amenity space provision, parking space arrangement, overlooking and overbearing.

Height and Massing

The scheme is surrounded by two schemes to the north (existing townhouse scheme) and the south (the recently approved Carehome). The two approved schemes have two different approaches of addressing Station Road. The approved site to the south is characterised by generous step back along with a reasonable 2-storey height facing the road, which will form a key feature of Station Road and enhance the public realm quality. On the other hand, the scheme to the north is characterised by 2.5 story height building with minimum set back from the road.

The proposal suggests a similar scale arrangement to the adjoining existing townhouse scheme with continues building line. Such arrangement will impose a strong enclosure for a long stretch of the road, compromising the overall feeling of the space and the street character.

Given its scale and position, the development would be too prominent on Station Road compromising the quality of the street scene. The frontage of the development should be designed more comprehensively, taking into consideration the frontages configuration of the development to the north and the consented scheme to the south. The three frontages should work in harmony to improve the street character and the overall feeling of the space.

One of the key successes of the consented scheme to the south is the relationship with Station Road. The generous step back along with the reasonable 2-storey height facing the road had resulted in a harmonious relationship with the Road. Applicants are advised to adopt a similar approach to that of the consented scheme. Further stepping the building back and reducing the height of the building facing Station Road can offer a smooth visual transition between the consented scheme frontage to the south and the residential development to the north. Such approach can help to create a harmonious relationship between the three sites which is fundamental for the street character. In addition, stepping down the roof in some parts of the main stretch of the block (running east-west) is also essential to minimise the overall bulk of the development, and can also offer additional private amenity spaces for the residents.

Given the proposed massing of the scheme and the closeness to the southern edge, it is considered that the proposal will result in loss of privacy and be visually dominant to the consented scheme to the south, and consequently compromising the public realm quality.

The proximity to Station Road would also compromise the privacy of the ground floor apartment facing the road. A quick measurement shows that a distance of 1.8m-2.5m is only left between the windows/doors of the ground floor apartments and the public footpath.

Layout

The proposed shape does not seem to work for the site layout. The proposed shape has resulted in squeezing the building quite tight to its boundaries (especially to the south), splitting the amenity space into two parts with poor natural surveillance in the connection point and unsatisfactory relationship between the eastern edge of the building, the parking spaces, and the amenity space to the east. Such approach has also resulted in overbearing to the consented scheme to the south. Officers believe that the 'L' or 'T' shapes, as presented in the DAS, page 37, with some refinement, could have provided a better solution.

Whilst the number of the parking spaces provided on the site seems reasonable, the way these spaces are designed, however, is not satisfactory. It feels that the main parking spaces area is invading the amenity space to the east, creating an awkward relationship with this edge. In addition, this area lacks meaningful soft landscaping to minimise the cars visual dominance over the space. Such arrangement has also resulted in a poor view out of the apartments which would be facing this parking area.

Some of the parking spaces at the site entrance point are arranged randomly and are not integrated to the development, which has resulted in a poor sense of arrival. In addition, no blue badge spaces are provided on the site which is not acceptable.

It seems some electric wheelchairs parking spaces are provided for the residents which is welcomed. However, these must be in a more convenient spaces, i.e., away from the refuse area and as close as possible to the entrance.

No information is submitted in relation to the provision of cycle parking for staff, visitors, or residents.

By virtue of the bulky massing of the proposed building and the scale of the approved scheme to the south, it is considered that the minimum standards (30 m for three storey building) set out in Paragraph 6.68 of the 'District Design Guide SPD' (2010) should be achieved to ensure that there is no overlooking issue.

Amenity space

Some private and communal amenity space areas are provided around the building. However, given the overall layout design, these spaces are considered insufficient for the number of the expected residents. Some areas such as that to the south-east and north-west are very tight, and it is unlikely that they can deliver a suitable and usable spaces for residents.

Paragraph 6.75 of the 'District Design Guide SPD' (2010) requires that a minimum of 25 m² should be allowed for each apartment as communal garden. In addition, upper floor apartment should have use of private balcony, of a minimum of 3 m². Whilst the measurement of the provided private amenity spaces on the ground floor measure just about to meet the required minimum area, it is considered, however, that some of these areas cannot provide the safe and usable space for residents.

Additional information is provided in relation to the nature of the amenity space to the front of the building entrance point. Officers agree with the applicant that this 'semi- public space' would help to improve the character of street and the entrance frontage. However, this area should not be counted as private amenity space for residents as it would fail to meet the privacy and day light standards.

The connection area between the eastern and southern amenity spaces lacks natural surveillance and the green stretch to the front of the scheme (facing Station Road) is too shallow to be considered useable

The submitted details shows that only some apartment would benefit from balconies, contrary to Paragraph 6.75 of the 'District Design Guide SPD' (2010). The applicant is encouraged to provide more balconies or winter gardens (enclosed glazed balconies) to ensure that all residents have access to sunlight and fresh air in their own private amenity space.

In the response to the initial comments, the applicant stated that the residents' lounge is an important area of residential amenity for these types of schemes which can be used all year round and in the evenings. Whilst Officers agree that these indoor spaces are as important as the outdoor ones, it is observed, however, that only one Lounge space (90 m²) located on the ground floor is provided for the expected 50 residents, which is considered insufficient. The number and location of the lounge/lounges should take into consideration the age group of the residents and their mobility. Officers still believe that at least one lounge area should be provided for residents in each floor, possibly with access to balcony/terrace on the upper floors. The two types of amenity spaces would have significant mental benefit for the residents as the Covid-19 situation proved.

Officers observed that the residents of the eastern wing of the building would have to travel through the building to the south-western end to access the amenity space which is not satisfactory. As the scheme is

designed for retired/elderly people, an easy and direct access to the outdoor amenity spaces is required.

Architecture

Officers cannot see the value of commenting on the architecture and the material palette till issues related to the fundamental aspects of the scheme such as massing, and height are addressed.

Given the age group of the expected residents, it is very important that the design should ensure that an easy and direct access to the outdoor amenity spaces is provided. This is not the case with the current proposal.

Due to the scale of the development and Officers concerns over the design of the scheme, the applicant is asked to engage with the Council's specialist to improve on the design via a design workshop. The scheme should then be presented to the Greater Cambridgeshire Design Review Panel (GCDRP) for independent viewpoint.

6.3 Landscape Officer – Objects to the application.

Comments that the landscape proposals, as currently shown on the landscape masterplan, are disappointing and could be greatly improved. The large mass of the building seems overbearing within the site resulting in the landscape being somewhat meagre and more of a setting for the building and car park than a garden for the enjoyment of the residents.

The car park dominates the area the north of the building and is hard up against the boundary with the railway line to the east leaving no space for a landscape buffer. The garden area is mainly focused to the south of the building with the owner's lounge, with its own small terrace area, to the north.

The approach to the amenity landscape offer for residence, as expressed on page 57 of the Design and Access Statement, is also disappointing. It seems to be downgrading most of the landscape offer to one where it is more important to provide a view from the building instead of providing a garden space to be physically enjoyed. For any communal building, especially one for older people, a garden space should be offering features to promote sociability and to be part of nature and of course it can also promote biodiversity. The last two years have taught us the importance of outdoor spaces. The design of communal landscapes should be an important factor and a great opportunity to this type of development.

We would encourage a review of the landscaped areas to include a larger garden area that is well connected to the private and communal areas of the building. It should contain areas for being sociable and the enjoyment of the planting with all its colour, texture and scents. It should contain secluded areas for solitary uses, perhaps a shelter to provide shade and cover out of the rain and sociability, raised planting areas for gardening for

the less mobile and a productive area for growing herbs and a few vegetables or perhaps fruit trees.

Owner's lounge

It is appreciated that there will be other calls on south facing private and public areas, but the owner's lounge and small terrace is on the north side of the building and isolated from the main garden. By placing it to the north of the building the lounge and terrace will constantly be in the shade and only have views of the car park access road. The owner's lounge should be the social hub of the garden as well as the building. All garden facilities should emanate from the lounge and its terrace. On the current building layout, it should therefore be on the south side to have immediate access to the garden. Currently the only communal entrances to the garden are from a fire door at the end of the corridor of the northwest wing or the car park. Garden entrances should be inviting to residents and not circuitous or inconvenient.

Inclusivity

There are no garden paths within the design which will result in the exclusion of any residents that are less mobile and use a wheelchair. It also deters the able bodied from wandering through the garden in the winter months. Private patio areas - all patio areas to ground floor flats are too small to be useful. The small privacy gardens along Station Road are not deep enough and too close to the public footpath.

Scooter Store

The mobility scooter store accommodating six spaces to north of the building off the car park access road is not conveniently located. It has no immediate entrance to the building unless you walk through the refuse store. Users have to walk around to the main entrance. Six spaces seems under provided for this type of older persons accommodation where residence still wish to remain as active as possible but may be experiencing some mobility issues.

Car park

It is unfortunate that the car park wraps around the northeast corner of the building lessening the garden area and resulting in one apartment only have views of the car park or access road.

Drainage

It is noted that there are no above ground sustainable drainage features such as swales, rain gardens and ground depressions to temporarily store or convey surface water. Features such as these greatly enhance the amenity of a landscape and could offer biodiversity benefits. On reading the Flood Risk & Drainage Technical Note it appears that because the existing site comprises made ground there is a risk of elevated groundwater which might preclude the use of infiltration drainage. The same report recommends that a ground investigation is completed at discharge of condition stage and 'wherever practicable infiltration drainage is promoted'. There may also be ground contaminants. From a landscape

perspective to promote infiltration drainage at discharge of condition is rather too late since surface water drainage features should be an integral part of the landscape design. We would strongly recommend that a ground investigation is carried out as soon as possible to ascertain any contamination levels and to run infiltration tests and determine whether surface water features are achievable. We note that there currently is a large underground attenuation tank beneath much of the lawned area. We would prefer such features to be beneath hard surfaces. If this feature must be included, or a similar one, we need to understand its depth and extent as soon as possible to ensure that it has sufficient soil cover to enable the landscape above to be successful (we need a minimum of 500mm of soils above).

Conclusion

In terms of securing high quality design the landscape proposal for this residential older persons development should be reviewed and further facilities incorporated. Currently it does not comply with Policy HQ/1: Design Principles, particularly c, f, g, and m.

6.4 Ecology Officer – Has no objections.

Comments that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination, and with appropriate mitigation measures secured, the development can be made acceptable in terms of the impacts upon protected and priority species and habitats.

The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone for Dernford Fen SSSI and two County Wildlife Sites but no consultation with Natural England is necessary. There are no ponds on site and the risk to Great Crested newt is negligible. Buildings 1, 2 and 3 and the two trees on site have negligible potential for roosting bats and no further surveys are required. Good practice measures should be followed to avoid impacts to hedgehogs.

Supports the biodiversity enhancements specified in the appraisal which have been recommended to secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Recommends conditions in relation to works to be carried out in accordance with the submitted report, an ecological enhancement layout, and a lighting design strategy.

6.5 Conservation Officer – Has no objections.

6.6 Trees Officer – Has no objections.

6.7 Environmental Health Officer – Has no objections subject to conditions.

Comments that the applicant has submitted a noise assessment, in support of the application, in line with BS:8233 to demonstrate that the

site, located between a road and trainline can be suitably mitigated. The applicant demonstrates that future occupants of the development can experience an acceptable noise level within the property, providing the recommendations made within the acoustic report undertaken by 24Acoustics is undertaken.

Recommends conditions in relation to a noise insulation scheme to protect the dwellings and amenity space from railway and road noise, a Construction environmental Management Plan, and hours of use of site machinery and deliveries.

6.8 Contaminated Land Officer – Has no objections subject to conditions.

Comments that previous development of the site is likely to have given risk to variable thicknesses of made ground of unknown nature and the site is being developed into a sensitive end use (residential). Adjoining the southern boundary of the site is a former fuel depot, from which there is evidence of possible migration of contaminants. Subsequently a number of potential pollutant linkages have been identified.

Recommends conditions in relation to a detailed investigation into contamination and remediation of any contamination found.

6.9 Sustainability Officer – Requires further information in relation to the electric heating.

Comments that the development would have a fabric first approach to include energy efficiency and low/zero (LZC) carbon solutions such as building fabric that exceeds Building Regulations Part L, thermally efficient building envelope, orientation and glazing to maximise natural daylight, and 100% electric heating to reduce carbon emissions:

A 42.5 kWp solar PV array with a minimum output of 36,456kWh/annum will be installed on the development which should offset enough carbon to ensure the proposed development achieves Building Regulations Part L compliance as well as reduce emissions by a further 10%.

An overheating risk should be designed out.

The development would have water efficient sanitaryware and appliances and Building Regulations Part G water calculations have been provided, demonstrating that residential dwellings should consume no more than 108.72 litres per person per day.

6.10 Affordable Housing Officer – Requires further information in relation to when the buildings were last in use and marketing for each building after vacated to show marketing for us for three years. This may include evidence such as Council Tax, or Business Rate Records, sworn statements and photographic evidence.

In 2017, Sheffield Hallam University were commissioned by South Cambridgeshire District Council, in collaboration with a range of local partners to assess the housing, care and support needs of older people in Greater Cambridge. The study identified that in Greater Cambridge (South Cambridgeshire DC and Cambridge City) the number of people aged 75 and over is set to near double between 2016 and 2036, when over 65s will constitute nearly 1 in 5 of the population. In the wider county, growth is projected to be highest among the over 90s age group, which is set to grow by 181% from 6,148 to 17,292 between 2016 and 2036. The impact of this demographic change is likely to be felt most strongly in rural districts with South Cambridgeshire expecting to see the largest increase in its over 75s at 98% by 2036. At the sub-district levels, ward population projections suggest some areas will see triple digit percentage increases in the number of over 75 year olds by 2036. This is likely to be pronounced in areas to the fringe of Cambridge, but also in wards such as Bourn (SCDC) and Castle (Cambridge). [Source: Sheffield Hallam University: Older people's housing, care and support needs in Greater Cambridge 2017-2036].

It is well versed that the District is facing a rapidly ageing population. The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019 sets out that both Councils (Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire) are keen to promote a range of housing options to accommodate people and families throughout their lifetime across all tenures to enable them to live safely and independently for as long as possible. It acknowledges the need for the provision of 'downsizer' accommodation so that older people who want to move to smaller and more suitable accommodation have the option to do so and be able to remain in their local community.

The Strategy acknowledges that loneliness and isolation is one of the biggest issues that may affect older people, and that homes for older people should be promoted that are well located to services and facilities and well integrated into the community, where people of all ages can help support each other.

The Strategy summarises the projected need for specialist accommodation, based on the Sheffield Hallam research:

- Approximately 5% of new supply to be age exclusive homes – likely to take the form of mainstream housing built with older people in mind, i.e. meeting Building Regulations Part 4 (2 or 3).
- Around 7% of homes to be specialist housing for older people, where the size of development makes this practicable. This could take the form of care ready type accommodation or extra care
- Appropriate provision of additional care beds.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Adult Social Care Market Position Statement 2018/19, identifies the following key pressures for South Cambridgeshire District:

- Homecare capacity

- Shortage of Residential, Dementia, Nursing and Nursing Dementia provision
- Care workforce recruitment – high cost of living
- Shortage of Personal Assistants

40% of dwellings within the development should be for affordable homes in accordance with Policy H/10: Affordable Housing.

This would result in a requirement for 12 dwellings applying vacant building credit as suggested by the applicant and 16 dwellings without applying vacant building credit.

If the Government policy considers that a building is “in use” over this time period in relation to CIL calculations then it cannot also be claimed that it is “vacant” when calculating vacant building credit. This means that VBC should only be applied where a building had not been in use for a continuous 6 month period over the previous 3 years. Any building that was proved to have been in use would not qualify for VBC. See Meldreth appeal decision.

The Council’s priority is to secure the provision of free serviced land for affordable housing as part of market developments. However, the Council recognises that there can be exceptional circumstances on certain smaller sites where an alternative to on-site provision may be appropriate. The decision whether a commuted sum is acceptable in any given circumstance will be considered as part of the determination of the planning application.

6.11 Section 106 Officer – Has no objections.

Comments that in respect of this application, planning obligations are sought in relation to the following: -

- a) Public Open Space
 - (i) Outdoor sports an offsite contribution of £27,275.13 towards the Great Shelford sport pavilion
 - (ii) Informal open space in the form of onsite space provision.
 - (iii) Allotments and Community Orchards an offsite contribution of £3,900 towards the improvement of the existing allotments in Great Shelford and provision of a community orchard
- b) Indoor Community Space an offsite contribution of £12,383.07 for improvements to Great Shelford Memorial Hall including a new kitchen
- c) Green Infrastructure an offsite contribution of £20,226 towards the creation of new green space at Wandlebury Park and/or the wider Gog Magog hills
- d) Burial provision an offsite contribution of £8,190 to improve and expand the Great Shelford cemetery
- e) Indoor Sports being a contribution of £10,237 towards indoor sports courts and £11,406 towards indoor swimming pool improvements at Sawston Sports Centre.
- f) Monitoring Fees being a contribution of £500

6.12 Economic Development Officer – Has no objections.

Comments that the buildings are in a sustainable location, adjacent to Great Shelford Station and the village amenities, however they appear in need of considerable investment to reconfigure and bring them up to the standard that the market expects.

The Greater Cambridge Employment Land and Economic Development Study states that Greater Cambridge's office stock saw growth of 41% to 907,000sqm between 2000/01 and 2018/19. Cambridge experienced a decline of 2% whereas South Cambridgeshire experienced a 107% increase in office stock, much higher than the national and regional rate.

There are supply pressures for small to mid-sized office occupiers in the city core, particularly between 1,000 to 5,000 sq. ft. (around 100 to 500 sqm) and demand for this bracket and larger floorspace in North-East Cambridge including the Science Park. Demand is high for wet labs, as space is highly specific, and companies seek flexible high quality floorspace, although the market is bringing forward more floorspace.

Villages in Greater Cambridge play an important role in providing for local employment and for supporting local clusters and has a strong office market, which has experienced floorspace gains. Over the past 17 years, Greater Cambridge's office stock has seen moderate growth from 634,000 sqm in 2000/01 to 907,000 sqm in 2018/19 which represents a 41% growth over this period and an annual growth rate of 2%. It is to be noted, however, that most office floorspace growth is occurring in South Cambridgeshire.

The pandemic has reduced demand for bespoke smaller office accommodation and hybrid working has increased the preference for shared/managed workspace that can be booked on a flexible basis as required. There is alternative provision of a higher quality currently available at Mill Court offices on Hinton Way and Sawston is located close by and has a good supply of available office accommodation of various types, including The Works at The Unity Campus, a newly refurbished development.

At the current time the highest demand is for highly specific wet and dry lab space. We are aware of office accommodation being converted to laboratories, however, this is taking place in high quality environments such as Cambridge Research Park where opportunities for similar businesses to cluster are already established/eco-systems already in play to facilitate co creation/entrepreneurship.

A shortage of creative workspace has also been identified, however, these premises tend to be sought in more urban locations and affordability is a key factor for the tenants when seeking accommodation.

Recent enquiries received by the Economic Development Team have been from organisations looking for large scale premises with very specific requirements which suggests that difficulty is not experienced securing general office accommodation.

The premises do appear to have been amply marketed but with higher quality alternative accommodation available in the immediate area, it is reasonable to assume that without considerable investment to reconfigure or convert to flexible, managed /shared workspace it will be difficult to secure long term tenants.

6.13 Local Highways Authority – Objects to the application, as amended.

The Local Highway Authority requests that the above planning application be refused in its present format for the following reasons:-

The inter-vehicle visibility splays as shown on drawing no. 536.0040.002, Rev B (Updated Site Layout) are acceptable to the Local Highway Authority. However, the area within each splay shall be kept clear of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times, including any proposed fencing to the front of the property located within the splays. Please add a note to the plan(s) stating this.

Reason: To provide adequate inter-visibility between the users of the access and the existing public highway for the safety and convenience of users of the highway and of the access.

Due to the proposed number of vehicles accessing the development, a dropped vehicular crossing is not suitable at this location. Therefore, the junction of the proposed vehicular access with the highway carriageway shall be laid out with 6.0 metre radius kerbs.

Reason: in the interests of highway safety.

The proposed vehicular access is unsatisfactory to serve the proposed development by reason of its inadequate width and the proposal would therefore likely result in stopping and manoeuvring of vehicles on the highway to the detriment of highway safety. Given the proposed vehicular access proximity to a railway level crossing, and to enable two domestic vehicles to pass wholly off of the adopted public highway, the Local Highway Authority would require that the access width be a minimum of 5 metres for a for a minimum distance of 10 metres as measured from the near edge of the highway boundary and not 4.5m in width as shown on the submitted plans.

Reason: in the interests of highway safety.

The smaller size of the parking spaces means that they may not encourage use. The parking/turning requirement may be satisfied if the applicant refers to the publication 'Car parking, What works where' (published by English Partnerships) in 2006 and show the dimensions for each of the proposed car parking spaces which should be 2.5m x 5m, with a 6m reversing space. The dimensions of 2.5m x 5m for a domestic car

parking space are taken from 'Car parking What works where' publication. The Manual for Street dimensions are taken directly from Design Bulletin 32 which was published in 1977. During the preceding thirty years (MfS 1 being published in 2007), domestic motor vehicles became larger, this trend has continued over the past fifteen years with the introduction of more safety features e.g. side impact bars etc., that cars of the late 1970's did not have. Simply put for an average sized domestic vehicle a bay of 2.4m x 4.8m is no longer fit for purpose. Reason: in the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety.

Whilst the applicant has stated in Section 5.1 of the submitted Transport Note that "a fire tender and refuse vehicle will not need to enter the site, given that both functions can be carried out from Station Road", the Local Highway Authority has serious concerns with regards to this proposal due to the proposed refuse collection point being in close proximity to the railway level crossing. The Local Highway Authority would like to highlight to the Local Planning Authority that the parking arrangement for the proposed development appears to be very constrained. The Local Highway Authority would seek a redesign so that a refuse vehicle and fire tender can enter, turn and leave the site in a forward gear. Reason: in the interest of highway safety

6.14 Network Rail – Has no objections.

Strongly recommends the developer complies with the following comments and requirements to maintain the safe operation of the railway and protect Network Rail's infrastructure. The developer must ensure that their proposal, both during construction and after completion does not:

- a) encroach onto Network Rail land
- b) affect the safety, operation or integrity of the company's railway and its infrastructure
- c) undermine its support zone
- d) damage the company's infrastructure
- e) place additional load on cuttings
- f) adversely affect any railway land or structure
- g) over-sail or encroach upon the air-space of any Network Rail land
- h) cause to obstruct or interfere with any works or proposed works or Network Rail development both now and in the future

6.15 Lead Local Flood Authority – Objects to the application, as amended.

As stated in our previous responses, it is currently proposed that the majority of the water discharging from the site will flow through a storage tank and then discharge into an existing on-site surface water network, with only the water from the eastern part of the car park receiving surface water treatment through the limited permeable paving. Section 6.5 of the SPD states that runoff from a site should be of an acceptable water quality to protect receiving waters. The size and number of treatment stages is based on the level of pollution entering the system. It is acknowledged that the area of permeable paving has been increased in response to past

comments from the LLFA, however large areas of the south and west of the site are still proposed to route directly into the below ground storage via the piped network and therefore will not receive any surface water treatment prior to discharge. The LLFA therefore requires demonstration that surface water for the entirety of the site will receive appropriate surface water treatment before this application can be supported.

6.16 Anglian Water – Has no objections.

Comments that the foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Cambridge Water Recycling Centre which currently does not have capacity to treat the flows the development site. Anglian Water are obligated to accept the foul flows from the development with the benefit of planning consent and would therefore take the necessary steps to ensure that there is sufficient treatment capacity should the Planning Authority grant planning permission

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

The preferred method of surface water disposal would be to a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) with connection to sewer seen as the last option. Building Regulations (part H) on Drainage and Waste Disposal for England includes a surface water drainage hierarchy, with infiltration on site as the preferred disposal option, followed by discharge to watercourse and then connection to a sewer. From the details submitted to support the planning application the proposed method of surface water management does not relate to Anglian Water operated assets. As such, we are unable to provide comments on the suitability of the surface water management.

6.17 Environment Agency – Has no objections.

Comments that the site overlies principal aquifer (part of the Cam and Ely Ouse Chalk groundwater body, a Water Framework Directive Drinking Water Protected Area). Principal aquifers are geological strata that exhibit high permeability and provide a high level of water storage. They support water supply and river base flow on a strategic scale. The site also overlies a secondary A aquifer. Although the site is not located within a groundwater source protection zone, the regional use of groundwater in this area makes the site vulnerable to pollution.

The historic use of the site has included stables, a flour mill as well as 'secure waste storage'. In addition, large thickness of fill / made ground was identified in parts of the site, and two railway sidings were recognised 'extending within the eastern margin of the site'. The latter do not appear to have been included in the conceptual model for the site.

The Desk Study has discussed the fuel storage depot adjacent to the southern boundary of the site, considering it as a potential contaminant source.

Based on the above and the historic use of the site as identified in the submitted Desk Study Appraisal, we do not consider this proposal to present a high pollution risk to controlled waters.

According to the submitted documents, the surface water drainage for the site is to connect to existing system, and no soakaways or other infiltration SuDS are proposed. This proposal is considered to minimise any potential risks to groundwater, and as such is acceptable.

6.18 Crime Prevention Officer – Raises concerns regarding the lack of surveillance to the mobility scooter parking area.

Comments that the area is of low risk to the vulnerability to crime at present. The layout has been designed to ensure that the residents are safe and secure whilst ensuring that the residents in the surrounding properties maintain their privacy. However, the storage for cycles/mobility scooters is not overlooked by active rooms and is close to the entrance of the site which may not provide adequate security. An external lighting plan should be provided. Tree crowns should be maintained above 2 metres and hedges maintained below 1 metres to provide surveillance across the site.

6.19 Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service – Has no objections subject to a condition.

Requests a condition in relation to the adequate provision of fire hydrants to serve the development with the number and location determined following a risk assessment.

7.0 Third Party Representations

7.1 One representation has been received who supports the application. Comments that the housing is much needed in the community and in a location close to shops, health centre, pharmacy and green spaces so would reduce the need to travel by car. It would reduce social isolation. Welcomes the increase in the pavement width.

7.2 The above representations are a summary of the comments that have been received. Full details of the representations are available on the Council's website.

8.0 Member Representations

8.1 None received.

9.0 Assessment

Principle of Development

- 9.1 The site is located within the Great Shelford development framework. It currently comprises three buildings with a lawful use as offices (formerly class B1a now class E(g)(i)).

Loss of Employment

- 9.2 Policy E/14 Loss of Employment Land to Non Employment Uses of the Local Plan states the following: -

1. The conversion, change of use or redevelopment of existing employment sites to non-employment uses within or on the edge of development frameworks will be resisted unless one of the following criteria is met:

a. It is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand. Applications will need to be accompanied by documentary evidence that the site is not suitable or capable of being made suitable for continued employment use. Evidence would be required that the property has been adequately marketed for a period of not less than twelve months on terms that reflect the lawful use and condition of the premises.

b. The overall benefit to the community of the proposal outweighs any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises.

c. The existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution, or unacceptable levels of traffic and any alternative employment use would continue to generate similar environmental problems.

2. Redevelopment proposals which propose the loss of all employment uses will need to be accompanied by clear viability or other evidence as to why it is not possible to deliver an element of employment development as part of the scheme.

- 9.3 The three office buildings on the site are The Stables, Granary House/Link House, and The Maltings. They have been converted from historic uses and are not new buildings although they are in a reasonable condition. The total floorspace of the buildings is 1,100 square metres.
- 9.4 The Stables is a one and a half storey building sited on the western boundary of the site adjacent to Station Road. It has a floorspace of 227 sq m and is split into two suites - A (114 sq m) and B (133 sq m). The offices are open plan and cellular.
- 9.5 Granary House/ Link House is a two storey building sited on the southern boundary of the site. It has a floorspace of 455 sq m and is split into two separate units- Granary House (364 sq m) and Link House (91 sq m). The offices are open plan.

- 9.6 The Maltings is a one and a half storey building situated along the eastern boundary of the site adjacent to the railway line. It has a floorspace of 398 sq m. The offices are open plan and there are meeting rooms.
- 9.7 The application form states that the offices have 6 full time employees and the proposed development would provide 1 full time employee and 2 part time employees.
- 9.8 With regard to criteria a of the policy, a Marketing Report and Office Tenant Plan has been submitted with the application. The buildings on the site have been marketed to let by Cheffins through boards on site, the internet (Cheffins, EG Property Link, Rightmove), mail outs to commercial agents, and adverts in the local press (Cambridge News and Business Weekly).
- 9.9 The Stables building has been vacant since 2017. Suite A has been marketed since December 2016 and Suite B has been marketed since April 2017.
- 9.10 Granary House has been vacant since August 2020 and marketed since February 2021.
- 9.11 Link House has been vacant since February 2021 and marketed since February 2021.
- 9.12 The Maltings has been vacant since February 2021. No details of the marketing have been provided but it is currently on the Cheffins and EGLink websites.
- 9.13 20 enquiries have been made in relation to all of the buildings between 2017 and 2021. A number of parties viewed the buildings and decided against a lease due to better alternatives on the market with higher quality space, different office configurations, further works needed prior to occupation, and the need for external storage space. There was, however, interest from three parties in relation to short term leases but one of these was not an acceptable offer.
- 9.14 In 2021, there were 39 other commercial premises on the market within 5 miles of Great Shelford and current developments such as Unity Campus in Sawston would increase the range of premises available in the future.
- 9.15 The general market for office accommodation in the area decreased for a period during the Covid 19 pandemic due to employees having to working from home. This appears to be leading towards more flexible working and the need for core offices or shared/ managed space. The majority of the office premises taken up in 2021 were mainly in the city or on the business parks with less take up for office premises in villages. Any take up in villages, was for higher quality developments at premises such as Mill Court in Great Shelford and The Unity Campus in Sawston.

- 9.16 The buildings on the site are of reasonable standard but it is advised that a short or medium term lease would only be likely to be agreed if the buildings were refurbished to a higher standard. The buildings do not appear to be able to compete with the more modern buildings in the city or villages and business parks due to the location and/or standard of accommodation.
- 9.17 Whilst the application form states that the site has 6 employees, the lawful use of the premises as offices would be likely to have a greater amount of employees in normal circumstances if the Covid 19 pandemic had not occurred. With reference to the Employment Density Guide (Third Edition), an office building of 1,100 sq m based on an average floorspace of 12 sq m per employee could potentially accommodate 91 employees if fully occupied. However, it is noted that vacancy rates within buildings vary.
- 9.18 The proposed development would therefore result in a significant decrease in employment on the site.
- 9.19 This is materially different to the application on the adjacent site approved under reference S/3809/19/FL as this was for a care home that resulted in an increase in the amount of employees on the site from 43 to 60.
- 9.20 With regard to criteria b of the policy, there are a number of employment premises in Great Shelford for offices. This includes Mill Court to the east of the station, Station Court to the west of the station, and Magog Court on Hinton Way.
- 9.21 The development would provide community benefits in the form of specialised housing for the elderly.
- 9.22 Policy S/5 of the Local Plan states that development will meet the objectively assessed needs in the district over the period 2011-2031 for 19,500 new homes, including affordable housing.
- 9.23 Policy H/9 requires developments to provide a wide choice, type and mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community including families with children, older people, those seeking starter homes, people wishing to build their own homes, people seeking private rented sector housing, and people with disabilities. The market homes in developments of 10 or more homes will consist of:
- a. At least 30% 1 or 2 bedroom homes;
 - b. At least 30% 3 bedroom homes;
 - c. At least 30% 4 or more bedroom homes;
 - d. With a 10% flexibility allowance that can be added to any of the above categories taking account of local circumstances.
- 9.24 Developments including specialist accommodation for the elderly (with or without care) will not be subject to the housing mix set out above and will demonstrate appropriate design standards.

- 9.25 The supporting text advises that the population of the district is ageing and often older people need or prefer smaller properties that are easier to manage than their original home, with people often looking to 'downsize' to a smaller property. There are a range of models that can play a part in providing specialist accommodation for older people. These include sheltered and enhanced sheltered housing, Extra Care housing, retirement villages, continuing care retirement communities and registered care homes both with and without nursing care. Where appropriate, specialist accommodation for the elderly should be provided on a mixed-tenure basis, and such accommodation should be located on sites in new settlements or within larger villages. Where any scheme providing specialist accommodation for the elderly (with or without care) includes an affordable housing component, this can count towards the overall 40% affordable housing requirement if part of a wider development.
- 9.26 Paragraph 60 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 9.27 Paragraph 61 states to determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals.
- 9.28 Paragraph 62 states that within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes).
- 9.29 The adopted Local Plan does not have a policy in relation to the specific amount of elderly persons housing required in the district over the plan period. However, paragraph 7.3 states that the district has an ageing population with growth forecast between 2001 to 2021 of 95% for the 60-74 age group and 108% for those 75+.
- 9.30 The Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019 to 2023 (2019) sets out the strategic direction for housing activity in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District. Priority 1 is to increase the delivery of homes, including affordable housing, along with sustainable transport and other infrastructure, to meet housing need. This specifically includes assessing the housing requirements of groups with specific needs and building for a rapidly aging population.

9.31 The Older People's Housing, Care And Support Needs in Greater Cambridge 2017-2036 (2017) states that Greater Cambridge is set to experience a rapidly ageing local population, with the number of people aged 75 and over set to nearly double between 2016 and 2036 when over 65s will constitute nearly 1 in 5 of the population. The impact of this demographic change is likely to be felt most strongly in rural districts: South Cambridgeshire is expecting the largest increase in its over 75s at 98 per cent by 2036, with Cambridge City seeing a rise of 77 per cent over the same time period. The CRESR model identifies a requirement for 3,422 units of specialist housing in Greater Cambridge in 2016, against actual supply of 3,280 units. It also recommends that by 2035, the supply of specialist housing will need to be 80 per cent higher than present, at 6,163 units.

9.32 The following specialist housing schemes have been granted permission since 2017: -

20/02929/OUT - Land Between Haverhill Road And Hinton Way Stapleford
Outline planning for the development of land for a retirement care village in Use Class C2 comprising housing with care, communal health, wellbeing and leisure facilities, public open space, landscaping, car parking, access and associated development and public access countryside park with all matters reserved except for access. The indicative details suggest a central care home of up to 110 bed spaces/rooms/units (both assisted care suites and care bedrooms) with associated facilities and up to 110 retirement dwellings with care link packages

S/3809/19/FL - 2 Station Road, Great Shelford
Demolition of existing buildings and structures and the erection of a 63-bed care home (Use Class C2) with external amenity space access car parking landscaping and other associated works

S/1685/19/FL - Land At High Street / Monkfield Lane, Cambourne
Erection of 54 retirement apartments 221sqm of retail/financial and professional services space (A1/A2 use class) communal facilities landscaping car parking and ancillary development

S/1157/19/FL - Etheldred House, Clay Street, Histon
Change of use of staff accommodation to 9 residential care rooms (C2)

18/0481/OUT - Land North Of Cherry Hinton Coldhams Lane Cambridge
Outline planning application (all matters reserved except for means of access in respect of junction arrangements onto Coldhams Lane, Cherry Hinton Road and Airport Way) for a maximum of 1200 residential dwellings (including retirement living facility (within Use Class C2/C3)), a local centre comprising uses within Use Class A1/A2/A3/A4/A5/B1a/D1/D2, primary and secondary schools, community facilities, open spaces, allotments, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

17/2196/FUL - Hinton Grange Nursing Home, 55 Bullen Close, Cambridge
Demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide a replacement 68 bed care home (Use Class C2) arranged over three storeys together with associated car parking, landscaping and amenity space.

S/3418/17/FL - Land At Fulbourn Social Club, Capital Park, Cambridge Road, Fulbourn
Demolition of the existing Fulbourn social club and construction of a new 72-bedroom care home (Use Class C2) with associated car and cycle parking landscaping and access from The Drive Fulbourn

S/2740/17/RM - Land To The East Of New Road, Melbourn
Application for approval of reserved matters for the appearance landscaping layout and scale following outline planning permission S/2791/14/OL for a care home of up to 75 beds new vehicular and pedestrian access

9.33 The schemes above would provide a total of 397 care beds and 164 care apartments. A number of care beds would also be provided on the development at Cherry Hinton.

9.34 Notwithstanding the above, there are a number of schemes currently under consideration: -

21/00953/FUL -Former Hotel Felix, Whitehouse Lane, Cambridge
Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a care home (Use Class C2) with external amenity space, access, parking, landscaping and other associated works
80 bed care home with significant proportion dedicated to dementia care.

20/01426/FUL - Anstey Hall, Maris Lane, Cambridge
Construction of 87 2 bedroomed apartments, flanking a new public park to the south of Anstey Hall in order to provide assisted-living accommodation for people over 65. The Listed house will be adapted to serve as the central facilities for the retirement community

9.35 These schemes under consideration would further provide, if approved, a total of 80 care beds and 87 care apartments.

9.36 The Inspector when dealing with the appeal for application reference 20/02929/OUT for a retirement village at Land Between Haverhill Road And Hinton Way, Stapleford dated 29 December 2021 commented as follows: -

“The Council’s approach within its adopted Local Plan is that C2 housing comprises a part of its overall housing requirement and that it has identified sufficient land for housing development to satisfy its requirements for the next six years. That assertion is not contested and I

have no reason to conclude otherwise but it is not sufficient. Uncontested evidence given in this appeal is that unless sites are specifically allocated for C2 development, the developers of such schemes are unable to compete for sites in the housing land supply market with the providers of C3 general housing accommodation and s, the delivery of C2 development will be restricted.

Despite a plethora of studies, the Council's approach has not delivered and is not expected to deliver special care housing in anything like sufficient quantities. No policy or any allocation in the adopted Local Plan requires a specific proportion of dwellings to be delivered as special care housing. Although special care housing is mentioned in the justificatory text to the Ida Darwin Hospital Site, none has actually been delivered in the development of that site. Policy SS/8(6) provides that development of Cambourne West 'could also include nursing and residential care homes' but none has been delivered.

Although there are some schemes in the pipeline which would reduce the outstanding need within the housing market area from an expected 1044 dwellings and 436 bedspaces in 2022 to an expected 838 dwellings and 118 bedspaces by 2024, by 2041 the unsatisfied need for dwellings is expected to remain at 805 extra care dwellings. Government advice is that housing need alone does not amount to the very special circumstances required to justify inappropriate development in the Green Belt but, in this case, that housing need is combined with a lack of effective action to meet the need."

- 9.37 The development would provide a contribution towards specialist housing required for the elderly in the district.
- 9.38 The development would also provide a commuted sum towards affordable housing in relation to the equivalent of the provision of 12 dwellings on site taking into account vacant building credit and the economic viability of the scheme. This matter will be considered in detail further in the report.
- 9.39 With regard to criteria c of the policy, the existing office use is not considered to be generating environmental problems and the use is compatible with the surrounding land uses.
- 9.40 In conclusion, the community benefits through the provision of elderly persons housing and affordable housing on the site is, on balance, considered to outweigh any adverse effect on employment opportunities and the range of available employment land and premises in the village.
- 9.41 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy E/14 of the Local Plan.

Location and Scale of Residential Development

- 9.42 Policy S/2 of the Local Plan sets out how the vision for the Local Plan will be secured through the achievement of six key objectives including to

ensure that all new development provides or has access to a range of services and facilities that support healthy lifestyles and well-being for everyone, including shops, schools, doctors, community buildings, cultural facilities, local open space, and green infrastructure (criterion e).

- 9.43 Policy S/6 of the Local Plan sets out the Council's development strategy and a hierarchical approach to new housing in the district, with a descending order of preference given to on the edge of Cambridge, at new settlements and only limited development at Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres.
- 9.44 Policy S/6(4) sets out that development in the rural area will be limited, with allocations for jobs and housing focused on Rural Centres and Minor Rural Centres, and rural settlement policies providing for windfall development for different categories of village consistent with the level of local service provision and quality of public transport access to Cambridge or a market town.
- 9.45 Policy S/7 of Local Plan supports the development and redevelopment of unallocated land and buildings within development frameworks providing: -
a. Development is of a scale, density and character appropriate to the location, and is consistent with other policies in the Local Plan; and
b. Retention of the site in its present state does not form an essential part of the local character, and development would protect and enhance local features of green space, landscape, ecological or historic importance; and
c. There is the necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development.
- 9.46 Policy S/8 identifies Great Shelford as a Rural Centre where there is a very good range of services and facilities and residential developments with no limit on size are supported within development frameworks.
- 9.47 The development of 39 care apartments within the Great Shelford development framework is acceptable in principle in terms of the scale and location in policy terms.
- 9.48 However, the development is not considered to be of an appropriate density and character to the location and there is insufficient infrastructure capacity to support the development. These matters will be considered further later in the report.
- 9.49 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy S/8 of the Local Plan but would fail to comply with Policy S/7 of the Local Plan.

Housing Density

- 9.50 Policy H/8 of the Local Plan requires an average net density of 30 dwellings per hectare in Rural Centre unless justified by the character of the locality, the scale of the development, or other local circumstances.

- 9.51 The site measure approximately 0.29 of a hectare in area. The proposed density of the development would equate to approximately 135 dwellings per hectare. This would be significantly above the average net density for the village.
- 9.52 Whilst it is acknowledged that the development of 12 dwellings to the north at Nos. 4 to 26 Station Road approved under application reference has a higher than average density of approximately 92 dwellings per hectare, it was considered acceptable in terms of the layout of the site and the visual impact upon the character and appearance of the area.
- 9.53 The proposed development would be significantly above the average density and is considered to result in a cramped layout and overdevelopment of the site which would harm the character and appearance of the area.
- 9.54 The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy H/8 of the Local Plan.

Housing Mix

- 9.55 Policy H/9 of the Local Plan requires the provision of a wide choice, type and mix of housing to meet the needs of different groups in the community including families with children, older people, those seeking starter homes, people wishing to build their own homes, people seeking private rented sector housing, and people with disabilities. In developments of 10 dwellings, a specific mix is identified but states that developments including specialist accommodation for the elderly (with or without care) will not be subject to the housing mix.
- 9.56 The development would provide a mix of 24 one bed units and 15 two bed units. The proposed housing mix would provide a range of different sized units and is subsequently considered satisfactory.
- 9.57 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy H/9 of the Local Plan.

Affordable Housing

- 9.58 Policy H/10 of the Local Plan requires all developments of 11 dwellings or more to provide 40% affordable housing to address evidence of housing need with an agreed tenure and on clusters throughout the site except where it can be demonstrated that the level of affordable housing sought would make a development unviable in light of changing market conditions, individual site circumstances and development costs in which case a revised mix of affordable house types and tenures and then a lower level of affordable housing provision may be negotiated; the off-site provision of affordable dwellings can be demonstrated to have benefits such as the provision of additional affordable dwellings, or the improvement or a better use of existing housing stock and would contribute to the creation of mixed and balanced communities, or it can be demonstrated that it is not possible or appropriate to build affordable

homes on-site or off-site, in which case the development will provide a financial contribution towards the future provision of affordable housing with the contribution to be of 'broadly equivalent value' to that which would have been provided on-site.

- 9.59 Paragraph 63 of the NPPF states that where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:
- a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and,
 - b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.
- 9.60 Paragraph 64 of the NPPF states that provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas (where policies may set out a lower threshold of 5 units or fewer). To support the re-use of brownfield land, where vacant buildings are being reused or redeveloped, any affordable housing contribution due should be reduced by a proportionate amount.
- 9.61 The development proposes a commuted sum towards the provision of affordable housing equivalent to 12 dwellings on site taking into account vacant building credit and the viability of the scheme.
- 9.62 There is a significant need for affordable housing in the village of Great Shelford and the district of South Cambridgeshire as a whole. Great Shelford alone has a need for 80 affordable rented dwellings which does not include intermediate (shared ownership) properties. Therefore, 40% of the dwellings on site (16 dwellings) should be affordable or an equivalent commuted sum provided towards off site affordable housing.
- 9.63 However, vacant building credit also needs to be taken into consideration when calculating the provision of affordable housing together with the economic viability of the scheme.
- 9.64 The NPPG states the following in relation to vacant building credit: -

What is the process for determining the vacant building credit?

Where there is an overall increase in floorspace in the proposed development, the local planning authority should calculate the amount of affordable housing contributions required from the development as set out in their Local Plan. A 'credit' should then be applied which is the equivalent of the gross floorspace of any relevant vacant buildings being brought back into use or demolished as part of the scheme and deducted from the overall affordable housing contribution calculation. This will apply in calculating either the number of affordable housing units to be provided within the development or where an equivalent financial contribution is being provided.

The existing floorspace of a vacant building should be credited against the floorspace of the new development. For example, where a building with a gross floorspace of 8,000 square metre building is demolished as part of a proposed development with a gross floorspace of 10,000 square metres, any affordable housing contribution should be a fifth of what would normally be sought.

Does the vacant building credit apply to any vacant building being brought back into use?

The vacant building credit applies where the building has not been abandoned. The courts have held that, in deciding whether a use has been abandoned, account should be taken of all relevant circumstances, such as:

- the condition of the property
- the period of non-use
- whether there is an intervening use; and
- any evidence regarding the owner's intention

Each case is a matter for the collecting authority to judge.

The policy is intended to incentivise brownfield development, including the reuse or redevelopment of empty and redundant buildings. In considering how the vacant building credit should apply to a particular development, local planning authorities should have regard to the intention of national policy. In doing so, it may be appropriate for authorities to consider:

- whether the building has been made vacant for the sole purposes of re-development
- whether the building is covered by an extant or recently expired planning permission for the same or substantially the same development

9.65 There is no specific definition of vacant within national or local guidance.

9.66 In a previous appeal for a site in the district where vacant building credit was applied, the Council presented a case taking into account the CIL regs where the building was defined as vacant if it had not been occupied continuously for a period of 6 months in the last 3 years.

The Inspector commented in the appeal decision as follows: -
"Although the planning application form states that the building was not vacant at the time of the planning application, evidence since supplied by the appellant confirms this as an error. It would seem, therefore, that the building was vacant at the time of the submission of the planning application on 21 April 2017 and at the time of the Hearing on 13 November 2019. However, if I were to use only that as a definition of vacant, taking it to its extreme, a building could be vacant on only those two days and occupied for the whole time in between, yet still be considered as vacant for the purposes of VBC. Clearly that would be nonsense.

Whilst the CIL definition is for a different purpose from the matter before me, it nevertheless provides a useful starting point, particularly as one of the reasons for the introduction of the VBC was to provide consistency with exemptions from CIL. Following cessation of the previous business in 2015 marketing commenced in November 2015, continuing until November 2016 when the appellant purchased the site. The sales particulars note under "Tenure" that no leases, licences or tenancies were granted at that time over any element of the site, suggesting that it was vacant at the time. I am advised that the building was occupied from 6 October 2017 to 30 April 2018, or according to the appellant six months and 38 days. Therefore, even if I were to take the date of purchase as the starting period for vacancy, the building has been occupied for about seven months within about a three year period. While this is in excess of the CIL definition, it is only marginally so, particularly when considered against the likely total length of vacancy. Furthermore, only part of the building was utilised, and the occupation of the building was only ever a short term, temporary arrangement to assist a charity, which has now ceased.

The application of VBC is at the discretion of the decision maker. The proposal would meet the requirements of the PPG and the Framework in respect of VBC. Furthermore, taking into account the Council's definition of vacant, it is my view that the building can legitimately be classed as vacant for the purposes of the application of VBC. There would therefore be a requirement for just one affordable dwelling which is secured via the UU."

- 9.67 The Affordable Housing Statement submitted with the application advises that 704 square metres of floorspace on the site is currently vacant although this may change during the course of the application. The following calculation has been provided: -

Difference between proposed and existing: $3,436 - 704 = 2,732 \text{ m}^2$

Divided by proposed floorspace: $2,732 / 3,436 = 0.79$

Multiplied by affordable housing requirement: $0.795 * 40\% = 31.8\%$

This would result in a requirement for 12 affordable dwellings.

- 9.68 There are three buildings on the site - The Stables, Granary House/Link House and The Maltings.
- 9.69 The Stables has a floorspace of 227 square metres and was occupied until early 2017. Given that the building has been vacant for approximately 5 years, has been marketed with no interest in the long term, and has not been abandoned, this floorspace can be counted towards vacant building credit.
- 9.70 Granary House/ Link House has a floorspace of 455 square metres. Granary House was occupied until February 2021 and Link House was occupied until August 2020. Given that the whole building has been vacant and marketed for one year and three months, this floorspace cannot be

- counted towards vacant building credit. This is because the buildings have been vacant for a significantly shorter period of time than 3 years and there is a significant need for affordable housing in the area.
- 9.71 The Maltings has a floorspace of 398 square metres and was occupied until February 2021. Given that the building has been vacant for one year and three months, and no details of marketing have been provided, this floorspace cannot be counted towards vacant building credit. This is because the buildings have been vacant for a significantly shorter period of time than 3 years and there is a significant need for affordable housing in the area.
- 9.72 Therefore, the floorspace to be counted towards vacant building credit is likely to be lower at 227square metres. This would result in the following calculation: -
- Difference between proposed and existing: $3,436 - 227 = 3,209 \text{ m}^2$
Divided by proposed floorspace: $3,209 / 3,436 = 0.93$
Multiplied by affordable housing requirement: $0.93 * 40\% = 37\%$
- This would result in a requirement for 14 affordable dwellings.
- 9.73 In this case, it is agreed that the provision of affordable housing on the site would not be appropriate due to the specialist type of housing proposed and separate management arrangements. A commuted sum towards affordable housing off site is therefore accepted.
- 9.74 The applicants have carried out a viability appraisal of the development with 100% market housing and 31.8% affordable housing. A contribution of £611,255 has been offered as the equivalent of 12 dwellings. The viability inputs are currently being considered by the Council's consultant.
- 9.75 Taking into account vacant building credit, the commuted sum towards affordable housing should be the equivalent of 14 dwellings. A viability appraisal has not been submitted in relation to a scheme for 14 dwellings to justify a lower amount of affordable housing.
- 9.76 Overall, whilst the development would make a contribution towards affordable housing, it would not provide the required contribution towards affordable housing taking into account vacant building credit and the economic viability of the scheme. Although it is noted that vacant building credit is not the same as the CIL regulations, 3 years is considered a reasonable period of time when calculating vacant building credit given the significant need for affordable housing in the village and district of South Cambridgeshire as a whole.
- 9.77 The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Policy H/10 of the Local Plan.

Developer Contributions

- 9.78 Policy TI/8 of the Local Plan states that planning permission will only be granted for proposals that have made suitable arrangements for the improvement or provision of infrastructure necessary to make the scheme acceptable in planning terms. The nature, scale and phasing of any planning obligations sought will be related to the form of the development and its potential impact upon the surrounding area. Contributions may also be required towards the future maintenance and upkeep of facilities either in the form of initial support or in perpetuity in accordance with Government guidance.
- 9.79 Policy SC/6 of the Local Plan requires all housing developments to contribute towards the provision of indoor community facilities to meet the need generated by the development, with larger development providing facilities on site and smaller developments providing contributions towards developments off site through planning obligations. Contributions will be based on a standard of 111m² of such floorspace per 1,000 additional population.
- 9.80 Policy SC/7 of the Local Plan requires all housing developments to contribute towards the provision of open space to meet the need generated by the development, with the provision of facilities on site where appropriate and contributions towards developments which cannot be provided on site. Housing provision consisting of sheltered housing, extra care housing, and residential and nursing homes will not be required to provide outdoor play space except informal open space. Contributions for outdoor sport will be based upon 1.6ha. per 1,000 people, informal open space will be based upon 0.4ha. per 1,000 people, and allotments and community orchards will be based upon 0.4ha. per 1,000 people.
- 9.81 Paragraph 56 of the NPPF states that planning obligations must only be sought where they meet all of the following tests:
a) necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
b) directly related to the development; and
c) fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
- 9.82 The proposal is for more than 10 dwellings and requires a number of developer contributions to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Great Shelford Parish Council has been approached in relation to the needs of the village. These are set out below: -

Obligation	Contribution / Term	Trigger (subject to negotiation)
Affordable Housing	Equivalent of 40% taking into account vacant building credit and viability	100% prior to the first occupation of the development
Outdoor Sports	£27,275.13	100% prior to the first occupation of the development

Informal Open Space	On site	Laid out on site prior to first occupation of the development
Allotments and Community Orchard	£3,900	100% prior to the first occupation of the development
Indoor Community Space	£12,383.07	100% prior to the first occupation of the development
Green Infrastructure	£20,226	100% prior to the first occupation of the development
Burial Ground	£8,190	100% prior to the first occupation of the development
Indoor Sports	£10,237 £11,406	100% prior to the first occupation of the development
Monitoring	£500	Prior to the commencement of development

- 9.83 Great Shelford needs 9.49 ha of sports space and has 11.5 ha i.e. a surplus of 2.01 ha of Outdoor Sport Provision. The increase in demand for the use of this space requires a contribution towards the Great Shelford sport pavilion
- 9.84 Great Shelford needs 2.47 ha of informal open space and had 1.64 ha meaning a deficit of 0.73 ha⁷. Informal open space would be provided on site as part of the development.
- 9.85 Great Shelford needs 2.37 ha of informal open space and had 3.52 ha, i.e. a surplus of 1.15 ha. The increase in demand for the use of this space requires a contribution towards the improvement of the existing allotments in Great Shelford and provision of a community orchard.
- 9.86 Great Shelford needs 441 m² of indoor community space whereas it has 192 m² resulting in a deficit of 249 m². The increase in demand for the use of this space requires a contribution towards improvements to Great Shelford Memorial Hall including a new kitchen.
- 9.87 Over the plan period (to 2031) 3,739 hectares of additional green infrastructure is required in the district. The increase in demand for the use of this space requires a contribution towards the creation of new green space at Wandlebury Park and/or the wider Gog Magog hills.
- 9.88 Great Shelford Parish Council is a burial authority with a cemetery located off Cambridge Road. The increase in demand for the use of this space

requires a contribution equivalent to £210 per dwelling to improve and expand the Great Shelford cemetery.

- 9.89 The Council has worked with Cambridge City Council and Sport England to develop two sports strategies: a Playing Pitch Strategy 2015-2031 for grass and all weather pitches covering both areas; and an Indoor Sports Facility Strategy 2015-2031 to guide future provision of indoor sports halls, swimming pools and outdoor cycling facilities to serve existing and new communities in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire. The increase in demand for the use of this space requires a contribution towards indoor sports courts and indoor swimming pool improvements at Sawston Sports Centre.
- 9.90 Notwithstanding the above, a fee of £500 is required to monitor the planning obligations.
- 9.91 Further details on the existing facilities and need are set out in full in the response from the Section 106 Officer.
- 9.92 Cambridgeshire County Council has advised that contributions are not required towards libraries or transport improvements.
- 9.93 The applicant has questioned the need for contributions towards open space as the average age of the occupiers of the development would be approximately 80 years old.
- 9.94 The development is for elderly people above the age of 55. Whilst the average age may be higher, it would not mean that the occupiers would not be likely to use indoor and outdoor sports facilities in the village such as tennis courts, bowling greens, swimming pools, allotments, or community orchards or would not be likely to contribute towards the need for additional cemetery space.
- 9.95 The lack of contributions towards open space and burial grounds infrastructure is not considered to mitigate the impact of the development and ensure that it is acceptable in planning terms.
- 9.96 The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Policies SC/7 and TI/8 of the Local Plan.

Character and Appearance of the Area

- 9.97 Policy HQ/1 of the Local Plan requires all new development to be of high quality design, with a clear vision as to the positive contribution the development will make to its local and wider context. As appropriate to the scale and nature of the development, proposals must:
- a. Preserve or enhance the character of the local urban and rural area and respond to its context in the wider landscape;
 - b. Conserve or enhance important natural and historic assets and their setting;

- c. Include variety and interest within a coherent, place-responsive design, which is legible and creates a positive sense of place and identity whilst also responding to the local context and respecting local distinctiveness;
 - d. Be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, density, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area;
 - e. Deliver a strong visual relationship between buildings that comfortably define and enclose streets, squares and public places, creating interesting vistas, skylines, focal points and appropriately scaled landmarks along routes and around spaces;
 - f. Achieve a permeable development with ease of movement and access for all users and abilities, with user friendly and conveniently accessible streets and other routes both within the development and linking with its surroundings and existing and proposed facilities and services, focusing on delivering attractive and safe opportunities for walking, cycling, public transport and, where appropriate, horse riding;
 - h. Ensure that car parking is integrated into the development in a convenient, accessible manner and does not dominate the development and its surroundings or cause safety issues;
 - i. Provide safe, secure, convenient and accessible provision for cycle parking and storage, facilities for waste management, recycling and collection in a manner that is appropriately integrated within the overall development;
 - k. Ensure developments deliver flexibility that allows for future changes in needs and lifestyles, and adaptation to climate change;
 - l. Mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change on development through location, form, orientation, materials and design of buildings and spaces;
 - m. Include high quality landscaping and public spaces that integrate the development with its surroundings, having a clear definition between public and private space which provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction as well as support healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, sustainable drainage and climate change mitigation;
 - o. Design-out crime and create an environment that is created for people that is and feels safe, and has a strong community focus.
- 9.98 The District Design Guide SPD (2010) and Landscape in New Developments SPD (2010) provide additional guidance. The NPPF provides advice on achieving well-designed places and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.
- 9.99 The eastern side of Station Road has a fairly high density of development in a number of different uses such as residential and commercial.
- 9.100 The buildings are predominantly sited close to the road. The approved care home to the south would be set back from the road.
- 9.101 There are a variety of heights of building which range from two-storeys at the junction of Station Road with Tunwells Lane, Woollards Lane and London Road, one and half storey and two storeys on the site, rising to

two and a half storeys adjacent to Great Shelford railway station. The approved care home to the south of the site is two-storey close to Station Road and rises to the rear of the site to three storeys.

- 9.102 The scales of the building substantial in size although the mass of the buildings are broken up into blocks through articulation.
- 9.103 There is an assortment of ages of properties which include traditional Victorian style, 1970s buildings, and modern contemporary town houses and apartments.
- 9.104 The plan form of the buildings are generally linear and the design of the buildings include features such as dormer windows and gables.
- 9.105 The materials of construction are predominantly buff bricks and slate roofs with some elements of timber cladding.
- 9.106 The western side of Station Road has a lower density of development which comprises mainly residential development.
- 9.107 The buildings are set back from the road, two storeys in height and moderate in scale. They are mainly 1960s semi-detached dwellings with a linear plan form and simple hipped roof design. The materials of construction are render and tiles.
- 9.108 The development would have a very high density with approximately 70% of the site comprising of the building and hard surfaced vehicle parking and 30% green amenity space, which is considered to result in a significant amount of built form and a limited amount of landscaping. This would lead to a cramped layout and subsequent overdevelopment of the site and result in a poor quality development and environment for residents with a limited sense of place and identity which would detract from the public realm. Whilst it is noted that the existing development does not have any soft landscaped amenity areas, this is a historic commercial development and not a modern residential development which requires a high quality living environment.
- 9.109 The proposed building would be sited approximately 4.5 metres back from the road with a widened footpath and small front gardens. Whilst it is acknowledged that the building would have a greater set back than the existing buildings and development to the north, it would be set significantly further forward than the approved care home to the south and would have a limited amount of amenity space. This is considered to result in strong enclosure of the street and urban form of development which would have an adverse visual impact upon the character of Station Road. The three frontages should work in harmony to improve character and the overall feeling of the space.
- 9.110 The proposed building would have an 'H' shape plan form. This would be significantly more complex than the simpler linear and 'L' shape buildings

immediately adjacent to the site and in the area. It would also result in the building being close to all boundaries of the site and being in close proximity to existing buildings which would create unattractive spaces and poor relationships with neighbours. The wing to the east is of specific concern as it would be very close to the parking area, railway line, and invade the communal garden to the south of the building. There would be lack of buffer space around the building to soften the impact of the parking area upon residents.

- 9.111 The development would be two and a half storeys in height adjacent to Station Road rising to three storeys in the central and rear sections. Whilst the height of the development adjacent to Station Road would be slightly lower than the development to the north and is satisfactory, the central and rear sections of the development would be significantly higher in closer proximity to Station Road than the development to the south. In addition, the scale of the building would be larger in size than the adjacent development. This is considered to result in a visually dominant development which would detract from the character and appearance of the street scene.
- 9.112 The parking area at the entrance is constrained and the parking area to the rear would be very close to the amenity area.
- 9.113 The position of the mobility scooter storage would not have any natural surveillance or adequate security for the safety of residents.
- 9.114 The position of the building is considered to compromise the privacy of the ground floor apartment facing the road.
- 9.115 The development would comprise a large communal garden to the south, a small communal garden and terrace to the north, and some private gardens.
- 9.116 The District Design Guide recommends a minimum of 25 square metres for each apartment as communal garden. In addition, upper floor apartments should have use of private balcony, of a minimum of 3 square metres.
- 9.117 The communal garden to the south would measure approximately 700 square metres and the garden and terrace to the north would measure approximately 90 square metres. Within the building, a communal lounge would be provided for residents.
- 9.118 The size of the communal external amenity spaces would fall short of the overall requirement and the spaces are not considered of an appropriate quality for residents to enjoy as they would be narrow, overshadowed, and dominated by the parking area.
- 9.119 The main garden would be separated from the communal lounge, have poor access by residents and a limited offer. The lounge and garden

should be the social hub of the building and complement each other. The gardens should have a path to promote inclusivity and a variety of different areas for relaxing and being close to nature. Some spaces should be shaded and some open to the sun and some spaces should be social areas and some solitary areas. Different types of planting should be provided from trees to flowers of different of textures, colours and scents to activate the senses and increase biodiversity. Drainage features should also be provided to store surface water.

- 9.120 Notwithstanding the above, a limited number of the apartments would have private amenity space and these should be provided to a greater number of apartments to improve the quality of the development.
- 9.121 Overall, the development is not considered to be of high quality design and make a positive contribution to its local and wider context. It would not preserve or enhance the character of the local urban and rural area and respond to its context in the wider landscape; include variety and interest within a coherent, place-responsive design, which is legible and creates a positive sense of place and identity whilst also responding to the local context and respecting local distinctiveness; be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, density, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area; deliver a strong visual relationship between buildings that comfortably define and enclose streets, squares and public places, creating interesting vistas, skylines, focal points and appropriately scaled landmarks along routes and around spaces; ensure that car parking is integrated into the development in a convenient, accessible manner and does not dominate the development and its surroundings or cause safety issues; and include high quality landscaping and public spaces that integrate the development with its surroundings, having a clear definition between public and private space which provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction as well as support healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, sustainable drainage and climate change mitigation.
- 9.122 The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Policy HQ/1 of the Local Plan.
- 9.123 The one bedroom apartments would measure between 55 square metres and 70 square metres in area and the two bedroom apartments would measure between 75 square metres and 100 square metres in area. The bedrooms would measure at least 11.5 square metres in area and adequate internal storage space would be provided. The apartments would have appropriate residential space standards.
- 9.124 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy H/12 of the Local Plan.

Heritage Assets

- 9.125 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that with respect to any buildings or other land in a

conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

- 9.126 Para. 199 of the NPPF set out 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, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Any harm to, or loss of, the significant of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.
- 9.127 Policy NH/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) requires development affecting heritage assets to sustain or enhance the character and distinctiveness of those assets. Policy HQ/1 states that all new development must be compatible with its location in terms of scale, density, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, material, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area.
- 9.128 The site is situated adjacent to the conservation area. There are no listed buildings within the vicinity of the site.
- 9.129 The main significance of the Great Shelford conservation area is considered to be the original settlement around the church that includes Church Street, High Street and Woollards Lane. The street pattern and buildings, particularly timber framed, in the historic core along with the areas of open space in the heart of the village with mature trees along the roads are key characteristics of the conservation area.
- 9.130 The proposal would result in the demolition of a number of existing commercial buildings and the introduction of a large single building. The setting of the conservation area on the eastern side Station Road currently consists of large scale buildings.
- 9.131 The development is consequently considered to preserve the setting of the conservation area and not result in harm to the significance of heritage assets. Even if less than substantial harm were to be identified, this is likely to be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.
- 9.132 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy NH/14 of the Local Plan.

Trees and Landscaping

- 9.133 The site comprises two small trees close to the eastern boundary.
- 9.134 The development is not considered to result in the loss of significant trees that provide an important contribution to the visual amenity of the area.
- 9.135 The development would comprise new tree planting which would compensate for the trees lost. It would also provide additional ground level planting within the communal amenity spaces. However, the planting is limited

9.136 The proposal would therefore comply with Policies HQ/1 and NH/4 of the Local Plan.

Biodiversity

9.137 The Environment Act 2021 and the Councils' Biodiversity SPD (2022) require development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with policy NH/14 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.

9.138 The site comprises a number of existing buildings which would be demolished as part of the proposal. These building may provide habitats for protected species.

9.139 An Ecological Assessment has been submitted as part of the application. The site is of low ecological value. The buildings and trees on the site were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting and foraging bats. No further surveys are required. There are no ponds on the site for great crested newts. The site does not have any suitable habitats for reptiles or badgers. No birds were observed nesting on the site.

9.140 Enhancement measures such as bird and bat boxes and native planting is recommended.

9.141 Conditions would be attached to any consent in relation to works to be carried out in accordance with the submitted report, a biodiversity enhancement scheme, and a lighting strategy.

9.142 The development is not considered to adversely affect protected species.

9.143 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy NH/4 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety and Parking

9.144 Policy HQ/1 states that proposals must provide safe and convenient access for all users and abilities to public buildings and spaces, including those with limited mobility or those with impairment such as sight or hearing.

9.145 Policy TI/2 requires developers to demonstrate adequate provision will be made to mitigate the likely impacts of the proposed development and, for larger developments, to demonstrate they have maximised opportunities for sustainable travel, and provided a Transport Assessment and Travel Plan.

- 9.146 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 9.147 Station Road is a busy road from the centre of the village to the A1301. It has a speed limit of 30 miles per hour. The site is situated between the crossroads with Tunwells Lane, Woollards Lane and London Road and the Great Shelford railway station and level crossing.
- 9.148 A Transport Statement has been submitted with the application. The existing development site currently generates approximately 25 trips in the AM peak, 21 trips in the PM peak, and a total of 153 trips across a 12-hour period. This results in 13 trips per hour. The proposed development would generate approximately 4 trips in the AM peak, 6 trips in the PM peak, and 80 trips across a 12-hour period. This results in 13 trips per hour.
- 9.149 The development is considered to result in a decrease in traffic generation along Station Road and the development would not adversely affect the capacity of the public highway.
- 9.150 However, the design of the access is not considered acceptable and would adversely affect the functioning of the public highway.
- 9.151 The access would measure 4.5 metres in width. This is not considered satisfactory as it would result in vehicles stopping and maneuvering on the highway to the detriment of highway safety. Given the proposed vehicular access proximity to a railway level crossing, and to enable two domestic vehicles to pass wholly off of the adopted public highway, the access width should be a minimum of 5 metres for a minimum distance of 10 metres as measured from the near edge of the highway boundary.
- 9.152 The access would be constructed as a dropped crossing. This is not considered appropriate due to the amount of vehicles accessing the development. A 6.0 metre radius kerb is required to ensure that the proposal would not be detrimental to highway safety.
- 9.153 Notwithstanding the above, the inter-vehicle visibility splays are only acceptable if the area within each splay is kept clear of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times. The splay is currently shown across the 1.1 high fencing along the boundary with Station Road which is not acceptable. However, this could be addressed through a boundary treatment condition.
- 9.154 Whilst it is noted that a fire tender and refuse vehicle will not need to enter the site given that both functions can be carried out from Station Road, strong concerns are raised to the proximity of the refuse store to the level crossing and that refuse vehicles would provide an obstruction to the public highway at collection times which may conflict with the level

crossing. It is requested that there is space on site for these vehicles to enter and turn and exit in forward gear.

- 9.155 The proposal would therefore fail to comply with paragraph 111 of the NPPF.
- 9.156 The site is located in the centre of the village with easy accessibility to a number of services and facilities by walking, cycling and public transport. The development would not result in sole reliance upon private modes of transport to serve everyday needs.
- 9.157 The proposal would therefore comply with Policy TI/2 of the Local Plan.
- 9.158 Policies HQ/1 and TI/3 set out that car and cycle parking provision should be provided through a design-led approach in accordance with the indicative standards set out in Figure 11 of the Local Plan.
- 9.159 The recommended indicative vehicle parking standards are 2 spaces per dwelling – 1 space to be allocated within the curtilage. This results in a requirement for 79 vehicle parking spaces – 39 on site. The development would provide 16 vehicle parking spaces and six mobility scooter spaces. The development is for elderly people above the age of 55. Whilst it is noted that the average age of occupants may be higher, in this case it is agreed that the level of vehicle parking provided is satisfactory. However, the size of the spaces would be 2.4 metres x 4.8 metres and are not considered to be fit for purpose as they would be rather limited for a standard size domestic vehicle. The spaces should measure 2.5 metres x 5 metres with a 6 metre reversing space.
- 9.160 The recommended minimum cycle parking standards are 1 space per bedroom. This results in a requirement for 54 cycle parking spaces. The development would not provide any cycle parking spaces. Whilst it is unlikely that the development would require this amount of cycle parking, some cycle parking should be provided. The development is for elderly people above the age of 55. Whilst it is noted that the average age of occupants may be higher, it would not mean that the occupiers would not be likely to use cycles. A condition would be attached to any consent to secure an appropriate amount of covered and secure cycle parking.
- 9.161 The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Policy TI/3 of the Local Plan.

Flood Risk

- 9.162 Policy CC/8 of the Local Plan requires development proposals to incorporate sustainable surface water drainage systems (SuDS) appropriate to the nature of the site. The scheme will be required to demonstrate that:
- a. Surface water drainage schemes comply with the Sustainable Drainage Systems: Non-statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage

systems and the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document or successor documents;

- b. Opportunities have been taken to integrate sustainable drainage with the development, create amenity, enhance biodiversity, and contribute to a network of green (and blue) open space;
- c. Surface water is managed close to its source and on the surface where it practicable to do so;
- d. Maximum use has been made of low land take drainage measures, such as rain water recycling, green roofs, permeable surfaces and water butts;
- e. Appropriate pollution control measures have been incorporated, including multiple component treatment trains; and
- f. Arrangements have been established for the whole life management and maintenance of surface water drainage systems.

- 9.163 The site is situated in Flood Zone 1 but subject to an area of surface water flood risk.
- 9.164 A Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note has been submitted with the application.
- 9.165 The surface water drainage strategy for the site will account for run off in the 1 in 100 year period plus 40% climate change. Infiltration methods are unlikely to be suitable for the site due to ground conditions so run off from the buildings will discharge to an underground attenuation tank beneath the communal garden to the south of the building and run off from the access and hard surfaced areas will discharge to permeable paving with drains under the parking spaces. Drainage from these features will pass through a flow control measure before discharging to the existing surface water drainage network to the south.
- 9.166 The majority of the water would flow to the attenuation tank. However, no surface water treatment measures to reduce pollution control entering the network are proposed in relation to the tank and these are required to ensure that pollution does not enter the surface water system. There is adequate treatment for the permeable paving drains.
- 9.167 Given the above, the development would not provide appropriate surface water treatment and pollution control measures which would result in a significant risk to water quality.
- 9.168 The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Policies CC/7 and CC/8 of the Local Plan.

Neighbour Amenity

- 9.169 Policy HQ/1 of the Local Plan seeks all developments to protect the health and amenity of occupiers and surrounding uses from development that is overlooking, overbearing or results in a loss of daylight or development

which would create unacceptable impacts such as noise, vibration, odour, emissions and dust.

- 9.170 The nearest neighbours to the site are the property at Nos. 4 and 6 Station Road to the north and the approved care home to the south.
- 9.171 No. 4 Station Road has a ground floor study window and second floor bedroom window in its east elevation facing the access and a first floor living room window and second floor bathroom window in its south elevation facing the building. It also has a roof terrace.
- 9.172 No. 6 Station Road has a first floor kitchen window in its south elevation facing the building.
- 9.173 The care home has a number of bedroom windows in its north elevation facing the building.
- 9.174 The proposed building would be sited approximately 17 metres from No. 4 Station Road. It would have a significant amount of first and second floor habitable room windows in its north elevation (bedrooms and living rooms) facing this property.
- 9.175 Whilst the development is not considered to be unduly overbearing in terms of its mass or result in a significant loss of light to the first floor living room window in the south elevation and the roof terrace of No. 4 Station Road, it is considered to result in overlooking leading to a severe loss of privacy.
- 9.176 The District Design Guide recommends a back-to-back window distance of 25 metres for two storey buildings and 30 metres for three storey buildings. Although it is noted that it is a side relationship, there are a significant number of habitable windows and the separation distance between the buildings would be substantially below the guidance. The relationship is consequently not considered acceptable and would result in harm to this neighbour.
- 9.177 The relationship with No. 6 Station Road is satisfactory given that the window serves a kitchen which is a non-habitable room.
- 9.178 The proposed building would be sited approximately 25 metres from some parts of the care home but this reduces to approximately 7 metres in the eastern part of the site. It would have a significant amount of first and second floor habitable room windows in its south elevation (bedrooms and living rooms) facing this property along with balconies.
- 9.179 Whilst the development is not considered to be unduly overbearing in terms of its mass or result in a significant loss of light to the care home, it is considered to result in overlooking from the balcony which serves the flat to the south east to habitable rooms. The secondary living room

window could, however, be subject to a condition to ensure that is obscure glazed and fixed shut.

- 9.180 The proposal is considered to adversely affect the amenities of the neighbour at No. 4 Station Road through a severe loss of privacy. The window and roof terrace of No. 4 Station Road would also result in a loss of privacy to the occupiers of the development.
- 9.181 The site is situated adjacent to Station Road and the Cambridge to London Liverpool Street railway line.
- 9.182 A Noise Impact Assessment has been submitted with the application.
- 9.183 A survey has been carried out at the site to identify the noise levels at the site over a period of one week at a location in the south east corner of the site adjacent to the railway line. The results show that noise levels during the day between 07.00 and 23.00 hours ranged from 64 to 66 dB LAeq and noise levels during the night between 23.00 and 07.00 hours ranged from 55 to 63 dB LAeq. The average was 66 dB LAeq in the day and 59 dB LAeq at night.
- 9.183 A survey has been carried out at the site to identify the noise levels at the site over a period of two weeks at a location in the south west corner of the site adjacent to Station Road. The results show that noise levels during the day between 07.00 and 23.00 hours ranged from 52 to 57 dB LAeq and noise levels during the night between 23.00 and 07.00 hours ranged from 45 to 53 dB LAeq. The average was 54 dB LAeq in the day and 50 dB LAeq at night.
- 9.185 The recommended standards require noise levels of 35 dB LAeq daytime noise levels for living rooms, 30 dB LAeq night time noise levels for bedrooms, 45 dB LAeq night time noise levels in bedrooms for regular events, and 55 dB LAeq for external amenity areas.
- 9.186 The results show that the building will need to be designed with facades, acoustic fenestration and mechanical ventilation systems to ensure that internal noise levels are acceptable and accord with the recommended standards.
- 9.187 The results show that the majority of the external noise levels across the site would be at or below 55 dB LAeq apart from the area adjacent to the railway. To mitigate this impact, a 2.5 metres high acoustic fence should be provided along the eastern boundary.
- 9.188 The mitigation measures required will be secured through a condition attached to any consent in relation a noise insulation scheme in order to protect the amenities of neighbours.
- 9.189 Conditions would also be attached to any consent in relation to a Construction Environmental Management Plan and the hours of use of site

machinery and construction related deliveries to protect the amenities of neighbours from noise.

- 9.190 In summary, the development is considered to adversely affect the amenities of the neighbour at No. 4 Station Road and the approved care home to the south through a severe loss of privacy. The window and roof terrace of No. 4 Station Road and approved care home would also result in a loss of privacy to the future occupiers of the development.
- 9.191 The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Policy HQ/1 of the Local Plan.

Other Matters

- 9.192 A Flood Risk and Drainage Technical Note has been submitted with the application.
- 9.193 The foul water drainage strategy will direct foul flows from the development to a new private gravity foul network which will connect to the existing foul sewer network in Station Road. A condition would be attached to any consent to ensure that the proposal would have a satisfactory method of drainage which would not affect water quality and would comply with Policy CC/7 of the Local Plan.
- 9.194 A Phase 1 Desk Study appraisal in relation to contamination has been submitted with the application.
- 9.195 The previous development of the site is likely to have given risk to variable thicknesses of made ground and the site is being developed into a sensitive end use (residential). In addition, the site adjoins a former fuel depot, from which there is evidence of possible migration of contaminants. Subsequently a number of potential pollutant linkages have been identified. Conditions are recommended to ensure that further investigation into the risk of contamination is carried out and remediation measures identified and implemented in order to protect the health of future occupiers and groundwater to comply with Policies SC/11 and CC/7 of the Local Plan.
- 9.196 A Sustainability Statement has been submitted with the application. Renewable energy measures in the form of a solar PV array with a minimum output of 36,456kWh/annum is proposed be installed on the roof of the building which would offset enough carbon to ensure the development would reduce carbon emissions by at least 10% and comply with Policy CC/3 of the Local Plan.
- 9.197 Water efficiency measures in the form of low flow fixtures and fitting are proposed to be installed to ensure that the development would limit the use of natural water resources to 108.72 litres per person per day and comply with Policy CC/4 of the Local Plan.

- 9.198 In addition, the fabric of the building would have high levels of insulation, high glazing specification, efficient electric heating and extract fans for natural ventilation. The development as while would have energy efficient lamps. These features would ensure that the development is energy efficient and comply with Policy CC/1 of the Local Plan.
- 9.189 A condition would be attached to any consent to enable the development to achieve an adequate link to broadband and comply with Policy TI/10 of the Local Plan.

Planning Balance

- 9.190 Planning decisions must be taken in accordance with the development plan unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise (section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38[6] of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).
- 9.191 The development is considered to provide community benefits in the form of a significant contribution towards specialist care housing in the district and a contribution towards affordable housing to outweigh the loss of employment on the site. These benefits carry significant weight.
- 9.192 However, it is not considered acceptable in terms of the lack of an appropriate contribution towards affordable housing taking into account vacant building credit and the economic viability of the scheme, the inadequate provision of developer contributions to mitigate the impact of the development, the density and quality of the development, and the impacts of the development upon the character and appearance of the area, amenities of neighbours and future occupiers, highway safety, and water quality.
- 9.193 The benefits of the development do not outweigh the harms identified above. In fact, the harms identified significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in this case. Therefore, officers will be recommending that the appeal is dismissed, and the application is refused.
- 9.194 Having taken into account the provisions of the development plan, NPPF and NPPG guidance, the statutory requirements of section 66(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders, as well as all other material planning considerations, the benefits of the development do not outweigh the harms caused by the development. Therefore, officers will be recommending that the appeal is dismissed.

Recommendation

- 9.195 Refusal (for information only), for the following putative reasons: -
1. The proposed development, by reason of the inappropriate calculation of vacant building credit, is considered to result in a shortfall in the

commuted sum required to provide affordable housing off site to contribute towards local needs. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy H/10 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which seeks 40% of dwellings on site to be affordable to meet local needs unless it is not economically viable, and paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 which requires vacant credit to be taken into account when calculating affordable housing on brownfield sites.

2. The proposed development, by reason of its density of approximately 134 dwellings per hectare, cramped layout and close proximity to the boundaries with lack of landscaping, siting in close proximity to Station Road, three storey height central and rear sections, substantial size and scale, 'H' plan form, and a poor level of communal and private amenity space, is considered to result in a poor quality design and living environment which would not make a positive contribution the local and wider context. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies S/7, H/8 and HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which seek developments to preserve or enhance the character of the local urban and rural area and respond to its context in the wider landscape; include variety and interest within a coherent, place-responsive design, which is legible and creates a positive sense of place and identity whilst also responding to the local context and respecting local distinctiveness; be compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, density, mass, form, siting, design, proportion, materials, texture and colour in relation to the surrounding area; deliver a strong visual relationship between buildings that comfortably define and enclose streets, squares and public places, creating interesting vistas, skylines, focal points and appropriately scaled landmarks along routes and around spaces; ensure that car parking is integrated into the development in a convenient, accessible manner and does not dominate the development and its surroundings or cause safety issues; and include high quality landscaping and public spaces that integrate the development with its surroundings, having a clear definition between public and private space which provide opportunities for recreation, social interaction as well as support healthy lifestyles, biodiversity, sustainable drainage and climate change mitigation.
3. The proposed development, by reason of the provision of a significant number of habitable rooms in the north and south elevations and lack of separation between the adjacent dwelling to the north and the approved care home to the south, is considered to result in overlooking and a severe loss of privacy to habitable rooms and a roof terrace which would adversely affect the amenities of neighbours. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy HQ/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which seeks developments to protect the health and amenity of occupiers and surrounding uses from development that is overlooking, overbearing or results in a loss of daylight or development which would create unacceptable impacts such as noise, vibration, odour, emissions and dust.

4. The proposed development, by reason of the inadequate access width and lack of kerb radius, is considered to adversely affect the functioning of the public highway along Station Road to the detriment of highway safety. Notwithstanding the above, the inadequate size of the vehicle parking spaces on site may also have implications in terms of highway safety. The proposal is therefore contrary to paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 which seeks to resist developments where there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
5. The proposed development, by reason of the inappropriate surface water treatment and pollution control measures in relation to the surface water discharging from the attenuation tank, would result in a significant risk to water quality. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CC/7 and CC/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which seeks to resist developments which would not protect water quality.
6. The proposed development, by reason of the potential lack of developer contributions towards open space and burial sites, is not considered to sufficiently mitigate the impact of the development upon local infrastructure. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies SC/7 and TI/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 which seeks to ensure adequate infrastructure to make the development acceptable in planning terms.

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 Plan 2018
- South Cambridgeshire Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
- Planning File References: 21/05276/FUL, S/1434/00/F, S/0750/96/F and S/0706/83/F