

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

1<sup>st</sup> October 2008

**AUTHOR/S:** Executive Director / Corporate Manager - Planning and Sustainable Communities

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### **S/1319/08/F - SAWSTON**

**Erection of 22 Flats With Associated Parking Following Demolition of Existing Health Centre, Link Road, Sawston for Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association**

**Recommendation: Delegated Approval**

**Date for Determination: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2008 (Major Application)**

#### **Notes:**

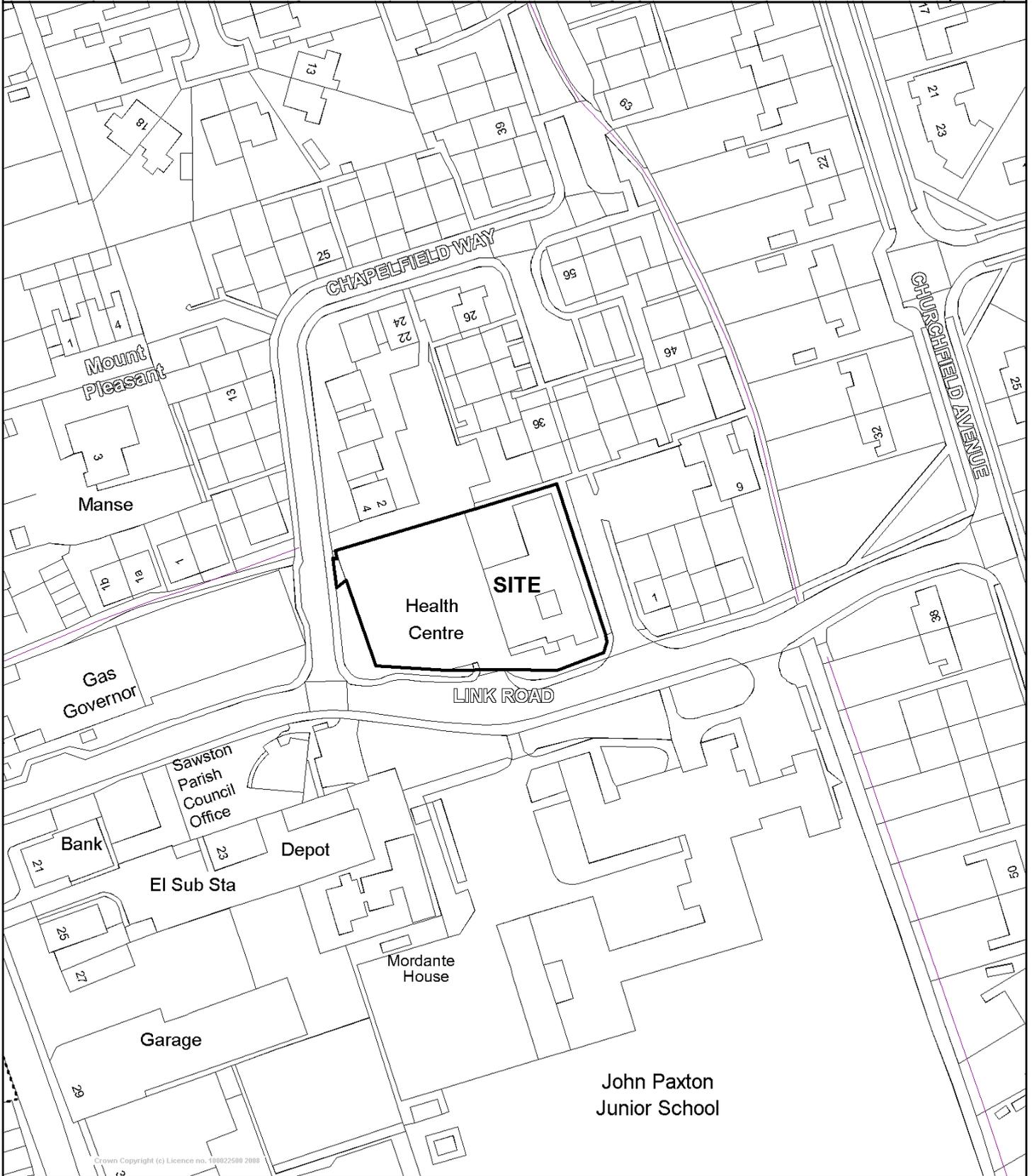
**This application has been reported to the Planning Committee for determination because it is a major application and Sawston Parish Council requests specific conditions, which cannot necessarily be justified.**

#### **Site and Proposal**

1. The site is situated within Sawston framework. It measures 0.19 of a hectare in area and currently comprises a, 1960s, part two-storey (6 metres high) and part single storey, flat roof building that was previously used as a health centre on the eastern side, and a hard surfaced parking area to the west. The site is surrounded by two metre high timber close boarded fencing and metal herrass fencing.
2. Residential development lies to the north, east and west of the site. Link Road to the east consists of a terrace of two-storey houses. Chapelfield Way to the north and west comprises a mix of terraced and semi-detached bungalows and two-storey flats. The Bellbird School is situated on the opposite side of the road to the south. It is being redeveloped.
3. This full planning application, received 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2008, proposes demolition of the existing health centre and the erection of 22 affordable flats. The built form would be within three blocks and comprise 10 x 1 bedroom dwellings and 12 x 2 bedroom dwellings. Two, two and a half storey blocks would front Link Road and measure approximately 9 metres in height and one, two storey block would front Chapelfield Way and measure approximately 7.8 metres in height. The proposed materials are buff brick/ timber cladding for the walls, and tiles for the roof. A new access measuring 4.5 metres in width would be provided off Chapelfield Way. The area to the rear of the building would consist of 28 car parking spaces, 22 cycle parking spaces and two stores for bins. A 1.8 metre high brick wall would form the eastern and northern boundaries of the site. A landscaping strip would surround the southern and western sides of the buildings to include the two existing small trees on the site. No open space is proposed as part of the redevelopment scheme.

#### **Planning History**

4. Temporary planning permissions were granted for a medical facility on the site in 2002 and 2005 (references **S/1240/05/F** and **S/1482/02/F**) whilst planning permission was



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granted and construction completed of the new medical centre on London Road, Sawston (references **S/2392/02/O** and **S/1964/04/RM**).

5. Planning permission was granted for a health centre on the site in 1968 (reference **S/0049/68/F**). An extension to the health centre and additional car parking facilities were granted planning permission in 1975 (reference **S/0994/75/F**).

### **Planning Policy**

6. **Policy ST/4** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007** identifies Sawston as a Rural Centre. There is no limit on the amount of development that will be permitted within the village frameworks of these settlements provided that adequate services, facilities, and infrastructure are available or can be made available as a result of the development.
7. **Policy DP/7** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that the redevelopment of unallocated land within village frameworks will be permitted provided that the site in its present state does not form an essential part of village character; the development would be sensitive to the character of the location, local features of landscape, ecological or historic importance, and the amenities of neighbours; there is necessary infrastructure capacity to support the development; and the development would not result in the loss of local employment or a local service or facility
8. **Policy ENV7** of the **East of England Plan 2008** and **Policy DP/2** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** seek all new developments to incorporate high standards of design that respond to the distinctive character of the local built environment.
9. **Policy DP/3** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on, amongst other criteria, residential amenity, traffic generated, village character, and recreation and other community facilities.
10. **Policy HG/1** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** seeks residential developments to the make the best use of sites by achieving average net densities of 40 dwellings per hectare in sustainable locations close to a good range of existing services and facilities.
11. **Policy HG/2** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that residential developments will contain a mix of units providing accommodation in a range of sizes, types and affordability, to meet local needs. Affordable Housing should be of an appropriate mix to respond to identified needs at the time of the development, in accordance with HG/3.
12. **Policy HG/3** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that proposals for housing developments will only be permitted if they provide an agreed mix of affordable housing to meet local needs.
13. **Policy SF/10** of the **South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that all residential developments will be required to contribute towards outdoor playing space and informal open space to meet the additional need generated by the development. Where

appropriate, provision should be made on the development site. However, an appropriate contribution will be required for 'off site' provision of the types of space not provided on-site. This could be for new provision or improvements to existing facilities.

14. **Policy SF/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that planning permission will be refused for proposals that would result in the loss of a village service where such a loss would result cause an unacceptable reduction in the level of community of serve provision in the locality.
15. **Policy NE/3 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that all development proposals for 10 dwellings or more will include technology for renewable energy to provide at least 10% of their predicted energy requirements.
16. **Policy NE/6 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** seeks all new developments to maintain, enhance, restore or add to biodiversity.
17. **Policy TR/1 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that planning permission will not be granted for developments likely to give rise to a material increase in travel demands unless the site has a sufficient standard of accessibility to offer an appropriate choice of travel by public transport or other non-car travel modes.
18. **Policy TR/2 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007** states that car parking should be provided in accordance with the maximum standards to reduce over reliance on the car and to promote more sustainable forms of transport. Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with the minimum standards.

### **Consultation**

19. **Sawston Parish Council** - Recommends approval subject to conditions. It comments that the building is supported, all flats must be offered to Sawston people (unlike Stanley Webb Close Phase 2 where this should have happened and did not), and a pelican crossing should be provided in Link Road, as it is opposite the increased size new Bellbird Shool and the flats will increase the traffic flow in Link Road. It should be noted that when Link Road was resurfaced cables were put in a conduit under the road to make a crossing less costly in the future. Cycle parking should be provided in accordance wit the minimum standards.
20. **Environment Agency** - The application falls under operational development of less than 1 hectare within flood zone 1 (low risk). No objections are raised. The applicant should be advised of a number of informatives aimed at good practice towards surface water management.
21. **Trees and Landscapes Officer** - The two trees should be protected during construction if they are to be retained, but there are no objections should they be removed, as they are of poor quality.
22. **Ecology Officer** - Considers that a bat and bird survey should be undertaken as a result of the poor nature of repair of the building. Mitigation or compensatory measures may need to be incorporated into the scheme. Condition the provision of nest boxes.

23. **Environmental Health Officer**- Concerned that problems could arise from noise and disturbance and suggests working hours conditions to protect the amenity of neighbours. Also suggests a condition for a site investigation into contamination and informatives relating to the burning of waste and demolition of the existing building.
24. **Housing Development Manager** - Supports the project and comments that the development will provide a much needed, mixed tenure scheme for Sawston. The proposal has been fully worked up with the Housing Development Team and the RSL was successful in obtaining grant funding for this project in the last National Affordable Housing Programme bid round for 2008/11.
25. **County Education Officer** - An education contribution is not required as the development is for 100% affordable housing.
26. **Local Highway Authority** - Comments are awaited and will be reported verbally at the meeting.
27. **Landscape Design Officer** - Comments are awaited and will be reported verbally at the meeting.
28. **Police Architectural Liaison Officer** - Comments are awaited and will be reported verbally at the meeting.
29. **Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service** - Comments are awaited and will be reported verbally at the meeting.
30. **Building Inspector** - Comments are awaited and will be reported verbally at the meeting.
31. **Environment Operations Manager** - Comments are awaited and will be reported verbally at the meeting.

### **Representations**

32. The occupier of No. 24 Chapelfield Way has queried the treatment to the northern boundary of the car park and whether there would be an access point.
33. A resident of Washington Drive supports the removal of the old health centre.

### **Planning Comments – Key Issues**

34. The main issues to be considered during the determination of this application relate to the principle of redevelopment of the site for housing, loss of a village service/ local employment site, density, mix and affordable housing, open space, impact of the built form upon the character and appearance of the area with regards to its layout, scale, design, and materials, neighbour amenity, highway safety, landscaping and ecology.

### ***Principle of Redevelopment of the Site for Housing***

35. The site lies within the framework. Sawston is a sustainable village that is designated as a rural centre. There is no limit to the number of dwellings that can be constructed in such locations and therefore the erection of 22 residential units is considered acceptable in principle subject to other normal planning considerations. The existing health centre is a vacant and unattractive building and there are no objections to its demolition.

### ***Loss of a Village Service/ Local Employment Site***

36. The site formerly comprised a health centre. The loss of such an important community facility and a local employment site within the village would have been an important issue. However, a new replacement medical centre has recently been built elsewhere in the village. No objections are therefore raised to redevelopment of the site for housing.

### ***Density, Mix and Affordable Housing***

37. The erection of 22 residential units on the site equates to a density of 115 dwellings per hectare. This is clearly above the minimum density requirement of approximately 40 dwellings per hectare in villages such as Sawston. However, it is considered to be appropriate level, as it would be situated in a sustainable location close to a range of services and facilities, and make the best use of previously developed land.
38. The development comprises a mix of one and two bedroom dwellings. Although no larger units are to be provided as part of the scheme, this mix is considered to be satisfactory, given that the Sawston Housing Needs Survey 2004 identified a need for 75% of properties to be one and two bedroom.
39. The development comprises 100% affordable housing. The application specifies that eight properties will be socially rented and fourteen intermediate. Confirmation from the housing officer is awaited on whether the houses will be offered to residents in housing need outside the village of Sawston contrary to the Parish Council's comments.
40. However this is not an exception site under Policy HG/5 since the proposal complies with settlement and housing policies of the adopted Local Development Framework 2007. Under Policy HG/3, therefore, the identified need is considered on a district - wide basis for Major Developments, Rural Centres and a Minor Rural Centres.

### ***Open Space***

41. The development requires the on-site provision of 84 square metres of formal children's play space, 84 square metres of informal children's play space, and 138 square metres of informal open space. No open space is provided on site as the area surrounding the buildings form incidental landscaping to the scheme. Therefore, a financial contribution of approximately £33,000.00 towards the provision and maintenance of open space 'off site' would be required. This would be part of a planning obligation subject to a condition of any consent.

### ***Character of Area***

42. The area is characterised by development fronting Chapelfield Way and Link Road. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed buildings would be situated on a different part of the site to the existing building and forward of the existing building lines, the layout is considered to respect the existing pattern of development in the area. The flats would be divided into three separate blocks and situated on the southern and western boundaries of the site with parking to the north. Landscaping would be provided to the front of the flats adjacent to Link Road and Chapelfield Way with a feature area in the south western corner.
43. The site is surrounded by a mixture of scales and types of residential development ranging from single storey terraces of small bungalows to two-storey blocks of flats.

Whilst the proposed two and a half storey flats would be higher than the existing health centre and the surrounding residential development, their eaves height would be lower than the health centre and some accommodation would be provided within the roof space. I do not therefore consider that they would result in unduly dominant and bulky features that would harm the character and appearance of the area through having an unacceptable visual impact upon the appearance of the street scene. The bulk of the development would be minimised by the building being divided up into three blocks rather than one large building.

44. The buildings have a fairly traditional two-storey design with two of the blocks having accommodation in a hipped mansard style roof served by dormer windows and roof lights. This is considered to be in keeping with the design of surrounding residential properties in the area.
45. The use of buff brick / timber cladding for the walls and tiles for the roof would be appropriate. The cladding would provide a relief and break up the mass of the buildings.

### ***Neighbour Amenity***

46. The buildings would not seriously harm the amenities of neighbours through resulting in an unduly overbearing mass when viewed from the windows or gardens of dwellings at No. 1 Link Road or Nos. 2-36 Chapelfield Way, given their position and distance from those properties. Block A would be situated 12 metres from the blank side elevation of Nos. 2 and 4 Chapelfield Way, and Block C would be situated 10 metres from the blank side elevation of No. 1 Link Road. Blocks B and C would be situated at least 22 metres from 34 and 36 Chapelfield Way.
47. I also do not consider that the buildings would lead to a significant loss of sunlight or daylight. Whilst it is acknowledged that they would be higher than the existing building and orientated to the south of most of the adjacent neighbouring properties, they would be situated an adequate distance away to not result in overshadowing.
48. The first and second floor windows in the buildings are not considered to result in overlooking that would lead to a loss of privacy to neighbours. The first and second floor windows in the north elevations of Blocks B and C would be situated a distance of 22 metres from the nearest windows and gardens. The first and second floor windows in the east elevation of Block A would be at a very oblique angle to Nos. 2 and 4 Chapelfield Way. The first and second floor windows in the east elevation of Block C would be obscure glazed and fixed as a condition of any consent.
49. I do not believe that the development would result in a significant rise in the level of noise and disturbance. Whilst the parking area would be situated very close to the rear gardens of Nos. 2, 4, 36 and 38 Chapelfield Way, it would be screened from these neighbours by a solid, 1.8 metre high brick wall.

### ***Highway Safety***

50. The proposed access would be off Chapelfield Way. No objections are raised to the principle of such an access in this position subject to the comments of the Local Highway Authority. However, the width of the access, vehicular visibility splays and pedestrian visibility splays appear to be substandard and would need to be improved.
51. The parking area shows a total of 28 parking spaces. This results in one parking space for each dwelling and 6 visitor spaces. Although these figures are below the

average standards, they are considered acceptable for a sustainable village such as Sawston, given that the units are small, and that the site lies within a central location and close to public transport links. No disabled parking spaces have been provided but the applicant will be asked to provide at least one. The measurements of the parking spaces and turning area comply with Local Highway Authority requirements.

52. A total of 22 cycle spaces have been provided. This amounts to one space per dwelling. This is in accordance with the standards. The cycle parking should, however, be within covered, enclosures. This siting of a cycle store close to the junction of the proposed car park access and Chapelfield Way may also be a safety concern.
53. The Local Highway Authority will be consulted on the need for a pedestrian crossing in Link Road as requested by the Parish Council as a condition of the consent. The meeting will be verbally updated on its advice.

### ***Landscaping***

54. The proposal would not result in the loss of any important trees. The landscaping scheme is acceptable subject to confirmation from the Landscape Design Officer. The applicant will be asked to incorporate landscaping within the parking area to the rear.

### ***Ecology***

55. The proposal is unlikely to result in the loss of any protected species or important habitats, but confirmation from the Ecology Officer is awaited. If such habitats would be at risk, mitigation or compensatory measures would need to be submitted as part of a condition of any consent.

### ***Other Matters***

56. The site lies within flood zone 1 (low risk). The development is not considered to increase the risk of flooding to the site and surrounding area.
57. Confirmation from the Building Inspector will ensure that the proposal provides at least 10% of its energy through renewable sources. A renewable energy production calculation submitted with the application calculates the need to provide approximately 20 sq m (0.9 m per flat) of solar hot water heating panels. These would be located over the main entrance stairwells.

### **Recommendation**

58. Subject to the nature of outstanding comments, delegated approval is sought with the safeguarding conditions.

### **Conditions**

1. Standards Conditions 1 - (Reason 1) Time Limit.
2. SC13 (RC13) Materials
3. SC5 (RC5) Landscaping
4. SC6 (RC6) Landscaping Imp
5. SC8 (RC8) Tree Protection

6.	SC12 (RC12)	Boundary Treatment
7.	SC22b (RC22)	Visibility Splays
8.	SC20 (RC20)	Visibility Splays
9.	SC15 (RC15)	Car Parking - Buildings Occupied Parking and Turing
10.	SC16 (RC16)	Cycle Parking Buildings Occupied
11.	C2 (RC2)	(Old Condition Highways)
12.	SC27 (RC27)	Contamination
13.	SC38 (RC38)	Noise
14.	SC31 (RC31)	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor East Elevation Block C of Building
15.	SC62 (RC62)	(delete i & ii) Affordable Housing Policy SF/10
16.	SC63 (RC63)	Recreational Infrastructure (S/F Open Space)
17.	SC54 (RC54)	Nesting Boxes

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- East of England Plan 2008
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Document 2007
- Planning File References: S/1319/08/F, S/1240/05/F, S/1482/02/F, S/0994/75/F, S/0049/68/F, S/1964/04/RM and S/2392/02/O.

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