

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Planning Committee

3 August 2016

**AUTHOR/S:** Head of Development Management

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**Application Number:** S/1040/16/FL

**Parish(es):** Longstanton and Willingham

**Proposal:** Extension of existing haulage yard along with associated infrastructure to provide additional HGV, trailer and car parking (part retrospective)

**Site address:** Land to the rear of existing haulage yard and No. 5 Station Road, Longstanton

**Applicant(s):** G Webb Haulage Ltd

**Recommendation:** Delegated Approval

**Key material considerations:** Principle of Development, Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area, Highway Safety and Parking, Impact on Residential Amenity through Noise and Emissions and Other Matters

**Committee Site Visit:** 2 August 2016

**Departure Application:** Yes

**Presenting Officer:** Lydia Pravin, Senior Planning Officer

**Application brought to Committee because:** Relevant material considerations raise significant planning concerns due to the scale of development proposed

**Date by which decision due:** 13 July 2016 (Extension of time requested until 03 August 2016)

### Executive Summary

1. The site consists of an area of almost 0.8 hectares and currently comprises an existing haulage yard situated to the west of the B1050 Station Road. There is access off Station Road and the site has significant hedging on the eastern boundary. Within the site there is an office building to the front of the yard with staff and visitor parking area. Centrally in the yard are workshop buildings with the rest of the yard surfaced with hardcore.
2. The site is bounded by hedging, hedgerow trees and steel security fencing, and by No.5 Station Road to the south of the existing haulage yard consisting of a bungalow. The land is designated as agricultural land that has been used for 'hobby farming' of sheep and goats in connection with No. 5 Station Road.

The proposed development is for extension of existing haulage yard along with

3. associated infrastructure to provide additional HGV, trailer and car parking (part retrospective). A portion of the land to the west of No. 5 Station Road which will facilitate the car parking area consisting of compacted granular pavement construction with geogrids as necessary and the pavement construction to be lined with suitable sealed geomembrane with a composite geo-synthetic drainage and protection layer has already commenced on site.
4. There are currently 53 car parking spaces and 45 HGVs and trailers enabling 53 full time staff. The proposed development will provide 86 car parking spaces (an additional 33 spaces) which included 3 visitor car parking spaces and 4 disable car parking spaces. There will be 8 cycle spaces and 71 HGVs and trailers (an additional 26 spaces) and will facilitate 78 full time staff (an increase of 25 staff).
5. Officers consider the scale of the development proposed will be significant, however the proposed development is an expansion and the economic benefits of the scheme will create 25 additional local jobs. There is not considered to be a significant landscaping and ecology impact and the loss of the agricultural land is outweighed by the benefits of the scheme. There is not considered to be significant harm to the local transport network or highway safety with access to sustainable modes of transport and there is proportional car and cycle parking facilities associated with the development.
6. The impact on residential amenity through noise and emissions is on balance considered acceptable in light of technical documentation which has been assessed. Sufficient surface water and foul drainage considerations have been addressed and the site is not considered to cause a significant flooding issue.
7. Therefore having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account there are not considered to be any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as outlined in paragraph 14. It is therefore considered that planning permission should be approved in this instance subject to conditions.

### **Planning History**

8. S/2307/01/F – Replacement workshop – approved  
S/0427/01/F – Office extension – approved  
S/1127/84/F – Use of land for transport yard – approved  
S/1347/91/O – Erection of workshop building – approved  
S/1094/86/F – Extension to office – approved  
S/1497/85/O – Erection of a workshop building – approved  
S/1010/85O – Erection of warehouse/workshop building - refused  
S/0661/80/F – Change of use from haulage yard to sales and service of agricultural and farm machinery – approved

9. **Planning Policies**

*National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012*  
*National Planning Practice Guidance*

10. *South Cambridgeshire LDF Core Strategy, adopted July 2007:*

ST/5 Minor Rural Centres (Willingham)  
ST/6 Group Villages (Longstanton)

11. *South Cambridgeshire LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, adopted July 2007:*

DP/1 Sustainable Development  
DP/2 Design of New Development  
DP/3 Development Criteria  
DP/7 Development Frameworks  
ET/5 Development for the Expansion of Firms  
NE/4 Landscape Character Areas  
NE/6 Biodiversity  
NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure  
NE/10 Foul Drainage – Alternative Drainage Systems  
NE/11 Flood Risk  
NE/14 Lighting Proposals  
NE/15 Noise Pollution  
NE/16 Emissions  
NE/17 Protecting High Quality Agricultural Land  
TR/1 Planning for More Sustainable Travel  
TR/2 Car and Cycle Parking Standards  
TR/3 Mitigating Travel Impact

12. *South Cambridgeshire LDF Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):*

District Design Guide SPD – adopted March 2010  
Trees & Development Sites SPD - Adopted January 2009  
Landscape in New Developments SPD - Adopted March 2010  
Biodiversity SPD - Adopted July 2009

13. *South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission July 2013*

S//3 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development  
S/7 Development Frameworks  
S/9 Minor Rural Centres  
S/10 Group Villages  
HQ/1 Design Principles  
E/16 Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside  
CC/8 Sustainable Drainage Systems  
CC/9 Managing Flood Risk  
NH/2 Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character  
NH/3 Protecting Agricultural Land  
NH/4 Biodiversity  
SC/10 Lighting Proposals  
SC/11 Noise Pollution  
SC/12 Contaminated Land

SC/13 Air Quality  
SC/15 Odour and Other Fugitive Emissions to Air  
TI/2 Planning for Sustainable Travel  
TI/3 Parking Provision

### Consultation

14. **Longstanton Parish Council** – objects with the following comments:
  - With the imminent commencement of construction on the Northstowe Phase 1 site, it is believed there will be an increase in pedestrian movement on the B1050 to the north of Longstanton including that of children crossing this road to attend the new primary school. This development would affect highway safety for these vulnerable road users.
  - It is felt that this development would have a detrimental effect on the area in that it is sited within a residential area and therefore not in keeping.
  - Councilors are concerned about the potential increase in air borne pollution from the additional diesel run vehicles the haulage yard would be looking to bring in.
  - Council members consider that this development would have considerable impact on those individual properties neighbouring the yard in that there would be additional noise and disturbance. The applicant has stated that the fence would be more appropriate but this does not affect the vehicles entering and leaving the site in proximity to residential properties.
  - The Council understands Mr and Mrs Sheridan have contacted the Planning Authority with respect to this development and the Council supports the comments raised by these residents.
  
15. **Willingham Parish Council** – commented:  
Willingham Parish Council recommend approval provided that applicant increases the radius of the turn in area of the site.
  
16. **SCDC Trees Officer** – commented:  
I am concerned that the proposed extension to the haulage yard will lead to gradual attrition of the buffer hedge / trees along the southern boundary to the site. Whilst the quality of trees in this location is not a matter of debate, it is their collective value as a screen and also a dust filter from dust that will be generated by moving vehicles on the new surface.
  
17. The proposed new hard surface is sufficiently distant from the trees but it does not provide any physical barrier between the hard surface and the trees to prevent gradual encroachment. This could easily be achieved using a sturdy fence, most effectively an acoustic fence.
  
18. I don't have any objection to the application but strongly suggest you encourage an amendment for the provision of a fence along the southern boundary between the hard surface and the tree belt. If this is installed prior to the site preparation and new surface it will also provide a very effective tree protective barrier to prevent damage during construction.
  
19. **SCDC Landscape Officer** – commented:  
No objection in principal but more details will be required by conditions.
  - We will require full planting details of the proposed boundary and replacement planting including species, stock sizes planting rates and numbers, proposed establishment management and protection for both the new planting and

existing vegetation retained on site.

- It would be preferable if the proposed SUDs stored water in surface pools or basins rather than in underground structures which can impact on the water quality. An area of 17 x 17 x 1.0 meters could accommodate the runoff for both the lorry park and car park areas.
- We will require details of the proposed car park materials and construction.

20. **SCDC Ecology Officer** – commented:

I have no objection to the application and no further ecological information is considered to be required to inform the application.

21. The ecological survey report provided by SLR is welcomed. The report is inaccurate with regards to the likelihood of presence of reptiles, which are protected under UK law. For example, it is stated that common lizard are associated with aquatic habitat and that slow worm may be present. The distribution of slow worm is extremely limited in the district. Although there are records of common lizard approximately 1km to the south-east, the grazed habitat within the site is unlikely to be used by the species. Therefore, reptile surveys are not required to inform the application as reptile species are not reasonably likely to be present.

22. The recommended avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures provided by the consultants are satisfactory. The recommendations are worded in what *should* rather than what *will* or *must* happen. I would advise that the wording in Section 5.1 needs to be updated and the report resubmitted or the suggested condition below may not be enforceable. However, if you consider that the current wording is sufficient to ensure compliance, I will defer to your judgement.

23. Please attach appropriately worded conditions to cover the following to any consent granted:

1) Ecological Mitigation

All works must proceed in accordance with the recommendations detailed in Section 5.1 of the *Ecological Appraisal* report (SLR, April 2016). This shall include measures to protect features of ecological interest, nesting birds and badger, including an update survey for badger if works do not commence before October 2016.

Reasons: To comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

2) External Lighting

Details of external illumination at the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before installation. No means of external illumination shall be installed other than in accordance with the approved details and shall not be varied without permission in writing from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect wildlife habitat in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the NPPF.

3) Biodiversity Enhancement

No development shall commence until a scheme for ecological enhancement consistent with Section 5.3 of the *Ecological Appraisal* report (SLR, April 2016) has been submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed scheme.

Reason: To provide habitat for wildlife and enhance the site for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF and the NERC Act 2006.

24. **SCDC Environmental Health Officer** – commented:  
I wish to confirm that I have received a copy of the above application and have considered the implications of the proposal, along with the additional information supplied. I have no comment to make regarding the actual provision of extra vehicles and parking spaces as such. However I will comment on the SLR noise report dated April 2016 that accompanied the application.
25. The conclusion of that report is that this proposal should not be rejected on noise grounds and having looked at the methods applied and the figures presented I agree with the reports interpretation of the current noise standards. However on close reading of the figures it is apparent that the situation is already marginal regarding acceptability on noise grounds, although that appears to relate to other traffic and not just the current haulage yard in the morning at least.
26. My interpretation of the situation is therefore that this development would be taking place in a location already adversely affected by traffic noise and this development is arguably acceptable because it would not worsen the current situation significantly? I think there is clearly a balance to be drawn when considering the siting of this sort of business but on the basis of the figures provided it is clear to me a local authority should not want this sort of use in a more built up residential area than this is currently.
27. **SCDC Air Quality** – commented  
In terms of local air quality management, the proposed increase in vehicle movements is unlikely to significantly worsen air quality in this area given the current, relatively good, air quality. The amount of traffic is unlikely to potential threaten 1-hour or 24-hour thresholds for certain pollutants as it is a relatively rural location currently where these targets are not being breached.
28. It is more likely that nuisance in terms of noise or odour would be potential issues given the proximity to residential properties and these issues I note have been covered by the Environmental Health Officer correspondence of 2/06/16. However, the area to the south of this site is soon to undergo significant residential development (Northstowe Phase 1) which will have a marked impact on local air quality and the Council have a substantial pre-commencement monitoring regime as a result, in the village of Longstanton.
29. Monitoring locations exist relatively near to the proposed development and would therefore gather relevant data for the additional traffic contribution created by these haulage vehicles (assuming the majority go towards the A14) as well as the Northstowe traffic. Therefore this data could be provided to any concerned residents if they wish to view it and will allow the council to accurately determine if air quality is significantly deteriorating in the area.
30. I therefore do not object to the proposed development on the basis of impacts to (or from) Local Air Quality and do not consider it necessary to require any further air quality impact assessment or associated measures through planning conditions attached to this permission.
31. **SCDC Contaminated Land** – commented:  
There are no immediately evident environmental constraints that would attract a contaminated land condition; however the development is proximal to a potentially

contaminative land use. Recommend an informative is attached so that if contamination is found during the development this can be addressed.

32. **Local Highways Authority** – commented:  
No significant adverse effect upon the Public Highway should result from this proposal, should it gain the benefit of Planning Permission.
33. **Highways England** – commented:  
No objection. Highways Act 175B is not relevant to the application.
34. **Cambridgeshire County Council Transport Assessment Team** – commented:  
The submission of a transport statement is acceptable. Existing Local Transport Network – it is noted that the guided busway and nearest Citi 5 bus stop is located within 800m of the site. The vehicle flows recorded are indicative of vehicle flows recorded for this road. The latest accident data has been obtained from CCC which shows there have been 6 collisions within approximately 1km of the site.
35. The analysis undertaken by the applicant shows that the proposal will not result in a detriment to road safety. The car and cycle parking provision is determined on merit. It is proposed to provide 82 car parking spaces in total an increase of 33 to the existing provision. There are no current cycle parking spaces and it is proposed to install 8 covered secure spaces. The car and cycle provision is acceptable.
36. Forecast Trip Generation - The proposals are to increase the space on the site to be able to accommodate an additional 25 employees and 20 trucks with 5 trailers. This would increase the staff employed at the site to 78. The majority of HGV movements into and out of the site are outside of the AM and PM peak periods of 07:00 to 08:00 and 17:00 to 18:00 which account for the expansion of the site. Therefore it is considered that there is not a significant impact of the development on the surrounding highway network.
37. With regard to Travel Plans, CCC has been reviewed and not commented on any detail of the Travel Plan at this stage. Targets / Measures of the travel plan will need to be subject to a condition should approval be given. However, the provision of a travel plan coordinator and information packs for employees is appropriate for this development. The Travel Plan annual surveys and reporting to CCC should be undertaken for a period of 5 years after the baseline survey has been completed.
38. Conclusions  
Overall it is considered that the proposal will not have a detrimental impact on the public highway and as a result I have no objections to this application. The local planning authority may need to consider any other matters regarding potential disturbance to neighbours.
39. **Environment Agency** – commented:  
Whilst the agency has no objection in principle to the proposed development we wish to offer the following recommendations and informatives.
40. We are reliant on the accuracy and completeness of the reports in undertaking our review and can take no responsibility for incorrect data or interpretation made by the authors.
41. The site is identified as being within floodzone 1 and less than 1 ha in area (m2) it would therefore fall under the Agency's Flood risk Standing Advice. See the following

link: <https://www.gov.uk/flood-risk-standing-advice-frsa-for-local-planning-authorities>

42. Recommendations regarding surface water drainage, foul water drainage disposal and pollution control. With regard to contaminated land the proposal is not considered to be high risk.

### **Representations**

43. **Hazeldene, Station Road, Longstanton, CB24 3DS commented:**  
1. Station Road, the Willingham side of the Guided Bus Line, is a residential area where development has not been permitted for many years, indeed our own family had a planning application for a single dwelling turned down purely on traffic concerns, i.e. an additional vehicle entering on to the road, as far back as the late 1960s. There has been no further development so how can the proposed increase in traffic of large lorries on this very busy road even be considered?
44. 2. This application is more suited to a specific industrial site not a residential area and the original application was approved only for single figure vehicles.
45. 3. Looking at the existing plans and the proposed plans, where are the 42 lorries and 3 trailers kept now if only an additional 20 lorries and 5 trailers necessitate the enormous site proposed?
46. 4. The Traffic Survey stating an average of 38/41 MPH surely means there has to be higher speeds to support this AVERAGE speed. We have long needed a speed camera on this road which is evident if you live along this stretch of road and try to safely cross the road. The fact that there have been no FATAL casualties is NO argument that the road is safe.
47. 5. There is considerable early morning noise when the lorries are leaving the site.
48. **Redcroft and Eastcote, Station Road, Longstanton, Cambridge, CB24 3DS commented:**
- Aware of the acquisition of 5 Station Road and that it was planned to use some of the newly acquired land for additional storage.
  - Concerned about the scale of the proposals which is at least double the scale of the current business.
  - Present operation is already out of character with the surroundings in terms of appearance and noise. The area is otherwise dominated by residential properties, orchards/ nursery's or horse liveries.
  - GHW is the only industrial site in the vicinity and is currently of reasonable size. Suggesting that the only industrial site in a rural/residential area could double in size is clearly changing the character of the neighbourhood significantly.
  - The outlook of Eastcote and particularly Redcroft would be transformed radically from grazing goats to an HGV parking lot.
  - The noise assessment study attached to the current proposal focuses exclusively on 5 Station Road and this raises a number of concerns as GWH own 5 Station Road this could be biased in its interpretation of the study. There would appear to be a conflict of interest in assessing the noise impact on this property. Noise travels and none of the closet neighbours (Ryecroft, Eastcote and Redcroft) except 5 Station Road have been considered in the noise impact assessment study. Eastcote is less than 10m away from Station Road. It is likely to be affected in a similar way. Redcroft is further away but has already complained about noise in the evening and at night and would be

further affected as levels are forecast to increase.

- Ryecroft is just across the road from the site and will be adversely affected by the increased number of vehicles entering and exiting the site.
- The noise levels only considered the noise levels on a Friday night and on a Monday morning. Vehicles transit the site throughout the day. More vehicles would lead to more noise.
- The noise study mentions noise in the middle of the night as if it were an accepted reference point to be noisy at night. The Council applied a noise/time restriction on the planning conditions for the site workshop in 2001 and 2002. Concerns about the existing and proposed noise levels. Another source being noise from slow moving vehicles in rush hour when the northbound traffic backs up from Longstanton to Willingham. GHW trucks contribute to this noise; increasing the number of trucks will also increase the number of vehicles queuing in the rush hour and resultant noise.
- To make it any more commercial would contradict several articles of the Local Plan as well as increase HGV traffic and the associated vibration and pollution through the nearby Northstowe community.
- Low frequency vibration from the trucks will have a similar impact to noise and the pollution from exhaust gases impacting on the neighbours. None of the properties on Station Road closest to GWH are of recent construction and are sensitive to low frequency vibration through the properties.
- No acknowledgement of the existing or proximity to their properties.
- There appears to have been a change of use (ahead of formal planning consent) for what use to be grassland to the rear of 5 Station Road which has already been covered with compacted hard core to facilitate its use as a car park for employees. Some trees have been taken down to allow access to this car park.
- There is also a very large heap of aggregates in evidence at the back of the site, whereas we understand the site is not supposed to accommodate any aggregates at all and is only designated as a site for lorry serving and storage.
- Unable to check whether there are any covenants on the site which would preclude anything other than agricultural use.
- The current proposal states that the number of trucks will increase from 42 to over 70 but we are not sure if 42 is an unauthorised starting point for the current year. The concern is whether the nominal 70 might be exceeded at some point in the future too.
- GWH stores aggregates at Station Yard (just north of the guided busway) but we don't know if this is an approved use for that site. Another concern is whether there is a risk of aggregates being stored behind 5 Station Road at some point in the future
- The following policies of the Local Plan would also appear to be compromised by the current proposal: Policy NH/2: Protecting and Enhancing Landscape Character. Policy NH/3 Protecting Agricultural Land, Policy NH/8 Mitigating the Impact of Development In and Adjoining the Green Belt, NH/9 Redevelopment of Previously Developed Sites and Infilling in the Green Belt.

**49. Ryecroft Nursery, Station Road, Longstanton, CB24 3DS commented:**

Object to the proposed development due to the impact on our standard of living for the reasons stated below:

- The dwelling is opposite the site entrance and since moving there in December 2014 feel the noise levels have increased considerably, especially with the addition of the vehicles speakers which are fitted to the HGV's which can be hear saying heavy good vehicle turning.
- Concerned by the noise coming from the existing use of the site.
- The original part of the house which faces the main road was built in the 1920s,

and still has the original stained glass windows to the front of the property which are part of the character of the house, these units are not double glazed so noise can be an issue. Our garden and patio area are within close proximity to the entrance of the site. Concerns about the impact of the noise on their habitable bedrooms.

- Concerned about the higher level of HGV's and other vehicles for the increased level of staff levels. Station Road is very congested already and are concerned about the increase in level of traffic for Northstowe.
- Concerned about the increase in fumes and smells from the increased level of vehicles entering and leaving the yard on a regular basis.

50. **Downham House, Station Road, Longstanton, CB24 3DS commented:**

- The B1050 is a significant route into the fens and already has experienced traffic growth as a result of development in the north and east of the county together with more localised development at Over and Willingham which will continue.
- The B1050 to the south of the application site (the route to the A14 from the application site) has been substantially altered recently to provide a street, with associated street scene furniture, through phase 1 of Northstowe and shortly will be a through road to a residential area.
- To the north of the application site there is a blind bend on the B1050 which at peak rush hour times lies on the route that the peak traffic takes in approaching the application site and its junction with the B1050.
- The applicant's application form indicates that there are at present 53 car parking spaces which will be increased to 86 spaces, an increase of 33 spaces, a percentage increase of 57.78%. The applicant's transport statement on page 11 records that there are 10 traffic movements from the application site, all travelling in the same direction as the peak traffic flow, 7 of which are cars. Applying the 57.78% increase to that figure will result in 11 cars using that junction if planning approval is granted which will be in addition to the HGV traffic.
- The current HGV spaces are expressed to be 45 spaces which are to be increased to 71 spaces, an increase of 26, a percentage increase of 57.78% again. The applicants transport statement on page 9 records that there are 13 HGV movements southbound on the B1050 at peak time (07:00 hours – 08:00 hours), page 11 suggest that 3 of those are from the present yard. Applying the 57.78% increase to that figure results in 4.73 HGVs leaving the site during the peak rush hour period. That increase will result in a total of 14.73 HGV movements on the B1050 during the peak rush hour, a 13.3% increase on present movements.
- The additional traffic movements cause by this junction need to be considered within the context of this stretch of the B1050 which is predominantly residential, agricultural or horticulture with no major junctions to reduce traffic speed. The access lies close to a blind bend and HGVs will be moving slowly out of this junction in peak traffic which is travelling at nearly 40 miles an hour, the speed recorded in the applicants transport statement.
- The Governments objectives are to encourage sustainable patterns of development, focusing development in, or next to existing towns and village, thereby preventing urban sprawl and discouraging the use of "greenfield" land. The application is a greenfield site and the applicant's ecological appraisal records the application site has been used for grazing in recent years and is surrounded by agricultural land.
- The application site is not in, or next to an existing town or village. A point that the Council has itself noted in its concern that the development will result in additional car movements for people community. The 57.78% increase in car

- parking spaces sought by the applicant would tend to support such a concern.
- This area is one of the areas that is supposed to represent green space between the new settlement of Northstowe and the adjoining existing settlements. The application will nearly double the existing operational site and will be a major incursion into the green space between settlements.
  - Concerns about the noise assessment report only considering the noise impact on No 5 Station Road which from the applicant's submission appears to be in its ownership. The proposed attenuation measures only benefit that property. There are two other properties, Eastcote and Redcroft, which are very close to the application site, Eastcote lies adjacent to No 5 and seems not to benefit from any noise attenuation measures.
  - The application site is accessed through the existing site and there is no indication that it is being operated as a separate yard, consequently the noise impact on the house known as Ryecroft which lies opposite the existing yard should also be considered. For these reasons I believe the proposed development is inappropriate.
  - If you are minded to grant permission, then I would suggest the following conditions are imposed:
    - (a) Noise attenuation measures which are adequate to prevent disturbance to all of the residential properties within the vicinity are imposed, following a further noise attenuation assessment considering all the neighbouring properties.
    - (b) Sufficient landscaping is introduced to the scheme to minimise the impact of the surrounding countryside and neighbouring residential properties.

## **Planning Assessment**

### **Principle of Development**

51. The site is located outside of the Development Frameworks of Longstanton and Willingham and designated as being in the open countryside. The adopted LDF policy DP/7 and draft Local Plan policy S/7 share the aim in restricting development outside of urban and village frameworks to agricultural, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses that need to be located in the countryside.
52. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It says that where relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted for development unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole, or where specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted (which includes land designated as Green Belt in adopted plans for instance).
53. National Planning Policy Framework adopted March 2012 (NPPF) paragraph 210. states planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Paragraph 211. goes on to say for the purposes of decision-taking, the policies in the Local Plan should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted prior to the publication of the Framework. However, as stated in paragraph 212 the policies contained in the NPPF are a material consideration which local planning authorities should take into account from the date of its publication.
54. It falls to the Local Planning Authority as decision maker to assess the weight, if any, that should be given to existing policies. The Council considers this assessment

should, in the present application, have regard to whether the principle of allowing the expansion of the existing business including whether the existing policy continues to perform a material planning objective and whether it is consistent with the policies of the NPPF.

55. The policies within the existing Local Development Framework (LDF) aim to focus all new development, including the expansion of existing employment sites, on sites within the village framework. Policy ET/5 relates to the expansion of firms but states that this applies to sites that are either within the framework, previously developed sites or very close to the edge of a village framework. The site is located outside of the village frameworks of Longstanton and Willingham and is approximately a kilometre from the settlement boundaries. The site is therefore not considered to be very close to the village frameworks. The land is also considered to be undeveloped agricultural land.
56. Policy ET/5 goes on to state a firm or business will be considered 'existing' if a significant element of its operation has been based in the Cambridge Area for a minimum of five years prior to the date of any planning application for development and within that time it has maintained a viable business operation locally. Expansion will not be permitted where it causes problems with traffic, noise, pollution or other damage to the environment. It would not be permitted if it would conflict with other policies of the Plan.
57. Paragraph 216 of the NPPF and paragraph 019 of the NPPG states from the day of publication decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:
  - The stage of preparation of the emerging plan;
  - The extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and
  - The degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework.
58. The draft Local Plan examination hearings recommenced on 07 June 2016 with joint hearings. The relevant policy in the determination of this application is E/16 Expansion of Existing Businesses in the Countryside of the draft Local Plan. This policy received four representations, two supporting this policy and two objecting. Fundamentally this this policy is considered to align more closely with paragraph 28 of the NPPF which enables economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Therefore prior to the receipt of the Inspectors Report, some weight can be given to the emerging Local Plan policy and it can be given greater weight than Policy ET/5 of the adopted LDF due to it being more consistent with the NPPF.
59. Policy E/16 of the draft local plan states:

The expansion of established existing firms that are outside development frameworks will be permitted where:

  - a) The proposal is justified by a business case demonstrating that the business is viable and has been operating successfully for a minimum of 2 years.
  - b) There is a named user for the development, who shall be the first occupant. A planning condition will be attached to any permission to this effect.
  - c) The proposal is of a scale appropriate in this location, adjacent to existing premises and appropriate to the existing development.
  - d) There is no unacceptable adverse impact on the countryside with regard to scale, character and appearance of new buildings and/or changes of use of land.
  - e) Existing buildings are reused where possible.
  - f) The proposed development would not (by itself or cumulatively) have a significant

adverse impact in terms of the amount or nature of traffic generated.

60. The planning application states that G. Webb Haulage Ltd was founded in 1947 and has been operating successfully from the current location since 1981 and the application is made by G. Webb Haulage Ltd the current owners and occupiers of the site. The scale of the expansion is significant with the site currently having provision for 53 car parking spaces and 45 HGVs and trailers enabling 53 full time staff. The proposed development will provide 86 car parking spaces (an additional 33 spaces), 8 cycle spaces and 71 HGVs and trailers (an additional 26 spaces) and will facilitate 78 full time staff (an increase of 25 staff).
61. The scale of development is significant in this location, however, there will be significant economic benefits as it would allow G. Webb Haulage Ltd to continue to operate from their existing location, where they have been for over 30 years, and support growth of the company. The proposed development will provide 25 additional local jobs for the surrounding rural communities and contribute to the Council's established target of 22,000 new jobs in the district by 2031 in line with policy S/5 Provision of new jobs and homes of the draft Local Plan.
62. The other material planning considerations which are pertinent to the principle of this development are the impact on the character and appearance of the area including the change of use of the land from agricultural. The impact of the development on the open countryside, the impact on residential amenity through noise and emissions and the impact on the highway network and car parking considerations which will now be considered.

**Impact on the character and appearance of the area:**

63. Policy DP/2 of the adopted LDF states all new development should preserve or enhance the character of the local area, conserve or enhance important environmental assets of the site and include high quality landscaping with the scale and character of the development and its surroundings. Policy DP/3 of the adopted LDF states planning permission will not be granted where the proposed development would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the countryside and landscape character and on the best and most versatile agricultural land.
64. The first material planning consideration is the impact on the open countryside. The site is screened from public view by existing buildings fronting Station Road and existing perimeter planting and therefore the visual impact is not considered to cause significant harm to the open countryside. SCDC Landscape Officer has requested further details by way of condition of further planting details along the proposed boundary, replacement planting details, and the management and protection for both the new planting and existing vegetation retained on site.
65. It would be reasonable to condition prior to the first use of the site these details are provided due to a portion of the land to the west of No. 5 Station Road which will facilitate the car parking area has already been constructed. This will ensure the development is properly assimilated into the area and the trees along the southern boundary are protected in the long term from encroachment which was raised by the Trees Officer in accordance with policies DP/2 and DP/3 of the adopted LDF.
66. SCDC Landscape Officer also requested conditions stating it would be preferable if the proposed SUDs stored water in surface pools or basins rather than in underground structures which can impact on the water quality. This is discussed in the other matters section as this relates more to the impact on the drainage of the site.

67. Paragraph 206 of the NPPF states planning conditions should only be imposed where they are necessary, relevant to planning and to the development to be permitted, enforceable, precise and reasonable in all other respects.
68. Details of the proposed car park materials and construction were also requested as a condition by the SCDC Landscape Officer. Information was provided on the car park materials which will consist of compacted granular pavement construction with geogrids as necessary and the pavement construction to be lined with suitable sealed geomembrane with a composite geo-synthetic drainage and protection layer has already commence on site. Therefore sufficient details have been provided and it would not be reasonable to request further details in line with paragraph 206 of the NPPF.
69. In terms of the impact on the ecology of the site, policy NE/6 of the adopted LDF considers biodiversity. The ecological survey provided by SLR which concludes that the site is of low ecological value was assessed by SCDC Ecology Officer and no objection was raised to the application.
70. The recommended avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures provided by the consultants were considered satisfactory. SCDC Ecology Officer raised concerns about the wording of the recommendations in what *should* rather than what *will* or *must* happen.
71. The recommended Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) and biodiversity enhancement conditions cannot be pre-commencement conditions due to the development already commencing on site. A time bound condition for the applicant to provide a CEMP and a package of ecological mitigation/enhancement measures would be appropriate in this instance in order to ensure biodiversity of the site is protected in line with policy NE/6 of the adopted LDF.
72. With regard to the external lighting condition requested it would be reasonable to condition this to ensure if external illumination of the site is required this can be controlled in order to protect the biodiversity of the site, to ensure there is no unacceptable adverse impact on the nearby properties and surrounding countryside in accordance with policies DP/2, DP/3, NE/6 and NE/14 of the adopted LDF.
73. The proposed development will involve loss of grassland, two sheds and areas of scrub and hedgerow and is designated as Grade II agricultural land. Policy NE/17 Protecting high quality agricultural land states the District Council will not grant planning permission for development that would lead to the irreversible loss of Grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land unless the land is allocated in the Local Development Framework or sustainability considerations and the need for the development are sufficient to override the need to protect the agricultural value of the land.
74. The land is considered to be of some value, however, the sustainability considerations of the proposed development which include the limited landscape and ecology impact combined with the significant economic gains with the need for the development to be located in this area as it is an expansion of the existing business are significant. In line with paragraph 14 of the NPPF the loss of the agricultural land is not considered to outweigh the benefits of the scheme.

### **Highway Safety and Parking**

75. There are currently 53 car parking spaces and 45 HGVs and trailers enabling 53 full

time staff. The proposed development will provide 86 car parking spaces (an additional 33 spaces) which included 3 visitor car parking spaces and 4 disable car parking spaces. There will be 8 cycle spaces and 71 HGVs and trailers (an additional 26 spaces) and will facilitate 78 full time staff (an increase of 25 staff).

76. With regard to the impact on highway safety the Local Highways Authority did not raise any concerns about the proposed development. Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Transport Assessment Team evaluated the Transport Statement and Travel plan which accompanies this application.
77. In terms of the existing Local Transport Network it is noted that the guided busway and nearest Citi 5 bus stop is located within 800m of the site with good quality cycle links and is well served by sustainable transport. The majority of HGV movements into and out of the site are outside of the AM and PM peak periods of 07:00 to 08:00 and 17:00 to 18:00 which account for the expansion of the site. Therefore it is considered that there is not a significant impact of the development on the surrounding highway network.
78. The Travel Plan identifies areas where non-car modes of travel may be reasonably encouraged and sets targets to reduce single occupancy car journeys and increase the number of staff who walk or cycle. Section 10.4 outlines these actions and measures which it would be reasonable to condition prior to the first use of the site to ensure the proposed development mitigates its travel impact in accordance with policy TR/3 of the adopted LDF.
79. The level of car parking provision satisfies criteria contained within the Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/95 April 1995 which states that for car parks up to 200 bays disabled car parking for employees and visitors to business premises should be provided at a rate of:
  - One bay for each disabled employee plus two bays; or
  - 5% of total capacity (whichever is greater).
80. This amounts to a total of 4 disabled spaces for the proposed development which have been provided adjacent to the main office building. Cambridgeshire County Council Transportation Assessment Team considered the car and cycle parking provision was acceptable. The proposed layout also provides space for cycle parking provision adjacent to the main office building. It would be reasonable to condition the precise details of the cycle parking through condition prior to the first use of the site to ensure they do not have cause adverse visual harm to the open countryside in accordance with policy DP/2 and DP/3 of the adopted LDF.

### **Impact on Residential Impact through Noise and Emissions**

81. The site is bordered to the south by No. 5 Station Road which is owned by the applicants and acoustic fencing has been proposed to mitigate the impact of noise from the development on this dwelling on the western rear boundary in accordance with policy NE/15 of the adopted LDF. There are two dwellings, Eastcote and Redcroft located further to the south of No.5 Station Road. Eastcote's rear garden is approx. 25 metres from the acoustic fencing and boundary of the proposed development with Redcroft some 40 metres distance. Ryecroft is located diagonally across the road from the entrance to the site and the distance measures approx. 32 metres.
82. Concerns were raised regarding the noise and emissions from the proposed development on the neighbours. SCDC Environmental Health Officer commented on the SLR noise report dated April 2016 that accompanied the application. Although

there is significant noise this is related to other traffic and not just the current haulage yard along Station Road which cannot be controlled by the proposed development.

83. SCDC Environmental Health Officer considered the methods applied and the figures presented in the noise report and concluded on balance the proposed development is considered acceptable and should not be rejected on noise grounds in terms of the impact on neighbouring residents.
84. In the Transport Statement it was confirmed during the morning network period between 07:00-08:00 hours only 10 vehicles utilised the access. Of the 10 vehicles utilising the access, 3 were classified as HGV.
85. In the context of the traffic flow along the B1050 Station Road during the morning peak period there were 987 vehicle movements. HGVs associated with the haulage yard constituted less than 1% of the total traffic volume.
86. The evening period data identified during 17:00 - 18:00 hours a total of 16 vehicles utilised the access. Of those 16 vehicles, 3 were classified as HGV.
87. In the context of the traffic flow along the B1050 Station Road during the evening period, (919 vehicle movements), HGVs associated with the haulage yard constituted less than 1% of the total traffic volume.
88. Across the 24 hour period a total of 96 vehicles egressed via the site access, of which 45 were classified as HGV. Of the 88 vehicles recorded turning into the site access, of which 24 were classified as HGV. In total 184 movements were generated by the haulage yard across the 24 hours period surveyed of which 69 were HGV.
89. In the context of noise from traffic flow along the B1050 Station Road during the 24 hour period surveyed (a total of 10,542 vehicles movements), HGVs associated with the haulage yard (69 movements) constituted less than 1% of the total traffic volume. Although concerns were raised by neighbours in connection with the noise as a result of the intensification when considered in the context of vehicle movements along Station Road it would not be reasonable to restrict hours of operation due to the expansion consisting of some of the existing haulage yard. Therefore under the tests outlined in Paragraph 206 of the NPPF it would not be enforceable. However, it would be reasonable to add an informative to bring to the applicants attention due to the proximity to neighbouring properties that the operation of large vehicles at unsociable hours could be subject to Statutory Noise Nuisance.
90. In relation the noise impact on No. 5 Station Road it would be reasonable to condition technical details of the acoustic fencing by tying these details prior to any residential occupation of No. 5 Station Road. Therefore in line with policy NE/15 Noise Pollution the proposed development is not considered to cause significant harm on the amenity of the residents sufficient to sustain a refusal of the application.
91. With regard to effect on air quality as a result of the proposed development, SCDC Air Quality commented in terms of local air quality management, the proposed increase in vehicle movements is unlikely to significantly worsen air quality in this area given the current, relatively good, air quality.
92. The Air Quality Officer also stated the area to the south of this site is soon to undergo significant residential development (Northstowe Phase 1) which will have a marked impact on local air quality and the Council have a substantial pre-commencement monitoring regime as a result, in the village of Longstanton.

93. Monitoring locations exist relatively near to the proposed development and would therefore gather relevant data for the additional traffic contribution created by these haulage vehicles (assuming the majority go towards the A14) as well as the Northstowe traffic. Therefore this data could be provided to any concerned residents if they wish to view it and will allow the council to accurately determine if air quality is significantly deteriorating in the area.
94. Therefore the proposed development is not considered to cause significant air quality concerns in accordance with policy NE/16 of the adopted LDF.

### **Other Matters**

95. With regard to the impact on water and drainage infrastructure (policy NE/9 of the adopted LDF) and foul drainage (policy NE/10 of the adopted LDF). Any additional surface water runoff generated by an uplift in post-development impermeable surfaces and climate change over the lifetime of the development will be negated by the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) through a combination of appropriate methods across selected areas of the application site.
96. It is proposed that the management of surface water drainage will mimic the 'predevelopment' drainage regime and will be managed at source within the confines of the application site for up to and including the critical 1% AEP (1 in 100 year return period) storm event incorporating climate change allowances over the lifetime of the development. Therefore it would be reasonable to condition prior to the first use of the site the is carried out in accordance with the sustainable drainage strategy conducted by SLR to ensure there is appropriate surface drainage and foul drainage in accordance with policies NE/10 and NE/11 of the adopted LDF.
97. In terms of any flood risk in accordance with policy NE/11 of the adopted LDF. The application site measures marginally less than 0.8 Ha and therefore a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is not required. However, to a FRA has been prepared and accompanies this application.
98. The FRA found the Site to be located entirely within Flood Zone 1 with a low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea. In addition, no significant flood risks were identified and the proposed development is considered 'Less Vulnerable' to flood risk. Therefore, the site falls within the lowest flood risk category and is deemed to meet the requirements of the 'Flood Risk' Sequential Test as set out in NPPF.

### **Conclusion**

99. Having regard to applicable national and local planning policies, and having taken all relevant material considerations into account there are not considered to be any adverse impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as outlined in paragraph 14. It is therefore considered that planning permission should be approved in this instance.

### **Recommendation**

100. Officers recommend that the Committee approves the application, subject to:

#### **Conditions**

- (a) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the

following approved plans: 013 and 011 rev 1.

(Reason - To facilitate any future application to the Local Planning Authority under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.)

- (b) Prior to the first use of the site as a haulage yard, a landscaping scheme showing full planting details of the proposed boundary and replacement planting including species, stock sizes, planting rates and numbers, proposed establishment management and protection for both the new planting and existing vegetation retained on site. The details shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority and shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.  
(Reason: To ensure the proposed development is properly assimilated into the area and the trees along the southern boundary are protected in the long term from encroachment in accordance with policies DP/2, DP/3 and NE/6 of the adopted LDF.)
- (c) The site shall cease to be occupied as a haulage yard and the land returned to its former condition within 28 days in the event of failure to meet any one of the requirements set out in (i) to (iv) below:
- (i) Within 1 (one) month of the date of this decision a scheme for ecological enhancement and mitigation consistent with Section 5.2 and 5.3 of the *Ecological Appraisal* report (SLR, April 2016) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed scheme.
- (ii) Within 9 months of the date of this decision the scheme shall have been approved by the local planning authority or, if the local planning authority refuse to approve the scheme, or fail to give a decision within the prescribed period, an appeal shall have been made to, and accepted as validly made by, the Secretary of State.
- (iii) If an appeal is made in pursuance of (ii) above, that appeal shall have been finally determined and the submitted scheme shall have been approved by the Secretary of State.
- (iv) The approved scheme shall have been carried out and completed in accordance with the approved timetable.
- (Reason – To provide habitat for wildlife and enhance the site for biodiversity in accordance with the NPPF, policy NE/6 of the Local Development Framework adopted 2007, and the NERC Act 2006.)
- (d) Prior to the first occupation of No.5 Station Road, technical details including materials of the acoustic fencing on the western boundary shall be provided for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Development shall commence in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason: To ensure there is not significant noise concerns on the residential amenity of No. 5 Station Road in accordance with policy NE/15 and DP/3 of Local Development Framework adopted 2007.)
- (e) Prior to the first use of the site the drainage strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans and with the Flood Risk Assessment and

Surface Water Drainage Strategy carried out by SLR dated April 2016.  
(Reason: To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water and foul drainage in accordance with policies NE/9 and NE/10 of the Local Development Framework adopted 2007.)

- (f) No external illumination at the site shall be permitted without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority including details of the location, design and technical specification of the lighting. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason: To protect wildlife habitat, ensure residential amenity is impact is protected and there is not significant harm to the open countryside in accordance with policies NE/6, DP/2 and DP/3 of the Local Development Framework adopted 2007.)
- (g) Upon commencement of the first use of the site Section 10.4 of the Travel Plan produced by SLR dated April 2016 annual surveys and reporting to CCC should be undertaken for a period of 5 years after the baseline survey has been completed. Development shall be carried out in accordance with these details.  
(Reason: To ensure the proposed development mitigates its travel impact in accordance with policy TR/3 of the Local Development Framework adopted 2007.)
- (h) Prior to the first use of the site details of the design and materials of the cycle parking shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. Development shall commence in accordance with the approved details.  
(Reason: To ensure the proposed development does no cause significant harm to the character of the area in accordance with policies DP/2 and DP/3 of the Local Development Framework adopted 2007.)

### **Informatives**

- (a) If during the development contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site then no further development (unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority) shall be carried out until the developer has submitted, and obtained written approval from the Local Planning Authority for, a remediation strategy detailing how this unsuspected contamination shall be dealt with. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.
- (b) Due to the proximity to neighbouring properties the operation of large vehicles at unsociable hours could be subject to Statutory Noise Nuisance.

### **Background Papers:**

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

- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted January 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework Development Control Policies (adopted July 2007)
- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan Proposed Submission July 2013

- Planning reference file: S/1040/16/FL

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