

PLANNING COMMITTEE



WEDNESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2025 - 1.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Connor (Chairman), Councillor R Gerstner, Councillor S Imafidon and Councillor N Meekins, Councillor M Purser (Substitute)

APOLOGIES: Councillor C Marks (Vice-Chairman) and Councillor I Benney,

Officers in attendance: Matthew Leigh (Head of Planning), Stephen Turnbull (Legal Officer), Jo Goodrum (Member Services & Governance Officer) and Gavin Taylor (Principal Development Officer)

P72/25

F/YR24/0903/0

LAND ADJACENT NEW SAXON WORKS, PETERBOROUGH ROAD, WHITTLESEY
ERECT UP TO 65,000 SQ M FLOOR SPACE CONSISTING OF E (B)(D)(F) (AMENITY BUILDINGS) AND E (G)(I)(II)(III) (OFFICE, LABORATORY AND MANUFACTURING) INCLUDING RENEWABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE, PARKING, COUNTRY PARK AND OTHER ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)

Gavin Taylor presented the report and drew members attention to the update report which had been circulated.

Gavin Taylor advised members that he was in receipt of a letter which was received earlier that day from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which in exercise of their powers under Article 31 of the Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order, has directed that the Council is not to grant permission on this application without specific authorisation. He added that the direction is issued to enable MHCLG to consider whether they should direct under Section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act, that the application should be referred to them for determination, however, this direction does not prevent the Council from considering the application or from forming a view to the merits or if so minded to refuse the planning permission.

Gavin Taylor made the point that the direction from MHCLG should not influence the decision making of the Council and should the Council resolve to grant permission, the Secretary of State requires time to consider whether to call the application in for their own consideration before the Council issues any planning permission. He explained that further information has also been received from the Ecological Officer with regards to comments received from the Saxon Gate Residents Group in particular with regard to their concerns over the habitats regulation assessment that is undertaken and the Ecologist has confirmed the recommendations of the habitats regulation assessment which sets out the requirements for review the assessment following the receipt of the reserved matters application including the water resources strategy which is also required under one of the proposed conditions.

Gavin Taylor explained that further comments have been received from the Council's Environmental Health Team who have considered the additional comments submitted by the Saxon Gate Residents Group which covers a number of matters such as pollution control,

exposure to pollution, ongoing Saxon Pit investigations, monitoring enforcement concerns and all comments have been reviewed along with the circulated committee update and the proposed conditions set out in the officer report and have advised that they are satisfied that the necessary controls are secured and raise no objection. He explained that he has also received an update from the Middle Level Commissioners (MLC) earlier today and further to their previous consultation on 24 November 2024, they have noted the proposal to discharge surface water via the adjacent Saxon Pits discharge into the Kings Dyke and the Environment Agency is considering a foul effluent discharge permit application for this particular outfall and, therefore, it should not be assumed that MLC would grant consent to discharge surface water via this outfall.

Gavin Taylor explained that MLC have also stated that an alternative discharge directly from the site may be required and any surface water discharge will require the prior consent of MLC under their byelaws as well as an agreement and approval of final planning decisions. He added that there are a number of conditions securing the water supply strategy, foul and surface water drainage strategies and these conditions will be consulted with via the Lead Local Flood Authority, Environment Agency, Anglian Water and MLC when such conditions come to be discharged or when a reserved matters application is submitted which is the standard approach.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Councillor Chris Boden, who addressed the committee in his position as a Cambridgeshire County Councillor. Councillor Boden stated that he is addressing the committee as the County Councillor for the application site, and he explained that he fully endorses the officer's report and the recommendation of approval. He added that he recognises that it is an outline application which is important to note because there are some matters of detail which do need to be addressed but that can be achieved under the reserved matters stage of the application.

Councillor Boden explained that the application has been subject to a successful pre-application submission and has the approval of Whittlesey Town Council. He expressed the view that the proposal brings huge positive economic effects with it and not merely for Whittlesey but for Fenland as a whole.

Councillor Boden made the point that the location of the proposal is very important as there are no material effects on residential amenity which sets it aside from any other economic growth area that there is a potential for in Whittlesey. He expressed the view that all planning applications involve the requirement of taking a balanced view of the pros and the cons and, in his opinion, officers have reached the correct recommendation and most of the objections raised have been with regards to the issue of transport issues.

Councillor Boden explained that he has been in contact with the Highways Team at Cambridgeshire County Council with regards to the application, adding that he has frustrations with regards to their approach, which he does not feel has been the correct one. He made the point that there was a fundamental change to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in December 2024 with regards to transport planning and the change meant that the modelling changed from a predict and provide model to a vision and validate model, with, in his view, the County Council appear to still be using the predict and provide model and are not utilising the current NPPF for transport planning.

Councillor Boden stated that it is the cumulative impact that is important when considering the traffic situation not with this application but when considering every planning application within Fenland. He added that he wished to emphasize the comments made by Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council which mirror the point he has been making for some considerable time concerning the fact that the current transport network within and outside of Whittlesey cannot cope with significant major additional development.

Councillor Boden expressed the view that the advantages of the scheme outweigh the disbenefits

that there are, with there having been a significant number of new applications which have come through in the last few years for additional housing all of which add to the negative effects of transport in the area. He explained that there is a further planning application which will be brought forward within the next few months which will be coming through on the site adjacent to Saxon Pit which lends itself to a significant increase in heavy good vehicles coming into Whittlesey and the cumulative effects cannot continue to be added on top of each other.

Councillor Boden expressed the opinion that the limit is yet to be reached but the limit is not too far away, and this does need to be taken into context as additional employment is required within the Whittlesey and Fenland area. He added that this sort of employment is also required and this sort of economic development is exactly the sort of thing which is needed and he does not want to see all of the advanced engineering and research roles being located in the Peterborough area, leaving Fenland with nothing so far as economic development is concerned.

Councillor Boden expressed the view that Fenland needs this sort of development, and it is inherently good and he explained that he has reviewed the points made by Peterborough City Council Highways and, in his opinion, most of it appears to resonate with peak hour access to the site than there reasonably will be. He added that when in operation it is likely that it will be a 24-hour operation as well a large amount of remote working due to the nature of the employment roles and, therefore, he does have doubts with regards to the calculations of the Peterborough City Council Highways team.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French asked Councillor Boden whether he has made any progress with his discussions concerning a potential bypass as the A605 is nearing capacity? Councillor Boden explained that Fenland District Council received a report earlier this year with regards to the potential of the A605 Relief Road and he hopes to bring a further report to the next meeting of Cabinet and Full Council to progress the matter. He added that the likelihood is that the road maybe implemented in the next decade and explained that the biggest and most immediate problems will actually be in Whittlesey Town Centre itself at the two roundabouts, the Kelly Vision Roundabout and the Cemetery Road roundabout, as that is where the most significant impact is and that will also be least impacted by the proposed development.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that the A605 is surcharged and the Kelly Vision roundabout is already suffering from very heavy traffic congestion, with Whittlesey suffering from considerable HGV traffic and the condition of the A605 being very poor. He expressed the view that there are severe limitations with regards to what can be done on the A605 which will also mean there can be no widening achieved and by implementing an additional 1300 – 1600 jobs at the Science Park in the future then there will be a cumulative effect on the A605. Councillor Boden stated that he agrees with the points made by Councillor Gerstner as there are times when the A605 suffers from very heavy traffic which is only going to get worse as there has been further residential development which has already been approved but is yet to be built out and both roundabouts will suffer further from an increase in traffic. He stated that the objections concerning the transport side which are being highlighted with the application have nothing to do with the Kelly Vision roundabout or the Cemetery Road roundabout as they are primarily to do with the Kings Dyke Bridge and with junctions within the Peterborough City Council area. Councillor Boden expressed the view that it is a very important distinction to make and added that if there must be an increase in traffic then it should be against the flow of peak hour traffic which currently exists. He stated that this is what the proposed application will cause, and it will obviously increase the amount of traffic and the greatest increase in traffic will be against the current peak hour flow and minimizes the effect that it would have. Councillor Boden added that if it were in addition to the current direction of peak hour flows in both directions during the morning and evening then it would be a different matter. He referred to the state of the A605 and added that he wholeheartedly agrees that the condition of the road is unacceptable.

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she is horrified at the state of the A605 and added that the Highway Authority at the County Council need to take appropriate action as the state of the A605 is disgraceful. Councillor Boden agreed.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Councillor Mrs Dee Laws, who addressed the committee in her position as a Whittlesey Town Councillor. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she completely endorses the officer's report, and she fully supports the application. She expressed the view that the Planning Officer should be applauded for his detailed and comprehensive report which demonstrates the amount of work involved with the statutory consultees to bring the application forward for a decision to be made.

Councillor Mrs Laws stated that the proposal in front of the committee is forecast to deliver 1660 full time equivalent jobs equating to £59 million per annum additional wages and £126 million per annum gross value-added uplift for the UK economy. She added that the proposal also brings with it significant economic benefits not only to the economy of Fenland but also the regional and UK economy, with it also fitting with the Council's economic growth objectives contained within its Economic Refresh Strategy 2025 to 2028 and the shared ambition from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough 2050 and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Growth Plan.

Councillor Mrs Laws added that it also fits with the Council's political strategy occupying a broad location for growth in Whittlesey which is identified for employment use, making the point that the application achieves net gains in biodiversity, and will provide public accessibility and open space through a country park. She stated that was a facility which was lost some years ago with the failure of the Sainsbury's out of town store, with an attached retail park and adjacent public country park.

Councillor Mrs Laws added that it is the west to east main gateway into the town of Whittlesey and there are opportunities for a high-level design and a visual enhancement to the area. She explained that the agent and applicant provided a presentation to the members of Whittlesey Town Council, and the members were supportive and welcomed the application, with their also being a public consultation and as a result a lot of positive comments and support were received.

Councillor Mrs Laws explained that the proposal means a lot to Whittlesey Town Council and as Councillor Mrs French has referred to the southern relief road, the proposal is the type of opportunity that will open the gateway for transport and will improve the road network. She expressed the view that Fenland is an aging and maturing population, and the proposal will encourage younger people to come back and settle in Fenland and as a result it would mean that the houses would be developed which are needed for families, with the proposal delivering so much for the town and enhancing the future with the improvement to the age group coming through.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Gerstner stated that Councillor Mrs Laws has referred to people coming to Whittlesey to live and he asked whether she would agree that Whittlesey has almost reached capacity in land terms to build out any further major developments in Whittlesey as it stands at the present time? Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she does not disagree with that fact, and she expressed the view that Whittlesey has taken a hit for the Fenland area with regards to the amount of development which has taken place. She added that there are larger applications coming forward for both March and Wisbech and she stated that in the Local Plan there is a figure but that is not a ceiling figure. Councillor Mrs Laws added that there are several applications in the pipeline which are yet to be built out, and she explained that she undertook a survey a few months ago which resulted in her consulting with the local estate agents in the area, with the concerning thing being that people are trying to buy retirement bungalows more than family houses at the present time, but it is her understanding that in the community now residents are looking to give their children their

houses and then they move into a retirement bungalow themselves. Councillor Mrs Laws added that there appears to be an element of concern and there needs to be a more levelling off the age group in the area.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that the proposed 1660 jobs which may or may not come forward for local people in the Science and Technology park will require pretty high levels of education and qualifications. He added that in Whittlesey there is an element of the area being constrained on future land to build on which he is concerned about, with there being no large open spaces anymore to build thousands of houses. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she understands the point being made by Councillor Gerstner and there is still land available and there are still several applications which are to be brought forward which are in Whittlesey and border Whittlesey. She made the point that the employment within the Science and Technology Park would offer a variety of different job types and will not only include degree operating technicians as there will be positions available for landscape gardeners and posts available to maintain other aspects of the buildings. Councillor Mrs Laws added there will be the requirement for staff to operate the café and restaurant too and, therefore, there will not be the requirement just for the focus to be on high academic level posts and there will be opportunities for a wide range of diverse skills.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that having read the officer's report, the biggest concern is Anglian Water and Middle Level Commissioners, and she asked Councillor Mrs Laws for her views. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that she has many views on that point, but the application is only at outline stage and further details will come forward as the application progresses, with it appearing suddenly that the Middle Level Commissioners are taking an interest which is not something that they have done previously. She made the point that she welcomes the fact that they are showing an interest but that could be that they have more staff support to be able to do that and whilst she appreciates that they have concerns, Anglian Water have issues with regards to the right to connect and whilst there is an awareness of this, it is not going to change and whatever utilities are on the site, Anglian Water will have the right to connect into. Councillor Mrs Laws stated that from a Middle Level perspective, in her view, it will come down to the next stage of the application process.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Sarah Hann, Ross Percy-Jones and Robyn Green from Peterborough City Council Highways Team. Sarah Hann explained that she is the Principal Engineer within the Highway Development Control Team at Peterborough City Council (PCC) and they were consulted on the application as a neighbouring authority. She explained that the application has been reviewed to assess the impact of the proposed development on the Peterborough City Council highway network and due to the lack of information provided as part of the application, as well as their understanding of the existing highway network within Peterborough, they have had to recommend that the application be refused because it has not been demonstrated that it would not result in a severe residual cumulative impact on the highway within Peterborough.

Sarah Hann made the point that she is aware of several roads and junctions and roads in the vicinity of the site which are already near to, at or over capacity during network peak hours, which are on main routes anticipated to be used to access the development which include the A605, Whittlesey Road, Toll Road and A605 Stanground bypass as well as the bypass junction with Fletton Parkway. She made the point that the trip rates used within the transport assessment rely on there being a modal share of 50% or 60% of car driver trips and the census data from 2011 shows that for existing employment sites in this area, 88% of people who travel from the Peterborough area travel by car and 74% of the total trips made as a car driver.

Sarah Hann made the point that whilst the data is now 13 years old, it is the most recent census data available which is not affected by the impacts of Covid and public transport, walking and cycling links to the location have not significantly changed in the intervening period and she still considers the data to be representative. She added that the Department of Transport connectivity

tool also demonstrates that the location is poorly located by bus and active travel modes.

Sarah Hann explained that no assessment of the impact of the development for the 88% existing mode share on the Peterborough network has been carried out and little information has been provided by the applicant to indicate how it is intending to improve accessibility of the site from Peterborough by non-car modes to achieve a vision of a reduction from 88% to 50% or 60% car trips. She stated that it has been acknowledged that a shuttle bus is to be provided from Peterborough Station to the site but this is unlikely to be widely used as the majority of people travelling from the Peterborough area would then have to travel by bus to then have to travel out of town again and for most people it would be quicker and more easier to just drive.

Sarah Hann added that the 63% of the trips generated are expected to travel to, from or through the Peterborough area and she explained that even at a 50% mode share it would see an increase of 180 trips in the peak morning travel period and 160 trips through the evening peak travel period. She added that by using the trip data from the traffic assessment and the current modal share of 88% car trips for the application site, there would be an increase in 317 trips in the morning peak travel time and 281 trips in the evening peak travel time because of the development.

Sarah Hann stated that the transport consultants have indicated that as the development does not exceed an 8% increase in vehicle trips through Peterborough junctions, the impact of the development is not significant, however, the trigger for junction capacity assessments is any junction which receives thirty or more additional two-way trips in a single network peak hour because of the proposal and this trigger applies across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough transport assessment guidelines. She made the point that the application does not fully consider the impact of the proposed development of the Peterborough highway network and there has been no junction capacity modelling for many of the affected junctions.

Sarah Hann acknowledged that Cambridgeshire Highways have recommended refusal of the application but have also provided a condition restricting trips from the site to the 50% mode share but if the 50% threshold was applied and restricted by a condition it would still have that significant increase in trips through the Peterborough network and as the impact of this on all of the affected junctions has not been fully modelled it has not been possible for her team to determine appropriate mitigation measures for the impact within the area or what the appropriate level of contribution associated with such a trip cap for the area would be. She asked the committee to consider refusing the application due to the severe residual cumulative impact on highway safety and capacity within Peterborough or defer the decision to allow the appropriate assessment of the impacts of the development on Peterborough's network to be carried out, and any mitigation or trip cap contributions to be determined.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Meekins asked for clarification with regards to the point made concerning the fact that the data held is 15 years old. Sarah Hann explained that the most recent census data that is not affected by the Covid pandemic is 13 years old, which is what would be used to assess the modal share across trips to and from a development.
- Councillor Meekins stated that there appears to be an assumption that all those persons who are going to be employed at the Science Park will be travelling from Peterborough and apart from Whittlesey there are three other market towns and there is a great deal of unemployment in Wisbech and the Science Park could offer employment for some of those looking for work. Sarah Hann explained that the transport assessment submitted by the applicant indicates that 63% of the trips to and from the site will come from the Peterborough direction and the remaining trips will come to and from the Whittlesey direction.
- Councillor Gerstner questioned whether at the time when the Cardea roundabout was built and the junction for the Milk and Water Road was improved was there not any transport assessments undertaken including statistical information gathered? Ross Percy-Jones,

Principal Transport Planner, explained that there have been a number of planning applications over the last 5 to 10 years where the junctions have been looked at and subsequently had improvements made to them, specifically the Milk and Water junction. He stated that those developments have each assessed their own impacts and there has been significant changes around different development growth assumptions over time meaning it is difficult to draw a like for like comparison between the applications and their assessments. Ross Percy-Jones added that each one of the applications have been able to justify any impacts in relation to those junctions and when considering the current proposal, there is a neighbouring application site which has carried out the assessment on Peterborough's network and has taken into consideration the current proposal which demonstrates that cumulatively when you add in all of the growth sites together it is when you see the impact at the junctions. He made the point that it is acknowledged that the A605 is currently capacity constrained but not to the extent which is being demonstrated under the assessments.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that there has been a number of planning applications for the Saxon works for an operator bringing in IBA and that is heavy goods traffic. He added that he is surprised that PCC have not raised this as an issue as most of the traffic is coming from the Peterborough direction and leaves in the Peterborough direction. Councillor Gerstner added that there is an impending planning application going through the County Council to double the amount of material that the applicant is going to deal with and he has concerns with regards to the cumulative impact this application will also have. He asked for clarification as to the type of modelling used if there is a reliance on statistical information which is 13 years old. Ross Percy-Jones explained that the modelling that has been undertaken by the applicant and the transport consultant have used up to date survey data following a traffic survey exercise undertaken in 2023 using traffic flows and the census data which was referred to, to give an indication of the percentage of car driver trips. He added that he agrees it is indicative and it does not give a complete view of what happens now but it is the closest that is available and does appear to be a national issue that most authorities have to grapple with in terms of the age of the available data. Ross Percy-Jones explained that the junction modelling that has been undertaken is based on current data and added that with regards to the Saxon brick work site, PCC has provided a response on that application and he has requested the same type of assessments and the applicant for that proposal has carried out those assessments and has taken into consideration the effect of the current application. He added that the Saxon brick work application has demonstrated that by 2030 without their proposed development, with the doubling of HGV traffic, there was an indication that the Milk and Water Drove junction on the A605 and the immediate roundabout junctions to the west would operate at capacity. Ross Percy-Jones expressed the opinion that when you start to see at capacity conditions on the network, then any further increases in traffic delay starts to have a material impact on highway safety, with there being a great deal of academic research which demonstrates that there will be an increase in accidents on the network as congestion increases.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that the border between PCC and Fenland is located near the Horsey Way turning and there have been some good road improvements undertaken by PCC including improvements near Cardea and the Milk and Water junction, however, the report states that the capacity is not sustainable and he asked for further clarity with regards to what is considered to be sustainable. Ross Percy-Jones stated that regarding sustainable network operations if the traffic volumes exceed 85% of the available capacity on the network then that is what would be at capacity conditions. He added that a vision validated approach needs to be followed with applications and there is the need to work with applicants to identify a preferred vision to see whether that is something that can be achieved and delivered. Ross Percy-Jones stated that from a PCC perspective when considering the application, it has not been possible to determine whether that vision can be sustainably delivered and it needs to be demonstrated whether there is going to be an impact on the highway network and if there is a realistic chance that enough active travel provision or increases in bus services is going to come forward which would help to offset

the number of cars on the network, with to date it has not been demonstrated that there are going to be sufficient proposals in place to achieve those aspects. He explained that as well as the junction modelling which is looked at the modelling within the transport assessment is also considered and if it is not demonstrated that the application site could be reasonably accommodated with a vision that aligns with local and national policy then that is when he would put forward a refusal recommendation.

- Councillor Gerstner referred to the condition of the A605 and its severe limitations in engineering terms of what could and could not be achieved and he asked whether from a PCC perspective there are any suggestions as to what works could be taken to help the situation. Sarah Hann stated that she agrees it is a very constrained network in terms of the physical space to allow improvements of any type and the Stanground bypass is currently being looked at as one of the current phases is only a single carriageway and it is likely that when considering all of the proposed developments in the locality it is likely that this section of the bypass will need dualling and an entire additional carriageway will be needed. She added that, with regards to the existing junctions, by dualling the bypass it would have a knock-on impact on those junctions which would then need to be looked at as well.
- Councillor Purser referred to the A605 which suffers from heavy traffic, and he made the point that if people use buses and cycles surely that will alleviate some of the problems faced by the A605 and its heavy usage by HGV and cars. Sarah Hann stated that car trips take less space on the road network as opposed to lorries and there is always a congestion benefit by moving lorry trips from the highway. She explained that the information submitted as part of the application does not have any comparison of the trips and as a result it is not clear whether the proposed development would result in a reduction in trips and, therefore, be a benefit because the comparison has not been undertaken.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Stephen Rice, the agent and James McPherson, Transport Consultant. Mr Rice outlined what a Science Park is, explaining that it is a type of business park with a specific focus on research, development and innovation. He added that the buildings on it are usually specifically designed and purpose built with bespoke facilities for laboratories, workrooms, offices, meeting areas and high-grade manufacturing as well as recreational facilities such as gyms and cafes.

Mr Rice explained that there is normally a link to a university or an educational body and the main aim is to facilitate growth for business, entrepreneurs, start ups and collaborative communities. He expressed the opinion that they all deliver heightened levels of prosperity for the businesses on them and in turn this prosperity and wealth get distributed throughout the region in which it is located.

Mr Rice explained why he is proposing a Science Park on a former brickwork, adding that in 2021 he was tasked with designing a scheme for the regeneration of the brickworks and when this commenced it had only been announced that construction was starting on the new University in Peterborough and this was a key factor in his initial evaluation process. He made the point that he used to work for a company who managed all the science parks in Cambridge and Oxford, and he is of the view that a Science Park can offer far more than a standard Business Park.

Mr Rice stated that he formed a team of consultants and the first company he employed specialises in advising Science Parks who were recommended by the UK Science Park Association, with them evaluating the site and concluding that it had excellent prospects. He explained that it has always been the vision to design a development which was genuinely Net Zero and this required an input from energy specialists and Vital Energy who are the onboard development partner have designed an energy infrastructure which will mean that the development will be self-sufficient in heat and power whilst also being able to export heat and in particular generated from the on site ground and water source heat pumps.

Mr Rice explained that the energy and innovation centre on site could also be used to redistribute

waste heat from McCains to Whittlesey through a local heat network which would potentially be funded by national Government. He made the point that from an early stage in the process he engaged with educational bodies including the new ARU, Peterborough College and Cranfield University with ongoing discussions taking place, with Cranfield University being particularly keen to commence research projects on water neutrality and circularity as well as energy infrastructure focussing on heat networks and distribution, which is very much in line with Government policy for which there is significant grant funding available and Cranfield are very keen to apply for grant funding if outline permission is granted and he added that he is keen to involve the ARU with the projects.

Mr Rice stated that Councillor Mrs Laws has outlined some of the benefits that the Science Park will provide but it will also provide two hectares of public park immediately next to Whittlesey, an onsite gym and café open to the public and a shuttle bus, with the shuttle bus key to the Science park as it could run from the site to Peterborough Station and possibly Whittlesey Station. He added that the proposal will include circular cycle footpaths which will run around the site as well as a new pedestrian and cycle path from the site to Snoots Road, Whittlesey and explained that there will also be new control crossings on the A605 for pedestrians and cyclists.

Mr Rice made the point that he is very conscious that despite extensive discussions and the provision of evidence-based modelling which demonstrates how the development can deliver the sustainable transport modes which are confirmed in the transport assessment, the information has not been able to satisfy the Highway Team at the County Council and acknowledges the fact that there is further work to do and he has confidence that the transport plan will work. He stated that he has agreed to the principle of a Section 106 legal agreement that requires the delivery of new sustainable transport infrastructure, off site parking control and substantial financial payments to the Council if the sustainable transport targets are not met.

Mr Rice expressed the opinion that he feels that the town of Whittlesey and the region deserve a development like this, he has heard views expressed that the proposal will not provide jobs for Whittlesey or Fenland and he made the point that he does not agree with that view. He added that of the predicated 1650 new jobs, about 30% are likely to be for high qualified scientists and the rest will be for support staff across a whole range of disciplines including administration, media, property, grounds maintenance and hospitality.

Mr Rice stated it is an aspirational project which would not only offer employment opportunities for existing Fenland residents, but he is looking towards the future for the next generation who can aspire to work in science and technology, attend university and build a successful prosperous future for themselves and their families and region.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Gerstner stated that it is important to clarify that contrary to the point made by some Whittlesey Town Councillors that there was no public consultation, he can confirm that there has been a consultation exercise undertaken not only with the public but also with the Town Council. He added that the public consultation took place in December 2023 and the Town Council following that.
- Councillor Gerstner expressed the view that the proposal is a wonderful opportunity to change Whittlesey and the surrounding area for generations to come.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that should the committee be minded to granting outline planning permission would Mr Rice be prepared to confirm that the thirty-seven proposed draft planning conditions in the officer's report can? Mr Rice stated that he has reviewed all the conditions with the Planning Officer and he is happy to agree to them all.
- Councillor Gerstner stated whether there is any plan in place should the Ralph Butcher Causeway be restricted in traffic flow as has been the case for the last 12 months. Mr Rice stated that it is a phased development which is not all going to happen overnight and if built out as envisaged it would be the third largest science park in the UK. He added that

everyone appears to be assessing what the transport issue is likely to be and by the time it is fully built out it may be 15 years, with in 15 years' time sustainable transport modes are going to be far more prevalent and the use of the car will not be as prevalent as it is in the current day. Mr Rice expressed the view that it cannot be contemplated that the issue with the causeway will not be solved as they would have to consider reopening the railway crossing again and consideration may be given to opening the southern relief road to take some of the freight off the causeway or considering a weight limit on the causeway.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that Mr Rice had referred to a proposed bus service running from site to Peterborough and in his presentation, he alluded to the possibility of the bus servicing Whittlesey, and he asked for further clarity on that statement. Mr Rice explained that at the current time the focus is on Peterborough as it is going to be more difficult to persuade people to get off a train in Peterborough and use a bicycle to get to the site and he sees that as a challenge. He explained that he has used a model of a very successful Science Park in Didcot in Oxfordshire and that site operates an amazing sustainable transport network including the use of the first autonomous buses in the UK. Mr Rice explained that he is far keener to decipher on how to get people from Whittlesey Train Station to the site using walking and cycling as a mode and he prefers to spend money working out how a cycle route could be implemented rather than spending money on a shuttle bus service but he has costed proposals for the bus service and that has been provided to the County Council who have advised that it does look to be realistic in terms of the costings. He stated that the parking on the site will be subject to a nominal parking charge to dissuade people from using a car and the shuttle bus to Whittlesey has been discussed and it could be factored in, but the preference would be to improve the sustainable transport routes in the first instance.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that the application is in outline only but questioned whether Mr Rice has any idea of who the end users may be? Mr Rice explained that he has worked with Richard Collins from EIBC who are specialists in Science Parks and he has worked with him for three years since the infancy of the application process, with Mr Collins compiling a list of companies both from a local and slightly wider area from the district and it has been surprising how many high-tech businesses already exist in the region and all of them are potential targets but realistically the businesses that have been spoken to will not engage fully until a planning permission is secured. He added that he has already spoken to a number of regional politicians along with the CPCA, ARU and Cranfield and the only way a site such as this is going to be successful is if all the interested parties have a vested interest in seeing something like this work and come together. Mr Rice explained that when the genetics of a science park are considered along with how they evolve it requires a commitment from everybody, including politicians, regional leaders to attract businesses and the search for employees which is a very important factor. He added that it needs to be demonstrated to businesses that want to come here that there are employees and certain services and facilities in place to attract international companies, with them also having engaged with the CPCA from the outset as they would be one of the outside bodies that consider the database of possible businesses.
- Councillor Mrs French asked for an explanation with regards to what a mobility hub is as it is mentioned in the application. James McPherson stated that a mobility hub is a focal point where the shuttle bus operates from as well as a place for parking and hiring bicycles and a hub where the café could be. He explained that it is a centralised hub which looks to primarily have opportunities for sustainable travel but will be a standalone building which has other uses as well. Mr Rice added that there will also be a cycle shop, cycle repair stations and showers which are all included to encourage people to use a bike rather than a car.
- Councillor Connor stated that it has been mentioned that the CPCA and Cranfield have been contacted and have shown an interest, however, should there be a problem and businesses do not wish to operate from Whittlesey, how can he be certain that this will come to fruition. He expressed the view that it appears that there is a reliance on others to come forward with joined up thinking and it may not be as easy as that. Mr Rice stated that

it is incredibly difficult to bring a project such as this to reality, with obtaining planning permission just being the start and it has taken four years so far to get to the current stage, and he made the point that this type of development does not happen overnight and if it did then its longevity and successfulness would not be there. He explained that a great deal of work and discussion has taken place over the four-year period and Cranfield University are exceptionally enthusiastic and are looking to submit grant funding packages for research projects based on energy and in particular water. Mr Rice stated that he been receiving advice from Professor Stevenson who has been involved with the application from an energy perspective, and he is of the opinion that the science park should be water based due to the uniqueness of the park and none of the surface water can leave the site until a pump is switched on. He added that this is completely unique and the only way that the water will get into the Kings Dyke will be if a pump is switched on and the water will not go anywhere unless the pump is turned on, with this being the concept of water neutrality where all the on-site surface water comes in and it has been designed with a surface water drainage system, and the water will all be directed back to the lake which has got a freeboard and a vast attenuation capacity. Mr Rice explained that ultimately the site will be treating its own water, circulating and reusing all of its water which its water neutrality before moving to the next stage known as water circularity which means all the water including foul water gets reused and recycled on the site. He added that Cranfield are very keen to commence and obtain Government funding to commence research as the site could become a blueprint for commercial developments in the east.

- Councillor Connor stated that, if the application were approved, when does Mr Rice anticipate that works on the site would commence? Mr Rice stated that a realistic date would be 2027 by the time the reserved matters application is dealt with, and the highways issues are considered. He added that Anglian Water have agreed to supply fresh water to the site and with regards to foul drainage on any site this needs to be dealt with. Mr Rice explained that the first piece of work will be to implement the new access off the roundabout and a Section 278 process will take 18 months to 2 years.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that with regards to land contamination and the current state of the land, there has been historic issues with land contamination, and he questioned whether any survey work has been undertaken on the land? Mr Rice stated that there has been a survey carried out, and it was the first report he commissioned on the site, and a full stage three contamination assessment was undertaken with twenty metre deep bore holes and the survey was clear.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that he presumes that, in consultation with Cambridgeshire Highways, the concerns and issues regarding the A605 and including traffic volumes and the availability of cycle and pedestrian facilities will be properly addressed as in his view the site is not suitable for either walking or cycling from Whittlesey or Peterborough. He asked whether consideration has been given to joining and accessing cycle route 63 which can be reached via Funthams Lane, with the pathway on the northern side of the A605 not being fit for use and is challenging for pedestrians and he questioned whether Mr Rice can make a commitment and agree to look at improving the pathway in order to open up a route to the cycle route 63. Mr Rice explained that he has engaged with McCains very heavily during the application as have his energy consultants with regards to potentially using heat from McCains but unfortunately the strip of land in Funthams Lane which would be required to implement a cycle lane is owned by Forterra and they have totally failed to engage with him. James McPherson stated that with regards to footway improvements the transport planning policy now compels them to be visionary, and it is in the revised NPPF, and from the very outset of the application they have wanted to focus on the movement of people and not cars and if bigger roads are built then ultimately they will be filled with cars and car dominated behaviour. He made the point that he does not want to look at the future demand based on historic traffic trends and with regards to the cycle and pedestrian connections he has considered a route through the site to come out onto the A605 and looked at a toucan controlled crossing to allow people to cross to the northern side of the A605 and to then join those into Crossway Hands which will then go up towards the off

carriageway cycle connection. James McPherson added that with regards to going back into Whittlesey there are constraints with regards to what is achievable in terms of improvements for cyclists, but it has been carried along as far as Snoots Road and that is where the cyclists would rejoin the carriageway. He made the point that it is part of the strategy being looked at and considering how people can be moved by sustainable modes and the mode share target of car drivers at 50% has been included in all the transport work and a lot of work has been undertaken to show how that can be achieved through not only active travel but also to include shared and public transport including the shuttle bus.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that there is a cycle route 63 which goes from Stonald Road in Whittlesey and all the way to Peterborough, and he has concerns that the Crossway Hand junction is already suffering from a high level of traffic with limited capacity. He expressed the view that the road is dangerous for cyclists due to the volume of traffic and the fact that it is a single carriageway and with lorries attempting to pass each other, there is no room for cyclists. James McPherson stated that he is not saying that everyone is going to cycle to the site or that nobody will drive to and from the site, however, they are trying to provide an evidence based sustainable strategy by considering various different options on how people can travel to the site, with a lot of that travel is based on public transport including the shuttle bus. He added that with regards to the Crossway Hand junction there have been different options considered with regards to the design and in line with local transport note 120 which looks at cycle infrastructure design and how cyclists can be integrated with vehicles whilst acknowledging the HGV company in the vicinity that a swept path analysis has been undertaken in order to consider the largest vehicle types that would have to access Crossway Hand and to check that all of the different users could be accommodated and that has also been subject to an independent stage one road safety audit as well. Mr Rice explained that the site can be accessed by coming out of Whittlesey at Crossway Hand where you come into the site where there is then a perfectly good cycle way that takes cyclists through the site, through the science park and then back out the other end. He added that if people wanted to cycle from one end of the A605 to the McCain end then that is achievable rather than used the A605. James McPherson added that he is not suggesting that an inordinate amount of people would cycle to the site and whilst they would love to see that happen in the overall mode share he is suggesting just under 10% of the overall employees at the site could potentially have the opportunity to cycle. He made the point that the figure is not a dissimilar level to what is shown in the census data of 2011.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that 10% of 1600 is 160 and he does feel that the figure is being slightly ambitious.
- Councillor Gerstner questioned whether consideration is going to be given to a further public consultation should outline planning permission be approved? He further asked whether consideration is being given to the inclusion of a data centre within the science park? Mr Rice stated that with regards to a further public consultation he would be keen to know what Councillor Gerstner had in mind and if there was a valid reason for it and it would achieve something then he would consider it. He added that with regards to a data centre, the whole concept of the application is to provide employment, and the applicant has already been approached by people who are looking to include many different types of things on the site including a data centre. Mr Rice stated that a data centre would only employ about ten people and that is not something that he wants to see in Whittlesey and, in his view, it would seem a waste of a fantastic site. He explained that there will be data on the site and the vital energy infrastructure which has been designed for the site could be a blueprint as it shares heat and cooling and there is no requirement for air conditioning on the site and all of the computer banks in the site will be cooled from the lake. He added that he is totally against data centres and distribution centres on the site.
- Councillor Meekins stated that Mr Rice has mentioned that he has previous experience with Science Parks, and he explained that he was a partner at Bidwells for 13 years and a fundamental part of the business. He referred to the 1600 jobs going to be located on the Science Park and asked whether the office jobs that were alluded to are 9-5 roles or could they be attributed to flexible working hours? Mr Rice stated that he would describe a

Science Park as one of the most enlightened places that you can get in terms of employment, and they are flexible in terms of working hours. He added that it will be dependent on the type of research that is being undertaken, and some employees will treat it as a 9–5 job whilst others will hybrid work.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Gerstner stated that there has been a consultation exercise undertaken but one consultee was omitted, and he asked whether that has any bearing on what can and cannot be achieved today given the fact that the consultee have been given further time to respond. Gavin Taylor stated that there was one resident who was missed off of the original consultation and as a result they have been issued with a 21 day consultation letter which is the statutory obligation and that consultation period expires around the 26 November but to date no comments have been received from them. He added that the recommendation is as set out in the report and is to have regard to any material matters that may arise after the determination of the application today, but irrespective on whether the residents' comments on the application, the Council has a legal duty before a planning permission or refusal notice is issued to take into account all material considerations. Gavin Taylor explained that should that resident raise a matter to be considered which has not already been identified in the officer's report then the recommendation would be to discuss the matter with the Chairman of the Planning Committee as to whether the application would need to be brought back before the committee. He added that if there are comments raised which are not materially different to what has been considered in the officer's report then it would permit to proceed on that basis.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that given the objections both within the application from PCC Highways and CCC Highways and considering the point made by Councillor Boden within the presentation that they may be using the wrong model to factor an opinion on the proposal he would like that to be answered. He added that Travel England have stated that the A605 is not conducive to cycling or walking and the condition of the A605 is very poor as well as the adjacent road not being suitable for active travel at 40 mph. Councillor Gerstner made the point that to his knowledge there are five different speed limits along the A605 which alternate between 30 and 40mph along various parts of the road. He stated that given the possibility of wastewater there are several factors to consider, and he asked officers to explain how they have decided the contributing factors to recommend the application for approval. Gavin Taylor stated that, in terms of the process, there is always a planning balance to apply to most applications when making a determination and on this occasion the planning balance is set out in the report. He referred to some of the outstanding matters which include drainage and water supply and stated that the NPPF sets out that where it is considered that the development can be made acceptable in planning terms through conditions or obligations and in this case it is deemed appropriate to apply planning conditions to ensure that there are satisfactory schemes coming forward to support the development and he added that there is no reason why that cannot be secured through a planning condition. Gavin Taylor explained that he has contacted the EA as well as the MLC and asked whether they consider the conditions which have been set out are satisfactory and they have responded positively and with regards to some of the outstanding matters with regards to drainage there are reasonable conditions which can be imposed which are attributed to larger applications asking for site wide strategies. He added that, with regards to the balance of the transport impacts, it is set out in Section 11 of the report, with officers being mindful that the site is constrained and limited in terms of its scope and what can be reasonably and viably achieved through the scheme and whilst ideally there would be a continuous cycle footway connecting Whittlesey to Ramsey to Peterborough to March, unfortunately there is not due to how the settlements have evolved. Gavin Taylor stated that the applicant has chosen to look at what reasonable opportunities can be achieved through sustainable transport modes and active travel modes and a package has been put forward which, in the view of officers, is not going to alleviate the transport impacts and as is set out in the report there are going to be cumulative impacts of transport on the highway, but it

does aim to limit that through its vision. He added that by working through the proposal with the transport team there are obligations going to be sought through the Section 106 system where there will essentially be a financial penalty if the active travel movements and the modal share is not achieved, for the applicant to pay towards highway improvements which may either alleviate some of the transport impacts or improve and encourage non car modes of travel. Gavin Taylor stated that those issues are balanced against the benefits of the scheme which are set out in Section 11 of the report and include economic growth, employment opportunities, bio diversity net gain which is above the statutory 10% requirement as well as the public community areas which can be utilised by everybody and all of those aspects are seen as benefits which outweigh those disbenefits.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that the proposal is a wonderful opportunity for the district and should not be missed, however, he does not feel that enough weight has been given to the A605. He added that PCC have highlighted their constraints and restrictions and their ability to address the A605 and Active Transport England have highlighted that they require a firm commitment around the provision of an enhanced service in the area, making the point that currently the application does not include part of this enhanced transport system. Councillor Gerstner expressed the view that out of 1600 jobs, they are expecting 10% of that number to be cyclists on a road which is not conducive to cyclists or pedestrians. He reiterated that point that Active England are not supporting the proposal in its current form, and he finds the serious cumulative effects of the A605 to be unnerving.
- Councillor Mrs French referred to condition 2 and added that it states that application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the local planning authority before the expiration of five years and she questioned whether that statement contains an error as the Council will not exist in five years. Gavin Taylor stated that the conditions are in place for members to consider and if they wish to amend any of them then that is within their gift to do so. He added that five years was set as a requirement to deliver the reserved matters stage of the application as it is a long-term project and if after 5 years the reserved matters aspect is not in place then the element of that permission is removed. Matthew Leigh stated that the condition relates to the local planning authority and irrespective of whether it is Fenland or another council, it will still be the local planning authority.
- Councillor Gerstner asked officers from CCC Highways how they came to their decision on the application and why they are not using the latest data and information? Andrew Connolly explained that the modelling that has been assessed by the Highway Authority is the modelling that has been submitted by the applicant and the assumption within that model uses up to date traffic counts using industry standard software to assess the impact, with the model not being out of date and it is very much up to date. He referred to the census data and added that census is undertaken once every ten years and is, therefore, a little bit limited, making the point that it is unfortunate that the last census was in the middle of the Covid pandemic, and nobody uses that data as it does not give an accurate representation, and as a result the 2011 data is used to demonstrate how people travel around in Whittlesey. Jez Tuttle from CCC Highways stated that he has heard it mentioned during the committee that the Highway Authority at CCC do not use the vision and validate model but that is not the case and that modelling system is used and especially where networks are constrained. He made the point that the challenge that the highways authority faces is that someone has a vision, but consideration must be given as to whether the challenge is reasonable and he is aware that people who live in Peterborough will walk and cycle but as soon as you get out of the parkway system then that is less likely to be the case. Jez Tuttle stated that in terms of the vision the Highway Authority are not convinced that they will see a lot of walking and cycling because of the A605 and even the path alongside the river is not of a good condition during the winter months especially when it is dark. He made the point that when considering passenger transport, at the current time, there is only one bus which is being proposed to run from the train station in Peterborough and whilst it may pick up some passengers from the station who have travelled from Huntingdon, in his view, the proposed bus will not help those people who are travelling from the March direction and there is a larger suite of measures that is required to accompany

the application, and he does not believe that the work has been undertaken to ascertain what those additional measures might be. Jez Tuttle explained that because of the issue, the Highway Authority have requested a trip cap as they are convinced that the mode share will go down to 50% as that lends itself more to Cambridge where there are park and ride facilities and cycle ways. He expressed the view that passenger transport is the way forward, one bus operating from the station in his opinion is not sufficient and there may be other opportunities to look at works buses from other areas and he explained that the Highway Authority are not against the vision and validate, but in their opinion and with the information that they have seen to date, it is not achievable at this point in time.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that in the presentation it was stated that the current proposals for the Crossway Hand junction remains unacceptable and the revised design incorporates several positive amendments to partially address the concerns. He added that it also states that the variation in design could be deliverable but would likely resolve its principal concerns and on balance the Highway Authority feel that it is now in a position where it can seek a planning condition to secure delivery of appropriate and cycle mitigations at the Crossway Hand junction. Councillor Gerstner asked whether a desktop modelling exercise has been undertaken for the junction and whether an officer has been to site to see it first hand to ascertain what can and cannot be achieved at the junction? James Stringer from the Highway Authority stated that with regards to that junction he agrees that it is quite constrained and there are HGV movements related to the business located nearby. He explained that the design which has been undertaken by the applicant has been through a road safety independent audit to assess whether the junction would flag up any safety issues which would need to be resolved and as a result the design has been amended. James Stringer explained that the current status is that the design is not perfect and the application is at outline stage but there is a design in place which could be delivered that would be satisfactory to the Highway Authority after going through the 278 process to refine the design in order to assist HGV traffic from getting through the junction whilst also providing something that is safe and attractive for non-motorised users which he agrees is a challenge.
- Councillor Gerstner stated that there does not appear to be any recent data, making the point that he fails to understand why when dealing with a road layout where there is one road in and one road out, where there is no other alternative and traffic survey has not been undertaken. Jez Tuttle explained that the traffic survey data is up to date or as up to date as it can be given the time scale between the submission of the application and now and the traffic conditions in terms of vehicles are up to date and the key thing is the vision validate process requires consideration as to how the amount of car trips can be reduced. He added that the base data for the mode share is quite old which causes an issue as when trying to undertake a vision and validate analysis on data which is old and officers do know the number of cars and an assumption can be made with regards to the number of cars that would go to the site given the trip rates which are standardised. Jez Tuttle explained that the figure which is not known is how many people that could refrain from using their cars and because the data for the existing amount of people such as the mode share is old and it is very difficult to undertake a vision and validate assessment with data which is quite old. He added that it is very difficult for Highways Officers as they used to rely quite significantly on Government census data and as the last census data was 2021 this does lead to questions with regards as to whether the data is still valid. Jez Tuttle explained that one of the PCC Highways Officers had made the point that the status quo has not altered that much when considering the corridor which is being looked at and there have not been any large-scale bus, walking or cycle interventions and when considering people's travel habits there is not a lot which is going to change. He explained that the train services have not particularly increased and as there have not been any significant changes since 2011, it is going to be broadly the same in terms of the mode, with it going to be predominantly car modes with very few cyclists as well as people using the bus and potentially train users. Jez Tuttle stated that the opinion of Highways is that the data is old but given the fact that there will not be much which will change things, in their view, the data set for the route is going to be

about right.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that modelling alludes to the fact that there are going to be queues on the roundabout and Highways have predicated that the queue could be up to 110 metres, with 2034 still being a considerable number of years away but that could be when the science park comes to fruition. He made the point that the Highway Authority have stated that this is not acceptable and demonstrates that the proposed development will have severe impact on the roundabout and he asked officers to provide an explanation. Andrew Connolly explained that it is the applicants modelling which the Highway Authority have reviewed to determine the impacts and what they are required to assess is the base year which is when the application is submitted, the year when the application is fully built out and then five years following post full build out in order that it can be determined how the network is going to operate in the future. He explained that the information which has been provided by the applicant has been reviewed and the modelling they have used is up to date and is, therefore, acceptable, which demonstrates that the queues in the transport assessment are shown as being 109 metres on the A605 at the roundabout by the Ralph Butcher Causeway. Jez Tuttle added that the queue length is 109 metres which is approximately twenty cars and the delay in journey would equate to 48 seconds per vehicle but that information was on the very minimal mode shares as officers have already stated that they are not entirely convinced by that. He made the point that if the mode share increases significantly to 80%, if there is a junction that reaches capacity it becomes an exponential increase and if the mode shares are not achieved then the delay to each vehicle could then increase to up to 2 minutes which is why the trip cap has been suggested as a secondary intervention if the mode share is not realised.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Mrs French asked for her thanks to officers to be recorded and added that, having listened to the views of the Highways Officers from both PCC and CCC, she believes that the issues are something which can be overcome in the future. She stated that it is a brownfield site, an outline application and there appears to be very few objections. Councillor Mrs French referred to 5.21 of the officer's report where the Council's Business and Economy Team have stated that there is a shortage of commercial space employment land in the district. She made the point that the agent has undertaken a great deal of work on the proposal, agreeing that the condition of the A605 is appalling and she will support the application.
- Councillor Imafidon stated that Fenland is crying out for something such as a Science Park, and it is an opportunity which should not be missed. He added that he has considered the issues and challenges concerning the A605, however, the road infrastructure across the whole country is struggling but that does not mean that development should not be encouraged. Councillor Imafidon stated that both the officers and agent for the application have carried out very good work and the benefits outweigh the harm in this case, and he will fully support the application.
- Councillor Meekins stated that the application has good points and bad and the issue concerning traffic congestion, in his opinion, is just a way of life. He added that this is a wonderful opportunity with potentially 1600 jobs and Fenland is open for business and the agent has alluded to the fact that whilst there is still uncertainty with regards to businesses coming forward with a proposed 1600 jobs there must be some interest. Councillor Meekins added that if the proposal does not come to Whittlesey then those employment opportunities are going to go elsewhere, and the brownfield site will be left. He made the point that if outline permission is granted then the agent and applicant can move forward and advise interested parties that outline permission has now been granted. Councillor Meekins added that there are a significant number of conditions which have been attributed to the application and, in his view, it should be supported.
- Councillor Connor stated that he will support the application, adding that this type of application does not come forward very often and it is a wonderful opportunity for Fenland to put itself on the map. He added that it is only an outline application which only has access

agreed and a significant amount of detail can come forwards at the next stage of the application should it be approved today.

- Councillor Gerstner stated that he would have preferred to see the application deferred as there are sustainability and mode share concerns as well as cycling and walking infrastructure deficiencies, with there also being bus and public transport uncertainties and a number of technical outstanding issues. He added that there is a great deal of mitigation measures included in the conditions and he does not feel that the application has been rushed because he appreciates that the applicant has put in a great deal of work. Councillor Gerstner stated that the officers have also dealt very well with the application but, in his view, he believes that the application should be deferred in order to give the applicant time to revert back to highways in order to try and find some mitigation that can be engineered. He expressed the view that people do not walk and cycle down that road and there are a number of aspects that can still be rectified including the Crossway Hand junction. Councillor Gerstner stated that it is a fantastic opportunity which he is very supportive of but in its current form he cannot support the application, and he would rather see it deferred.
- Councillor Purser stated that the application is in outline form and he will fully support the proposal.
- Councillor Connor stated that on balance the employment opportunities the proposal will bring with it and the aspirations of Fenland to move forward all outweigh the concerns with the road apart for repairing the A605.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Imafidon and agreed that the application be GRANTED as per the officer's recommendation.

(Councillor Connor stated that he had previously attended a presentation given by the agent with officers and members during the infancy of the application but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(All members present declared that they know Councillors Boden and Mrs Laws as they are elected members of the District Council)

(Councillor Mrs French and Imafidon stated that they are members of Cabinet and work closely with both Councillor Boden and Councillor Mrs Laws, but they have not entered into any discussions regarding the application)

(Councillor Gerstner stated that he has met the agent on two previous occasions, but they did not discuss the application and attended the open public meeting concerning the application, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

3.40 pm

Chairman