

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Giddens

**Agent : Mr G Boreham
Morton & Hall Consulting Ltd**

Land North Of 386, Wisbech Road, Westry,

Permission in Principle for up to 9 x dwellings

Officer recommendation: Refuse

Reason for Committee: Town Council comments contrary to Officer Recommendation

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. The application seeks permission in principle of the erection of up to 9no. dwellings on Land North of 386 Wisbech Road, Westry. As the application is only for permission in principle, it is only possible to assess the location, land use and amount of development proposed.
- 1.2. As assessed above, amount of development is acceptable in principle for new residential development. However, the location of the site in an 'Elsewhere' Location fails to accord with the aims of Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), where development is to be restricted to that which is essential to the effective operation of rural enterprise, with no evidence submitted to demonstrate this.
- 1.3. Further, the development of the site for residential purposes would not constitute sustainable development, having regard to the settlement hierarchy as set out in Policy LP3, and the Planning Inspector's decision on a nearby site in relation to application F/YR17/1114/O, resulting in an erosion of the open and rural landscape character of the area.
- 1.4. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in planning terms, and it is accordingly recommended that permission in principle is refused in this instance.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The application site is located on Land North of 386 Wisbech Road, Westry. The site is currently an undeveloped parcel of agricultural land.
- 2.2. There is residential development immediately to the north and south of the site, with the site having a frontage of approximately 100m. There is also residential development on the opposite side of Wisbech Road.
- 2.3. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at very low risk of surface water flooding.

3 PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The proposal seeks permission in principle for the erection of up to 9no. dwellings on the site.
- 3.2. Whilst not a requirement of a PiP application, an indicative site layout plan has been submitted illustrating a centrally located access point onto Wisbech Road serving all properties, with a linear form of development set back from the highway by approximately 35m.
- 3.3. The indicative layout shows areas of soft landscaping along the front of the site, with 2no. swales provided in this area to assist with drainage.
- 3.4. Full plans and associated documents for this application can be found at:
<https://www.publicaccess.fenland.gov.uk/publicaccess/>

4 SITE PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. There is no site history relevant to the determination of the application.

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1. March Town Council – 04.11.25

Recommendation; Approval

5.2. Environmental Services - 24.10.25

No objection

5.3. CCC Archaeology – 27.10.25

No objection subject to condition securing scheme of archaeological work

5.4. CCC Highways – 03.11.25

No objection in principle – further details required at technical details stage

5.5. Anglian Water – 18.11.25

No objection

5.6. Mineral and Waste Authority – 19.11.25

The proposed dwellings at Plots 4 and 5 shown on the Proposed Site Plan H10460/03A would be within the Consultation Area (CA) for the safeguarded Waste Management Area (WMA) known as March AD Plant as identified under Policy 16 (Consultation Areas) of the MWLP. Policy 16 seeks to safeguard waste management facilities. It states that development within a CA will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the development will not prejudice the existing or future use of the area, i.e. the waste management site for which the CA has been designated; and not result in unacceptable amenity issues or adverse impacts to human health for the occupiers or users of such new development, due to the ongoing or future use of the area for which the CA has been designated.

5.7. Local Residents/Interested Parties

A total of 15no. letters of objection were received from residents of Wisbech Road.

| Objecting Comments | Officer Response |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Wisbech Road experiences a lot of traffic – HGV's & Lorries | See 'Other Matters' Section |
| Development will result in increased traffic movements | See 'Other Matters' Section |
| Risk to pedestrians from proposed pavements – approximate 45-minute walk to services & facilities | See 'Assessment' section of report |
| Detriment to visibility of adjacent site access | See 'Other Matters' Section |
| Loss of rural character | See 'Other Matters' Section |
| Increased disturbance and lost of privacy to adjacent dwelling | See 'Other Matters' Section |
| Roadside drains overflowing | See 'Other Matters' Section |
| Increased surface water flood risk | See 'Other Matters' Section |

6 STATUTORY DUTY

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a planning application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the purposes of this application comprises the adopted Fenland Local Plan (2014) the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2021) and the March Neighbourhood Plan (2017).

7 POLICY FRAMEWORK

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

Chapter 2 - Achieving sustainable development

Chapter 4 – Decision-making

Chapter 5 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

Chapter 8 – Promoting healthy and safe communities

Chapter 9 – Promoting sustainable transport

Chapter 11 – Making effective use of land

Chapter 12 – Achieving well-designed places

Chapter 14 – Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change

Chapter 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG)

Determining a Planning Application

National Design Guide 2021

Context

Identity

Built Form

Movement

Nature

Homes and Buildings

Fenland Local Plan 2014

LP1 – A Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

LP2 – Facilitating Health and Wellbeing of Fenland Residents
 LP3 – Spatial Strategy, the Settlement Hierarchy and the Countryside
 LP4 – Housing
 LP5 – Meeting Housing Need
 LP9 – March
 LP12 – Rural Areas Development Policy
 LP14 – Responding to Climate Change and Managing the Risk of Flooding in Fenland
 LP15 – Facilitating the Creation of a More Sustainable Transport Network in Fenland
 LP16 – Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments across the District
 LP17 – Community Safety
 LP19 – The Natural Environment

March Neighbourhood Plan 2017

H2 – Windfall Development
 H3 – Local Housing Need

Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments in Fenland SPD 2014

DM3 – Making a Positive Contribution to Local Distinctiveness and character of the Area

Cambridgeshire Flood and Water SPD 2016

Emerging Local Plan

The Draft Fenland Local Plan (2022) was published for consultation between 25th August 2022 and 19 October 2022, all comments received will be reviewed and any changes arising from the consultation will be made to the draft Local Plan. Given the very early stage which the Plan is therefore at, it is considered, in accordance with Paragraph 49 of the NPPF, that the policies of this should carry extremely limited weight in decision making. Of relevance to this application are policies:

LP1: Settlement Hierarchy
 LP2: Spatial Strategy for the Location of Residential Development
 LP5: Health and Wellbeing
 LP7: Design
 LP8: Amenity Provision
 LP12: Meeting Housing Needs
 LP18: Development in the Countryside
 LP20: Accessibility and Transport
 LP22: Parking Provision
 LP24: Natural Environment
 LP25: Biodiversity Net Gain
 LP27: Trees and Planting
 LP28: Landscape
 LP32: Flood and Water Management

8 KEY ISSUES

- **Location**
- **Land Use**
- **Amount**
- **Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)**

9 ASSESSMENT

- 9.1. Noting the guidance in place regarding Permission in Principle submissions, assessment must be restricted to (a) location, (b) use, and (c) amount, and these items are considered in turn below.

Location

- 9.2. Policy LP1 is the overarching policy supporting a presumption in favour of sustainable development, planning applications that accord with the policies within the LDP will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) sets out the settlement hierarchy within the District, setting out the scale of development appropriate to each level of the hierarchy. The application site is located in a generally rural location, with limited access to services and facilities. As such, it is considered that the site is located within an 'Elsewhere' location, as defined in Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014). Policy LP3 stipulates that development in these locations will be restricted to that which is demonstrably essential to the effective operation of local enterprise. This position is further supported by Policy LP12.
- 9.3. This position was supported by an appeal decision made in respect of planning application F/YR17/1114/O (Appeal ref: APP/D0515/W/18/3209909) for a site approximately 50m away, where the inspector concluded that this location should be assessed as an 'Elsewhere' location on the basis of the descriptions as set out in the Fenland Settlement Hierarchy.
- 9.4. Policy LP5 sets out the housing targets for the District and the Council has undertaken a full assessment of the Five-Year Housing Land Suppl. In June 2025, Fenland District Council published a new Five-Year Housing Land Supply report (for the five-year period between 1st April 2025 and 31st March 2030) which concludes that the Council can demonstrate a 6.6 years supply of housing land. As the Council can demonstrate a robust supply of housing land which is well in excess of five years supply, substantial weight is given to the Fenland Settlement Hierarchy as specified within the Local Plan. Therefore, any application for new development must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 9.5. The submitted planning statement states that the site is located within the built form of March and therefore accords with Policy LP3. However, on the basis of the assessment above, and the Planning Inspectorate's previous conclusion, it is not considered that this is the case.
- 9.6. Further to this, the erection of 9 dwellings in a linear fashion in a generally rural and open location such as this would inherently be to the detriment of the character of the area through the urbanisation of an area characterised by generally sporadic development.
- 9.7. No justification has been provided in support of the application to demonstrate that the proposals would be essential to the effective operation of local enterprise, and therefore it is considered that the proposal conflicts with the aims of Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), and therefore the location of the site is considered to be unacceptable.

Use

- 9.8. Whilst the site is located in what is considered to be a rural, 'Elsewhere' location, there is existing sporadic residential development to the north and south of the site, as well as on the opposite side of the highway.
- 9.9. Notwithstanding this, in the assessment of the aforementioned appeal on a nearby site, the Planning Inspector concluded that this location would not be a suitable location due to poor accessibility to services therefore rendering the location generally unsustainable for residential development.
- 9.10. Given the proximity of this application site to that which was subject of the appeal, it is not considered that the site would be materially different so as to render it a sustainable location for residential development.
- 9.11. As such, it is not considered that the proposed use of the site for residential purposes would accord with the aims of the Fenland Local Plan or NPPF in terms of supporting sustainable development.

Amount

- 9.12. The application seeks Permission in Principle for up to 9no. dwellings. Whilst not required as part of a PiP application, an indicative site layout plan has been submitted showing 5no. detached properties in a linear arrangement, set back from the public highway behind an access road running along the frontage of the site, served by a single access point.
- 9.13. The site measures approximately 0.66 hectares in size. As such, the erection of 9no. dwellings would result in a density of approximately 12 dwellings per hectare. It is considered that this is a relatively low density but would not be out of keeping nor disproportionate in a more rural location such as this.
- 9.14. It is considered that the development of the site for 9no. dwellings could likely be accommodated in an acceptable and suitable manner at technical details stage.
- 9.15. Therefore, the principle of development in respect of the amount of development is acceptable having regard to Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014).

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 9.16. The Environment Act 2021 requires development proposals to deliver a net gain in biodiversity following a mitigation hierarchy which is focused on avoiding ecological harm over minimising, rectifying, reducing and then off-setting. This approach accords with Local Plan policies LP16 and LP19 which outlines a primary objective for biodiversity to be conserved or enhanced and provides for the protection of Protected Species, Priority Species and Priority Habitat.
- 9.17. Applications for Permission in Principle is not within the scope of mandatory BNG. However, any subsequent Technical Details Consent application would be required to satisfy this requirement. It is at this point that the Biodiversity Gain Condition is required to be approved before development is begun.

Other Matters

- 9.18. A number of representations on the application have been received raising concerns about the development of the site in terms of highway safety and flood risk associated with the site.

- 9.19. The Highway Authority have commented on the proposal and have raised no objection to the development in principle in highway safety terms. The Highway Authority are content that sufficient visibility splays can be achieved from the proposed access due to the geometry of Wisbech Road. It is, however, noted that further information would be required at technical details stage to ensure that the development is fully satisfactory in terms of highway safety.
- 9.20. In respect of flood risk, the site is located in Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk of surface water flooding. As such, there are no issues to be resolved in relation to Flood Risk, having regard to Policy LP14 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Chapter 14 of the NPPF (2024).
- 9.21. The comments of the Mineral and Waste Planning Authority in relation to the proximity of the site to the March AD Plant are considered matters which could be addressed at the technical details stage.

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1. The application seeks permission in principle of the erection of up to 9no. dwellings on Land North of 386 Wisbech Road, Westry. As the application is only for permission in principle, it is only possible to assess the location, land use and amount of development proposed.
- 11.2. As assessed above, amount of development is acceptable in principle for new residential development. However, the location and use of the site in an 'Elsewhere' Location fails to accord with the aims of Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014), where development is to be restricted to that which is essential to the effective operation of rural enterprise, with no evidence submitted to demonstrate this.
- 11.3. Further, the development of the site for residential purposes would not constitute sustainable development, having regard to the settlement hierarchy as set out in Policy LP3, and the Planning Inspector's decision on a nearby site in relation to application F/YR17/1114/O, resulting in an erosion of the open and rural landscape character of the area.
- 11.4. The proposal is therefore considered to be unacceptable in planning terms, and it is accordingly recommended that permission in principle is refused in this instance.

11 RECOMMENDATION

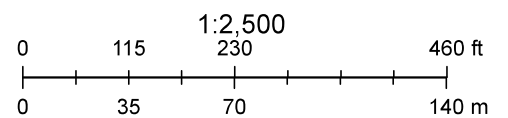
Refuse; for the following reason:

| | |
|----|--|
| 1. | The proposed development, which is located outside the settlement of March, is considered to be situated within the open countryside. Therefore, under policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan the proposal is considered to be an 'Elsewhere' location. The application is not supported by sufficient justification for dwellings in this location, where development is required to be essential for the effective operation of rural enterprise. Further, the location of the site is considered to be unsustainable for residential development and would result in an incongruous erosion on the rural landscape character of the area, contrary to the aims of Policies LP1, LP3, LP12 and LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan, and chapter 2 of the NPPF (2024). |
|----|--|



10/21/2025, 10:18:58 AM

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
|  | Public Rights of Way |  | Conservation Area Boundary |
|  | Tree Preservation Orders Areas |  | Listed Building |
|  | Tree Preservation Orders Trees |  | Fenland District Boundary |



Fenland District Council



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Please read, if in doubt ask. Change nothing without consulting the Engineers.

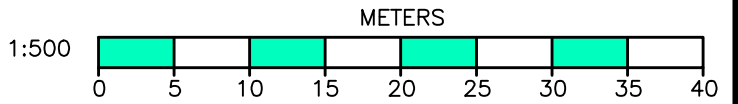
Contractor to check all dimensions on site before work starts or materials are ordered. If in doubt ask. All dimensions are in mm unless stated otherwise.

Where materials, products and workmanship are not fully specified they are to be of the standard appropriate to the works and suitable for the purpose stated in or reasonably to be inferred from the drawings and specification. All work to be in accordance with good building practice and BS 8000 to the extent that the recommendations define the quality of the finished work. Materials, products and workmanship to comply with all British Standards and EOTA standards with, where appropriate, BS or EC marks.

All products and materials to be handled, stored, prepared and used or fixed in accordance with the manufacturers current recommendations.

The contractor is to arrange inspections of the works by the BCO (or NHBC) as required by the Building Regulations and is to obtain completion certificate and forward to the Engineer

All finishes, insulation and damp-proofing to architect's details



| | | |
|---|----------------|----------|
| A | SCHEME AMENDED | OCT 2025 |
| | REVISIONS | DATE |

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LABC

LABC

Fenland District Council

Building Design Awards

Building Excellence in Fenland

CLIENT
Mr Clive & Mrs Giddens

PROJECT
Land North of Marshall House, Wisbech Road, March, Cambridgeshire, PE15 0BA

TITLE
Proposed Site Plan

INDICATIVE

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| DRAWN G.Boreham | DATE OF ISSUE |
| CHECKED | |
| DATE Oct 2025 | DRAWING NUMBER H10460/03_A |
| SCALE As Shown | |