

PLANNING COMMITTEE



WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 2026 - 1.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor D Connor (Chairman), Councillor C Marks (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs J French and Councillor M Purser, Councillor P Murphy (Substitute)

APOLOGIES: Councillor R Gerstner and Councillor S Imafidon

Officers in attendance: David Grant (Senior Development Officer), Matthew Leigh (Head of Planning), Danielle Brooke (Senior Development Officer), Alan Davies (Principal Planning Officer), Stephen Turnbull (Legal Officer), Jo Goodrum (Member Services & Governance Officer) and Hayleigh Parker-Haines (Senior Development Officer)

P83/25 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes from the previous meetings of 19 November and 10 December 2025 were approved and signed as accurate records.

P84/25 F/YR25/0586/F PHASE B, LAND EAST OF BERRYFIELD, MARCH ERECT 15 X DWELLINGS WITH ASSOCIATED INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE FORMATION OF 1 X BALANCING POND AND PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Shanna Penney, the agent. Ms Penney stated that the application is for 15 dwellings, and a previous scheme was presented to the committee last year which was for 18 dwellings alongside balancing ponds and areas of public open space. She explained that the application was refused for two reasons including a failure to satisfy a sequential test in terms of flood risk and the absence of the biodiversity net gain information but that the principle of development, the overall design approach and matters relating to surface water drainage were all found to be acceptable.

Ms Penney added that the reasons for refusal have been considered, and a revised scheme has been submitted which addresses the concerns highlighted, making the point that the development is located entirely in Flood Zone 1 removing the requirement for a sequential test and ensuring the full compliance with both the local and national flood risk policies. She explained that both the Lead Local Flood Authority and the Environment Agency have raised no objections which, in her view, means that flood risk matters have been satisfactorily addressed.

Ms Penney explained that the application has also been accompanied by a preliminary ecological appraisal and a biodiversity net gain report and metric which have been reviewed by the Council's Ecologist and have been accepted with appropriate conditions recommended, therefore, the previous reason for refusal relating to biodiversity has now been fully overcome. She added that all outstanding issues arising from the earlier refusal have now been resolved and the application is capable of being supported and will deliver much needed housing in a primary market town with excellent sustainable transport links and the prospect of imminent delivery.

Members asked Ms Penney the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French expressed concern that there is a lack of Section 106 contributions and no affordable housing attributed to the application and she questioned who is going to contribute towards the schools and GP services? She added that there are likely to be at least 35 residents plus children who will require education facilities as well as doctors and dentists and she questioned who is going to pay for those services? Councillor Mrs French stated that she does not think it is fair for the Local Authority to have to pick up the additional costs when the applicant will be making money. Ms Penney stated that she appreciates and understands the point made by Councillor Mrs French, however, the difficulty is that as the parcel of land is very large, and due to the flood risk constraints, only a third of the piece of land is developable which is making the proposal as only just being viable. She expressed the view that it should not be a cost for the Local Authority to have to pick up but there are no funds available which is regrettable.
- Councillor Connor stated that he agrees with the point made by Councillor Mrs French. He added that there are 15 dwellings proposed in a market town and there is no inclusion of affordable housing or Section 106 contributions which is very disappointing.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that the site has already had development which has been built out and there was a management plan included at that time. She explained that when that was built out, she had cause to attend the site repeatedly with regards to issues being caused due to mud on the road and made the point that should the application be approved it is essential that a strong management plan is included. Councillor Connor added that he attended the site on numerous occasions and met with residents due to parking on the path as well as mud on the road and pavements which residents were having to endure. He made the point that he notes that one of the proposed conditions is for a wheel wash facility but, in his view, that condition needs to be strengthened and needs to include a sweeper on site as well. Matthew Leigh stated that the condition officers are imposing is a standard condition and he understands that there may well have been issues on a previous development but that is not a reason to look to go beyond that as part of this. He added that obviously the construction management statement and the plan would require that mud is not on the road and if that becomes apparent then the developers will be contacted and have to ensure it is cleaned. Matthew Leigh expressed the view that he is not convinced that by imposing a condition requiring a sweeper to be available would be proportionate for a 15 dwelling unit and is not something that is normally requested. He added to go above and beyond the standard condition there would need to be some specific reason relevant to this planning application rather than the harm that has happened previously.
- Councillor Connor stated that the standard condition was included on the previous application, but it was not adhered to resulting in complaints to the Council but until he attended the site along with Councillor Mrs French no action was taken. He stated that he would like some reassurance and comfort that if there is only a wheel wash condition then it will be monitored. Matthew Leigh stated that if the condition was not adhered to previously that would be a separate matter to what is being requested with this application. He added that by stating that there is the need to provide a strong condition with this application, in his opinion, is a bit paradoxical because if the harm was from not complying to a condition, then why would a more robust condition mean that the developer would be compliant. Matthew Leigh added that the officer's report does deal with the control of emissions of dust and dirt during construction and, therefore, should a breach happen then this is an enforcement breach but whether or not they comply with the condition is a separate matter to what the wording of the actual condition is. He added that he feels that the frustration was with the previous application and that appears to be more to do with compliance rather than the actual condition.
- Councillor Connor added that he does have sympathy with what officers are saying but there were vehicles parked on the side of the road and lorries delivering were going onto the path as well. He stated that he would like some comfort for a sweeper to be there once a week, which he would be happy with, but he does want the residents' concerns to be taken

into consideration. Matthew Leigh stated that by having a sweeper on site once a week during construction, in his view, does not necessarily meet the test because having it there once a week is quite arbitrary. He explained that it may mean that there are trades people working inside the dwellings and, therefore, the point is about protecting dirt on the road, and the proposed condition does do that. Matthew Leigh made the point that if a sweeper attends once a week for example and then 5 minutes after that sweeper leaves mud appears on the road then this condition would still resolve that because there is an issue around dirt. He made the point that harm needs to be demonstrated, and the harm appears to have been from not complying with the condition not because the condition was not robust enough originally. Matthew Leigh explained that there is a difference and making the condition more onerous does not mean that the developer will more likely comply with it.

- Councillor Murphy referred to the large-scale development which took place in Whittlesey which also caused significant problems with regards to mud on the road during development.

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

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she has listened to the points made by officers and is not requesting that a sweeper is on site all day every day. She recalled an incident in December where she had to contact Matthew Leigh where the same issue arose in The Avenue as the roads were absolutely appalling and there is the same problem in Upwell Road and when there is mud on the road and it starts to rain it becomes treacherous. Councillor Mrs French made the point that why should the residents who live in Berryfield and Burnet Gardens have to put up with any more of this mess that is happening because they are driving through it and walking through this mud as well which then goes into their houses. She stated that there is no reason to refuse the application, but it does need to be monitored carefully and if enforcement is needed it should not be weeks later when there is a report and has to be dealt with immediately.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she does not think that the committee have any choice other than to approve the application and reluctantly support it but she is really concerned about the state of the roads again and the lack of affordable houses and the lack of section 106.

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

(Councillor Marks declared that he has had previous business dealings with the applicant and took no part in the discussion and voting thereon)

(Councillors Mrs French and Purser declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that they are members of March Town Council but take no part in planning)

P85/25

F/YR25/0750/F

BROMSGROVE HOUSE , HONEYSOME ROAD, CHATTERIS

CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL USE, SITING OF A MOBILE HOME TO BE USED AS AN ANNEXE AND REMOVAL OF EXISTING MOBILE HOME

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall stated that an application was refused on this site in 2025, but since that time, he has reduced the size of the annexe significantly and reduced the amount of extended residential curtilage. He made the point that he is not applying for a separate dwelling as it is an annexe in conjunction with the existing dwelling, which can be conditioned as such.

Mr Hall added that, at the present time, the applicant lives on site with her husband and children in a static caravan to the side of the existing property, which they have lived in for 14 years and the applicants' parents live in the host property at the front but the static caravan is leaking and is in a poor condition so something needs to be done. He stated that the applicant's mother is struggling with mental health so the applicant is living on site to assist and they do eat together as a family in the host property during the week at times and the applicant runs the Willows Day Nursery in Chatteris and the after-school club at Westwood School as well as the day nursery at Knights End Road.

Mr Hall explained that there are no objections to this application from any of the consultees or from members of the public. He stated that as the officer has stated a previous Planning Committee did approve an annexe on this site which was a permanently built one which also extended the curtilage more than this current application, with it being approved by the committee about 3 years ago and was also in Flood Zone 3, which was not constructed due to the actual cost of doing so, but also given the uncertainty with regards to the land use type for the land that is to the north and the northwest next to this site so it was put on hold and it has just expired.

Mr Hall made the point that during a previous planning committee 3 years ago, with regards to a previous annexe, located right next door to this site there is already an annexe located in Flood Zone 3 with no justification on the Public Access system and that was approved under delegated powers. He stated that this application is for a residential annexe, not a separate dwelling and there is a caravan on site now that has been there 14 years that the applicant's family live in.

Mr Hall explained that should approval be given then the existing caravan will be removed and a new caravan will be sited further to the rear of the site which is in Flood Zone 3 just like the existing and it will be built out of the ground. Mr Hall explained that the Environment Agency have not objected to the application which is for the betterment of the family.

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

- Councillor Benney stated that he recalls when this came before Planning Committee several years ago and at that time permission was given to build an annexe that was going to be a brick-built building and that was also up for officer's recommendation for refusal, adding that the house next door had an officer's recommendation of approval for exactly the same thing which does confuse matters. He explained that he does not know the applicant, but he does know of them, and he is aware that the lady runs a daycare centre and, in his opinion, this application appears to be a very genuine case, making the point that the uninhabitable caravan will be removed and will be replaced with something better but it will not alter the family unit. Councillor Benney expressed the view that the proposal is for people, and, in his view, it is where the committee should be considering the human element, as there is a family here and a family should not be split up. He made the point that he does not consider this building to be in the open countryside, which was the same scenario when Tesco was developed, it is not extending the curtilage and the development is not being taken out into the open countryside, it is just replacing what is already there with something better to improve the quality of life of the residents. Councillor Benney added that he can see where the policies maybe do not fit and where the site could be considered as being in the open countryside, but he does not share that view. He made the point that he appreciates that it is not ideal to put a caravan in Flood Zone 3, but there is already one on the site and the application will be built out of the ground which will make it safer and better. Councillor Benney made the point that he believes that this application deserves support, and he will be looking to grant this application.
- Councillor Marks stated that families get bigger and as families get bigger, they need more space and currently the applicant is living in a cramped caravan and this is going to give them a better living environment and more living space. He added that the issue of Flood Zone 3 and caravans has arisen previously and an application came forward over the past

few months which was for a traveller family whose application was approved in Flood Zone 3 and that was also for a caravan. Councillor Marks added that the committee look to be consistent, and he cannot see that this is doing anything to the detriment and believes that it will make a difference to their lives and he would be happy to see the application approved.

- Councillor Purser stated that by removing a dilapidated caravan it will provide a far better living accommodation for the residents and a new caravan is being provided which appears to be a like for like situation and he will fully support it.
- Councillor Murphy questioned whether Middle Level Commissioners ever provided a response to officers? Hayleigh Parker-Haines confirmed that no response has been forthcoming. Councillor Murphy stated that the Middle Level Commissioners are not concerned about the proposal, and he added that he has lived in Chatteris for his whole life, and he has never known that area to flood.
- Councillor Mrs French explained that Middle Level Commissioners are not statutory consultees and if there is a drain there then it is probably not theirs which is why no response has been received.
- The Legal Officer explained that this was subject to refusal in 2025 for a similar development and he drew members attention to the Planning Code of Conduct which forms part of the Constitution and that requires any members who wishes to support a recently refused application to identify the significant change in planning circumstances which justifies the approval.
- Matthew Leigh stated that it is his understanding that there is an existing caravan on site which is within the residential curtilage and has been in place for over 10 years. He explained that irrespective of that if it is being used as an annexe the siting of a caravan within a residential curtilage is not development. Matthew Leigh added that when members are making reference to the removal of an existing caravan, it needs to be understood that the caravan did not require permission and is lawful because if it is an annexe and is within the residential curtilage they could replace that existing caravan with this caravan without the need for planning permission, however, this application is materially different to just replacing the caravan because it is on a new site and it is expanding the site where if they wanted to take the existing caravan away and just put a new one in place it would not be before committee. He stated that the application is not like for like which is why there is a planning application because it does require planning permission due to the change of use of land and it is materially different to just placing a caravan on the site. Matthew Leigh explained that if they were just replacing the existing one then it would not require permission, but it cannot be argued that replacement of the caravan on a residential site that does not require planning permission is a material consideration as it is a development that changes the location and expands the residential character. He added that in policy terms it is an elsewhere location.
- Councillor Benney expressed the opinion that as a councillor this is the right decision for members to make, and he appreciates that the caravan is changing and is being moved albeit within the curtilage of the property, it is not going outside of the land and is staying within the land that is in the ownership of the applicant. He expressed the opinion it is making peoples lives better with no detriment to anybody else.
- Hayleigh Parker-Haines referred to the presentation screen which highlighted the application site, and she pointed out the existing caravan and that is within the existing residential curtilage. She pointed out to the committee the land to which this application relates which does not fall within the existing residential curtilage associated with Bromsgrove House and whilst it is the same ownership it is separate piece of land outside of the residential curtilage. Hayleigh Parker-Haines added that, in terms of the neighbouring property and their annexe, when that obtained planning permission it was a garage and it was the conversion of an existing building within the established residential curtilage and the previous approval granted by members pertained to an existing building on site as well as it was reusing that building and it was not a completely new annexe on site as it was utilizing existing buildings.
- Councillor Benney stated that the main point here is not the building next door, but it did

have an approval on it and whilst an annexe is acceptable there in some way it sets the principle. He added that not only is it in the curtilage it is also in the ownership of the land of the applicant and as it is their land they should be able to do what they want but he does appreciate that there is a planning process.

- Councillor Marks stated that he will be happy to second Councillor Benney's proposal, there are no objectors to this application, and it is a temporary structure which is tied to the main property and if the family move then the likelihood is this will be taken away. He added that by approving the application it is actually bettering the facility that is on site and whilst it is being moved across the site, it is not at the detriment of anybody. Councillor Marks expressed the opinion that it is not really an elsewhere location.
- Councillor Connor stated he also supports this application as it is going to improve the lives of the residents who are living in an existing caravan which is leaking, which cannot be right in the 21st century. He added that there are no objections to the application and it is tied to the property and, therefore, if the property gets sold then the caravan will have to be moved as well. Councillor Connor made the point that the committee have stated on many applications that they endorse families living together.
- The Legal Officer stated that he does not believe from what he has heard that there is any identification of the substantial change in planning circumstances that has arisen since the last application and the Constitution does not make any distinction between decisions made by committee or by officers.
- Hayleigh Parker-Haines referred to the presentation screen, identifying the previously refused scheme on the site plan, which included a larger change of use of land and included the strip running along the rear and then she identified the current application site on the presentation screen.
- Councillor Marks referred to the presentation screen and stated that he may have misunderstood but it appears that there is a whole building and, therefore, surely that is a material change. He added that on the top right of the boundary they are going to refurbish those out buildings, but a whole building has been gained from somewhere else. Hayleigh Parker-Haines explained that the building shown at the top of the site is an existing building and when this application was previously approved it was to utilize that building as an annexe and the previously refused scheme included the provision of another building to the south which is shown on that plan. She added that this application proposes a building in the siting of a caravan in a similar location to the previously refused site construction of an annexe and the building that is on site currently is going to be retained and they are going to put in the caravan.
- Councillor Connor stated that it is most definitely materially different from the last application.

Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Marks and agreed that the application be GRANTED against the officer's recommendation with conditions delegated to officers to apply appropriate conditions.

Members do not support the officer's recommendation of refusal as they do not consider the application site to be in an elsewhere location as the adjacent land has also been developed, the caravan will just be replacing the existing caravan already sited in Flood Zone 3, it is not believed that it will be harmful to the rural environment and the proposal will benefit a family.

(Councillor Benney declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Marks declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he attends Chatteris Town Council meetings but takes no part in planning)

(Councillor Murphy declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further declared that he knows the agent but is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

P86/25 **F/YR25/0814/PIP**
LAND NORTH OF 10 ASKHAM ROW ACCESSED FROM HOSPITAL ROAD,
DODDINGTON
PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR 4 X DWELLINGS

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall stated that in the officer's report it states that this is an elsewhere location but since the application was refused planning approval has been given by the committee for three plots directly to the north of the site shown on the map on the presentation screen which also highlights some change in the character of the area. He added that when he looked at this, he recalled an application for which he was the agent for in 2018 under delegated powers which was 380 metres to the west and the bungalow was much further out of Doddington but on the same side of the road on Benwick Road and that was given approval, which was not a replacement and was considered under delegated approval.

Mr Hall explained that all of this site is in Flood Zone 1 and he has considered the Cambridge County Council Highway's comments who have no objection to the application, he has discussed them with the applicant and should the application be approved, like with the other applications there, it will be a requirement to provide a passing place, and they agree that it can be provided within the highway verge. He stated that should the application be approved then that passing place would have to be included and would form part of the technical part of the application and the applicant is aware that some improvements need to be undertaken.

Mr Hall expressed the opinion that since the first application was refused three years ago there are material planning changes and the actual site area red line has been reduced by about a quarter, and it brings it away from some of the back gardens in Askham Row. He explained that he knows it is indicative but he has also increased the number of dwellings because on the first application that was refused he was told it was under development and he made the point that the second reason for refusal in the officer's report is incorrect because it says the proposal is for three dwellings but on the application form and the indicative drawings submitted it states four.

Mr Hall added that directly to the north of this site, further plots have been approved, and the application site has not been used for agricultural use for at least 10 years. He referred to the presentation screen and highlighted the application site in relation to the other sites and made the point that there are lots of approvals that have been given in the vicinity since about 2020 and he does not consider this not part of Doddington.

Mr Hall explained that to the north of the site Mega Plants is located and there are numerous planning approvals, some of those are already built out, some sold and some of them are being built. He added that to the east Doddington Hospital is located and to the left there is Askham Care Home as well as further residential dwellings further past there.

Mr Hall added that earlier in 2018, he obtained a delegated approval for a further dwelling, which was not agriculturally tied, not a replacement dwelling and that was approved under delegated powers and, in his opinion, the application site abuts residential development. He made the point

that it is all located in Flood Zone 1 and is linear development, which is the same as Askham Row and the same as the plots that were approved to the north.

Mr Hall expressed the view that there have been numerous planning approvals here in the last six years and he knows that the highway improvements cannot be conditioned but they would have to come forward if the application is approved under a technical matters application because if not it would attract a highways objection. He expressed the view that the properties on Askham Row are very nice large properties which is what this application is for, and he is trying to match in with the character of the area and the map, in his opinion, demonstrates that it is not an elsewhere location and it does form part of Doddington.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she is aware it is a planning in principle application and that Mr Hall has explained that the applicant would be prepared to contribute to the upgrade of passing places, however, she is concerned with regards to it being a 60mph area, which needs to be reduced and asked Mr Hall whether the applicant would consider applying for a speed reduction? Mr Hall confirmed that it is something that the applicant would do.
- Councillor Connor stated that he believes a speed reduction has already been applied for by Mr Cutteridge from Mega Plants as that formed a condition as part of one of his applications. Mr Hall stated that he believes that to be the case. Councillor Connor stated that it maybe another year before it is implemented and he added that this is a PIP application and this is only the first step obviously as there are still several hurdles in which to overcome to get full planning permission on this site.

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

- Councillor Marks stated that there have been numerous planning applications in this area or around this area and he stated that with regards to material changes from three years ago when this first came in front of the committee there have been other approvals given around it and he does believe there are changes here. He made the point that it is not the greatest road in the world but, in his opinion, you would not be able to drive 60 mph down there on a on a good day. Councillor Marks added that a passing place is a community benefit which he thinks is a good thing and he welcomes the fact that it is something that the applicant is already aware of. He added that with regards to land usage, there are already some nice houses at the front and if the application mimics that regarding space, he can see very little wrong with the application, and he would be happy to support it.
- Councillor Benney stated that he noticed on his site visit that there are bungalows being built down there and bungalows that have been built out already which are further out in the open countryside than this is and they have all been approved. He added that the application will bring with it some betterment on the road and Mega Plants is nearby who have received approval for a café and that means there will be more people using the area. Councillor Benney expressed the view that if this improves the safety of the road by putting highway improvements along here, with a speed reduction, it will make the development better and will makes it safer for people using the road.

Proposed by Councillor Marks, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and agreed that the application be GRANTED against the officer's recommendation.

Members did not support the officer's recommendation of refusal as they believe that there has been material change in the area due to the number of planning approvals which have been given in the last three years and that the proposed highway improvements as well as the speed reduction will bring benefit.

(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Murphy declared that he knows the agent, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)

P87/25

F/YR25/0594/O

LAND NORTH OF 450 TO 454 MARCH ROAD, TURVES

ERECT 3 X DWELLINGS INVOLVING THE FORMATION OF ACCESSES
(OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH ALL MATTERS RESERVED)

Hayleigh Parker-Haines presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Marks asked how officers can state that the ecological test has failed because, in his opinion, it cannot have failed, it just has not taken place at the right time and questioned whether the application should be deferred. Hayleigh Parker-Haines responded that insufficient ecological information has been submitted and, therefore, that does form a reason for refusal.
- Councillor Mrs French expressed the view that the time to do the survey would have been through the breeding season from March and, therefore, it would be unreasonable to refuse the application before it can be completed.
- Councillor Connor stated that he recalls that officers did advise members previously, recommending to the committee that the breeding season was from March to September, but the committee placed a three-month timeframe on the application which was incompatible with the breeding season. He made the point that as a result the applicant is unable to undertake the survey as it does not fit in with the prescribed timescale anyway.
- Councillor Marks stated that as it appears that there is a grey area he would suggest that the application is deferred for another six months.
- Councillor Connor stated that it is evident that there is nothing new from the last application and the committee are in the same position as they were when the application was last considered and he asked the committee whether they agree to further defer the application.
- Councillor Benney made the point that if the application is deferred then it is likely that it will be considered under the new planning rules, which means it will not come back before the committee. Matthew Leigh stated that, as it currently stands, he does not know as at the current time there is no legislation at the moment, it normally takes over two months for secondary legislation to be laid, and the transitional arrangements are not yet known. He made the point that it is also not yet clear how the transitional arrangements will work.
- Councillor Benney stated that if the application is going to be deferred there are two reasons for refusal and if the application is deferred for an ecological report that may never come back to the committee then that would then be down to officers to decide on the reason for refusal in relation to Flood Zone 3. He questioned whether the application is deferred on both points or should the committee consider the Flood Zone element now.
- Councillor Marks referred to the presentation screen, pointing out the applications which have already been given permission in Flood Zone 3, and he presumes that an ecology report would have already been undertaken. He asked when the other dwellings were given approval? Hayleigh Parker-Haines confirmed that it was in 2023 and any ecological report that was submitted as part of that application would be out of date now and reference to that as part of the current application cannot be made. She added that since the determination of that application the guidance used on flood risk has changed as well.
- Councillor Marks stated that mitigation measures can be undertaken with regards to flood risk, so the concern is the ecological report if the committee wish to consider the application and make a determination.

- Matthew Leigh stated that the Legal Officer gave advice to the committee previously with regards to the habitat's regulations and as an authority it cannot be conditioned that it is likely to be acceptable in the future and that is the reason members deferred it previously. He added that those circumstances have not changed but if members are wishing to not have two issues stand up in the future it may be in their best interest to refuse it only on ecology grounds rather than deferring the application. Matthew Leigh stated that if the Council find that the only issue with this application is ecology that would be a material consideration in any future application.
- Councillor Marks referred to the presentation screen and indicated that there is a blue line around an agreed build already which has not taken place yet and there is an out-of-date ecology report. He added that the builder could commence works tomorrow and badgers could have moved into there, but it seems that whatever wildlife would be on that site can be ignored, and there is the need to wait for an ecology report on the site next door. He added that the likelihood is that nothing has probably changed or if it has the adjacent site can still commence building whilst a development with a red line around it has to be stalled whilst an ecology report is undertaken and, in his view, there needs to be an element of common sense.
- The Legal Officer stated that the planning system requires that the Council considers each application as it comes in and the fact there may have been previous applications next door is a matter of planning history, but members could not today approve this application in the absence of the ecology report simply because there is a site next door which has an existing permission. He stated that the ecology report for the adjoining site is out of date and it would be entirely wrong for members to rely on that to approve this application.
- Matthew Leigh explained that the application next door was an outline application and if there has not been a reserved matters then there would still be the need for additional information. He made the point that there have been more case law recently which states that even on a same site you cannot rely on the fall back of an outline application for a full application when it comes to ecology. Matthew Leigh stated that the reality is that there is the requirement that officers need to have an ecology report to be able to support a scheme as a Council and without that members should not be looking to support this scheme.
- Councillor Benney stated that if the committee refuse the application solely on ecology and feel that Flood Zone 3 is acceptable here then Flood Zone 3 would not be an objection. He added that when the application comes back with an ecology report which is favourable then the application should be approved. Matthew Leigh stated that the decision of the committee would be a material consideration for any determination of a future application, with the planning history being a material consideration of significant weight.
- Councillor Benney stated that if the committee accept that it is a suitable site to build on, and members accept the Flood Zone 3, with everything built in Turves being in Flood Zone 3 then mitigation measures can be attached to the application. He added that if members deem that to be acceptable and then only refuse the application on ecology grounds and if it came back with a ecology report which was favourable then that can be overcome. Councillor Benney stated that if this came back and it had been refused on the flood zone, the fact it is in Flood Zone 3 cannot be got around and he would be minded to refuse the application on the ecology alone which would mean that an application could come back with the correct paperwork which could be approved. He stated that if the application is deferred with the changes that are coming in with the planning, it could be that this application goes straight to officers and then as it is in Flood Zone 3 it will get refused.
- Councillor Connor asked if the committee could make a strong recommendation which states that when the ecology has been completed that it comes back to this committee irrespective of whatever the new law planning laws states? Matthew Leigh stated that his understanding of the points that Councillor Benney has raised is that with any application members are not bound to follow the recommendation and they are able to look at the various reasons of refusal and consider whether they think some or all of them have merit. He added that if members agree with some but do not agree with others, members can refuse a scheme only on some of the reasons for refusal. Matthew Leigh explained that as

with any application, no decision means that automatically another application will have the same outcome or because of material considerations situations can change.

Members asked questions, made comments received responses as follows:

- Councillor Benney stated that if there had not been the other adjacent development then he may have agreed with officers. He added that from the public's perspective when the committee have already granted three dwellings and they are considering refusing the three dwellings next door, in his opinion, it looks poor but that is planning and that is how it works. Councillor Benney added that he does not want to see the dwellings refused and he would like to approve them, making the point that the issues of ecology can be overcome or another application would get round the ecology because they could undertake the ecology report. He stated that if the committee agree that it is Flood Zone 3, this may never come to planning committee again and in which case he believes it will be a flat refusal with Flood Zone 3 and the ecology. Councillor Benney expressed the view that it seems a cruel thing to do if the committee want it approved, but, in his view, the application needs to be refused but only on the ecology because the applicant can bring the paperwork forward to comply with the ecology aspect of it.
- The Legal Officer stated that he needs to caution members, he understands the rationale about the way forward but if members feel that Flood Zone 3 is not an issue then members should not be relying on the change in the future rules to defer or refuse the application and members should focus only on the planning issues. He added that members should not be making a decision based upon the future changes in the scheme of delegation because that is not a reason for making a planning decision.
- Councillor Connor stated that he believes the point that Councillor Benney was making is that there are three dwellings with extant planning permission and just for consistency's sake it would look odd if consideration was not given to the three next door on the same site.
- Matthew Leigh stated that he totally agrees with the point that the Legal Officer has made and added that what he has always said is that he would encourage members to refuse things on one reason when it would need to be deferred for a long time rather than deferring it, which would be consistent because it does become problematic. He added that if the site is in a flood zone that is fact and it cannot be changed and in officers' opinion there is not the level of detail to pass the sequential test. Matthew Leigh added that if members consider that the fact that the application is in the flood zone is not problematic, there will still then need to be consideration in the debate around the exceptions test and why it is acceptable and that would then form part of any minutes for the meeting as well.
- Councillor Benney stated that all of Turves is in Flood Zone 3 and, therefore, this means no development, with it not being good for a village to not have development, because villages die if they have no development and all the residents suffer from that. He added that he recognises the benefits of passing this application in Flood Zone 3 because if not Turves will die and there has been development throughout Turves including on the site of the old Public House. Councillor Benney made the point that he views the sequential test as a block to development and whilst he appreciates that it is policy, it does not look at all land usage. He asked officers what would happen if the application was approved without an ecology report? The Legal Officer explained that it would be a legally flawed decision because members are not taking into account the ecological information. Matthew Leigh stated that it would be as legally flawed as is possible when the legislation says do not do this, with the legislation around the considerations being just about ecology full stop and is around any decisions the Council makes, which, in his view, is dangerous.
- Councillor Marks made the point that members have an application in front of them, there is approval for the site next door and advice has been given by the Legal Officer, but the developer could start building tomorrow on the site next door. He added that the whole of Turves is in Flood Zone 3 but based on previous recently approved applications mitigation can be undertaken in flood zones. Councillor Marks acknowledged that there is not an ecology report but reiterated that there is approval for the site next door and as Councillor

Benney referred to, the former pub closed because there was not enough people supporting it due to there not being enough residents in Turves to support. He expressed the view that the most logical thing would be to approve this application, but he understands that legally it cannot be done without a favourable ecology report, so he feels that a mechanism needs to be found to bring this back, ideally to committee.

- Councillor Connor stated that he does not disagree with anything Councillor Benney or Marks have said but drew attention to the fact that seven or eight properties were approved opposite on the other side of the road, which has resulted in him being in favour of the other three and it was only this side of the road where there were any building plots left in Turves without going outside the village envelope, with the village envelope being from the second crossing gates in Turves all on that side of the road, right up past Burnthouse Lane until it meets agricultural land. Councillor Connor reiterated that seven or eight properties were approved approximately four or five years ago on the other side of the road so he does not see too much wrong with this application, it is in a flood zone, and this is never going to change but feels that he can support it. He added that he feels that the application should only be refused on the ecological report which he hopes can be carried out and can be brought back to the committee.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that it is only a few months away to get this survey undertaken and to be fair to the applicant and officers she would prefer to see the application deferred for 3 months to let them get their surveys carried out and then hopefully it will resolve the issue that is there.
- Councillor Connor stated that he would be minded deferring for 6 months.
- Councillor Benney asked for clarification as to whether it is being deferred only on the ecology? Councillor Connor stated that yes for it then to come back before the committee with the right paperwork and then the application could be approved.
- Matthew Leigh stated that the committee cannot partly approve an application, explaining that if it is deferred like other items have on a single issue that may well be resolved or not there will be an officer's recommendation based on that information and members will get to debate and make the decision. He explained that the judgment of the committee cannot be fettered through partly implying they are approving aspects of that application and his advice to members would not be putting a time restriction on the deferral to allow the applicant to get the ecology report undertaken and then for officers to consider.
- Councillor Marks stated that there was an application in Manea for seven houses where the committee refused it and the Planning Inspector came along and said that he could not see a problem. He added that if the Inspector looked at this with the properties next door that already have permission and if it had to go to an appeal for whatever reason, it has been turned down because it has come back to the planners as opposed to the committee again so he would hope logic would prevail.
- Councillor Benney stated that he is minded to approve the application and he added that members are content with the Flood Zone 3 issue and the committee accept the application without ecology and, therefore, approve it. He made the point that members have been given advice that to choose that course of action is dangerous, but that is down to a committee to decide. Councillor Benney expressed the view that if the committee does not feel that is acceptable then that is down to the committee.
- The Legal Officer added that if members decide to go ahead and want to approve the application, notwithstanding they are completely as it were blind in relation to the ecology, his advice would be that is a clear unlawful decision and he would have to report members decision to the Monitoring Officer. He stated that it would be unlawful if it was challenged and it would be successfully challenged.
- Councillor Benney stated that he has reflected on the legal advice given by officers and as the proposal seems to be unlawful, he will withdraw that proposal.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she suggests that the application be deferred and for the committee to consider the advice provided to the committee by the Head of Planning. She added that the committee disregarded his advice previously when he had advised members that a three-month period was not sufficient timescale to defer the application. Councillor

Mrs French added that the Head of Planning is now advising the committee not to add a time frame but that does concern her. She added that she would still like to see the application deferred so that officers work with the applicant in order to allow the survey to come out.

- Councillor Connor asked Councillor Mrs French to clarify her proposal. Councillor Mrs French stated that the application is to be deferred in its complete entirety on the two reasons as that is the advice given by officers.
- Councillor Marks asked for confirmation that the issue of Flood Zone 3 cannot be removed from the deferral? Councillor Connor stated that it must be included.
- Councillor Benney asked how long the application is likely to be deferred? Councillor Connor stated until the end of September.
- Councillor Benney stated that his suggestion was going to be the end of the year which gives the applicant 12 months and then if they have not brought it back in 12 months then it needs refusal.
- Matthew Leigh stated that reports have been brought back for items that had been deferred by the committee from before he was in post and where they have not progressed, they were brought back to the committee with a recommendation of refusal, and he recalls that they have been refused. He explained that there does not necessarily need to be a time period because once the opportunity for the ecology report has been undertaken it should come to officers in a timely manner. Matthew Leigh stated that if members do want to add a time limit then he would encourage the end of the year would be a reasonable time.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Murphy and agreed that the application be DEFFERED until the end of the year.

(Councillor Connor declared, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he had been lobbied on this application)

P88/25

F/YR25/0807/PIP

LAND SOUTH OF 6 BRIDGE LANE, WIMBLINGTON

PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE TO ERECT UP TO 7 X DWELLINGS

Alan Davies presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall stated that all of this site is in Flood Zone 1, just like the land that was given approval three months ago directly to the west of the application site and it does abut residential development to the north and is situated, in his opinion, within the development footprint of Wimblington which is a growth village under LP3 allowing for a small village extension and the application is for up to seven dwellings. He expressed the opinion that the site is within the development footprint of Wimblington and he referred to the map on the presentation screen which shows that it is immediately adjacent to an approval that was given 3 months ago to the west.

Mr Hall stated that he has discussed the Highways comments with the applicant himself and if the application is approved, there will be the need to be some highway improvements, with the site directly to the west having to also do some highway improvements which include a layby shown in the highway verge on this side of Bridge Lane which can be achieved and the applicant knows if this goes forward and if it is approved at the technical matters application stage, the highway improvements would need to be shown. He referred to the adjacent site to the west that was approved three months ago by members, with that site also being in-depth development and there was no reason for refusal on that one for it being located back from the public highway, but on this site, there is, and the application is not going as deep in-depth development as that site there.

Mr Hall explained that, if approved, the application would also eventually lead to the shed on site being demolished. He referred to the presentation screen, and pointed out that in this area of

Wimblington, there has been numerous approvals in the last six years and a lot of those are being built out and some of them have been built out to the north and directly to the west.

Mr Hall made the point that those applications are off Bridge Lane, Eaton Estate, March Road, with the character and the area having changed and is changing. He stated that all of the site is in Flood Zone 1 on the Environment Agency's map and it is within the built-up form of Wimblington, with there being numerous other approvals in very close proximity and a lot of those have started.

Mr Hall made the point that the applicant is fully aware about the highway improvements having spoken to the applicant about that and, in his opinion, he does not believe that the site could be classed as overdevelopment either as the proposal is for up to seven dwellings which all have at least a third garden area. He added that he knows it is indicative, but it shows members what might come forward if it were to be approved, with the technical matters application leading to the shed being demolished and the highway improvements to Bridge Lane, which will benefit everybody who is going to use Bridge Lane.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she is pleased to hear that if the application is approved then the shed will be demolished as that has caused issues over many months. Mr Hall stated that he agrees with that point.
- Councillor Marks stated that, with regards to the shed and access, he is aware that a large steam engine was being kept in the shed which was moved by transporter on numerous occasions and, therefore, it must be possible to get a lorry up and down the road, and, therefore, the road is not that narrow. He added that there are passing places as well and with the removal of the shed he questioned whether that would mean that the steam engine may actually go elsewhere which would stop HGV access? Mr Hall confirmed that is correct, explaining that the site that has been approved recently to the west has had to undertake highway improvements to the site on the other side to the north owned by MJS and the HGV movements would also stop as the steam engine will be moved elsewhere.
- Councillor Marks asked for confirmation that on the opposite side of the road there was Clark's haulage company with a number of lorries as well. Mr Hall confirmed that this is the site that is owned by MJS, which has permission for 16, which was a haulage yard quite a few years ago.

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

- Councillor Benney stated that he has reviewed the reasons for refusal and does not consider 7 dwellings to be large-scale in-depth development. He made the point that when the bypass went around Wimblington all of the land will eventually come in for building at some point. Councillor Benney stated that the committee approved 81 houses at the top on the Belway site and there have been other applications approved a few months ago along with an application on the site adjoining this that has been approved. He stated that this parcel of land will come forward for development at some point and the committee have an application in front of them which needs to be determined. Councillor Benney referred to the second reason for refusal and stated that reason has already been broken due to the application next door to the current site already being approved as it has changed the character of the landscape and every house that the committee passes has changed that. He expressed the view that Wimblington has changed in this whole area, and he does not see that this application will do any more harm as it is just for seven houses. Councillor Benney stated that Bridge Lane is narrow, but the committee have been advised that there will be highway improvements as the applicant is quite happy to pay for them, and if he does not bring those forward then it will not get built out either. He stated that he has reviewed the three reasons for refusal and, in his opinion, they do not add up and as a local councillor he is pleased to see that the shed will no longer be an issue and by it no longer being there it must improve the quality of life for the people who live in the area. Councillor Benney added that nobody wants anything built and always wants a field behind their home

but that is not achievable, expressing the view this is a much better scheme and a better solution for some of the problems that have been on the site since day one. He expressed the view that by getting rid of the shed he hopes that it will improve the quality of life for neighbours, and he hopes that this application will go some way to pleasing the residents that live around there. Councillor Benney expressed the opinion that the application should be approved especially as there was an application approved on the adjacent site last year. He added that he does not believe it is large scale development, it is for seven houses and if it was for 20 then he would consider it as large scale.

- Councillor Marks stated that he wholeheartedly agrees with everything that Councillor Benney has stated as this site has been a nightmare ever since he became a member of the committee with there always being issues with the shed so by removing the shed the neighbouring properties will be happier. He stated that when he saw the initial photograph and went on site it almost becomes a gated community which may be a benefit as it is developed. Councillor Marks made the point that for seven houses there is likely to be seven to fourteen vehicles per day up and down the road but there are highway improvements that are likely to be undertaken. He stated that the committee approved the houses next door and that part of Wimblington is changing quite drastically and he will be happy to support the application.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she has noted that one of the concerns of the Parish Council is drainage and flooding, but this issue has been discussed at length at previous meetings concerning other applications and, in her view, if this is approved the three developers should get together and actually improve the drainage system down there.
- Councillor Connor stated that it just seems a natural progression to him and to remove the shed it will make neighbouring properties far easier down there and will be a community benefit so he will be supporting this scheme.

Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Mrs French and agreed that the application be APPROVED against officer's recommendation.

Members do not support the recommendation of refusal as they do not consider the application to be in-depth large-scale development, other applications have been approved adjacent to the site and there are proposed highway improvements which will assist with traffic flow in Bridge Lane.

(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally. He further declared that he did meet with the applicant when he was a Portfolio Holder for the port but has not had any further dealings. He stated that he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Connor declared that he knows the applicant as he owns a scrap metal recycling yard and he used to own one but has since retired but he has never had any business dealings with him or socialised with the applicant. He further declared that he did meet with the applicant along with Councillor Marks on another matter that was not connected to planning. He stated that he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Marks declared that he met with the applicant once along with the Chairman but the meeting was not in relation to planning or planning issues and he does not know the applicant socially)

P89/25

F/YR25/0863/PIP

LAND NORTH EAST OF 134 LONDON ROAD, CHATTERIS
PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR UP TO 4 X DWELLINGS

David Grant presented the report to members.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall explained that there have been numerous approvals given in this location since 2019, one of those was under delegated powers, and there have been 17 dwellings approved at the location already which, in his view, proves that the area forms part of Chatteris due to the number of adjacent approvals. He added that some of the dwellings on the site have been completed and are occupied and some are under construction.

Mr Hall explained that he is working on some of the development at the current time and it is at the building regulation stage as people have purchased them as they want to move to the area. He referred to the Google map and added that the development could be considered as infill between the Four-Seasons Garden Centre and the dwelling next door.

Mr Hall explained that all of the site is in Flood Zone 1 and there are no objections from the Town Council or from members of the public. He referred to the presentation screen indicating the application site, explaining that all of the other approvals in this area in the last six years include those that are built, lived in and sold which, in his view, demonstrates that there is a need.

Mr Hall explained that southwest of the application site is the Four Seasons Grden Centre and café which needs the support to succeed. He expressed the opinion that the area is part of Chatteris so the character of the area has changed and continues to do so.

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

- Councillor Marks stated that it has been mentioned that there is no pavement, however, a new garden centre has been built, and people like to walk to a garden centre more than they like to walk to their houses. He added that he agrees with the point made by Mr Hall that the proposal could be almost classed as infill and made the point that the Chatteris boundary seems to move further to the bottom of Ferry Hill as you come round the corner where the Chatteris sign is. Councillor Marks explained that he is aware that it is in a 50mph area, but Chatteris Town Council are looking to apply for a speed reduction. He added that several self-build properties on Stocking Drove have been approved behind Ferry Farm and there is a footpath there but there is not one along Stocking Drove which is a busy road, and he will look to support the application.
- Councillor Benney stated that members keep being told that this location is not within Chatteris but, in his opinion, if you travel to the bottom of Ferry Hill, there is a sign which says 'Welcome to Chatteris and Welcome to Fenland' so Chatteris starts at the bottom of Ferry Hill rather than where the new Hallam Land development is. He explained that all of the other dwellings have been approved on the basis that members feel Chatteris is further out. Councillor Benney expressed the view that it is a shame that the footpath was not introduced when the garden centre was built as it should have been incorporated but it appears to have been missed. He expressed the opinion that it is located in Chatteris, and he will be supporting the proposal.
- Councillor Murphy stated that the photographs shown in the officer's presentation did not demonstrate any development at all, however, there are several dwellings located along the road with more development taking place. He made the point that Chatteris is expanding out towards Ferry Hill and the development is filling up the land all the way through and he welcomes the development. Councillor Murphy added that once the development starts of those applications which are yet to commence building then there will be homes all the way along the road and he wholeheartedly welcomes this development. He added that Chatteris Town Council would like to see a footpath from Sutton Gault which is already positioned down one side, but it would be nice to see it extended down one side of the road to the Four Seasons Garden Centre. Councillor Murphy expressed the opinion that he believes the application is a great application and it should be approved.
- David Grant stated that members have made reference to other developments in the area and they have referred to the 'Welcome to Chatteris' sign which is where they consider the built-up settlement starts. He added that if members chose to approve the application and

other schemes of three and four dwellings are considered to be infill dwellings in an unsustainable location, there will be no Section 106 contributions offered. David Grant added that members have made reference to an application determined by members in December, F/YR25/0796/PIP, and explained that this application was 350 metres from the built-up settlement and was served by a footpath on the opposite side of London Road to the south. He made the point that the proposed application is more than twice the separation distance from the built-up settlement and is not served by a pedestrian footpath on either side of the highway which has a speed limit of 50mph. David Grant stated that the examples given on the plan within the officer's presentation including Gaul Tree Lodge and the area to the south continuing past 120 London Road towards what is considered to be the built-up settlement of Chatteris is served by a footpath and some dwellings have been approved in outline, PIP and full. He stated that no footpath is proposed for this development and concerns have been expressed by the Highway Officer and Chatteris Town Council.

- Councillor Mrs French stated that there is no expectation for Section 106 contributions for 4 dwellings and as it is a PIP application they would like a footpath, but it cannot be requested under a PIP.
- Councillor Benney stated that as it is a PIP a footpath cannot be requested. He added that he would like a speed survey to be undertaken in order to justify a speed reduction along with the introduction of a footpath if it is feasible.

Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Murphy and decided that the application be GRANTED against the officer's recommendation.

Members do not support the officer's recommendation of refusal as they do not consider the application to be in an elsewhere location.

(Councillor Benney declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Marks declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he attends Chatteris Town Council meetings but takes no part in planning)

(Councillor Murphy declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Chatteris Town Council but takes no part in planning. He further declared that he knows the agent but is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

P90/25

F/YR25/0834/O

LAND WEST OF 78-88 STATION ROAD, MANEA

ERECT UP TO 8 X DWELLINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)

Tracy Ranger presented the report to members

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent, and Archie Hirson, the applicant. Mr Hall stated that the applicants have lived in Manea for 30 years and there is a material planning change with the application due to the fact the proposed dwellings are smaller 2 and 3 bedroomed properties which are more affordable rather than the larger dwellings which were applied for and refused previously. He made the point

that smaller properties have been approved previously, such as Lavender Mill Bungalow at Fallow Corner in the last 18 months, which are in Flood Zone 3.

Mr Hall stated that there are no objections from the Highway Authority, Environment Agency or Ecology and all of the buildings will be located outside of the Middle Level Commissioners 9 metre strip. He explained that the application site is located within 390 metres of easy walking distance to the train station and there is an adoptable footpath from the site all the way to the north.

Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen and identified other planning permissions which have been approved in Manea and are located in Flood Zone 3, located both to the north and the south of the site, with the map demonstrating that there are a lot of properties to the north, east and south of the site and the proposal is not in an elsewhere location which the officer has also confirmed in their report. He made the point that in the officer's report it states that the principle of development is acceptable given its location and the proposal complies with LP15 and LP16 and, in his opinion, there have been other planning approvals given to dwellings much further out and to those adjacent to the site.

Mr Hirson explained that he has lived in Manea for the last 30 years and planted the hedge on the Wimblington Road and whilst both himself and his brother are not developers they wish to seek an opportunity to give back to the community. He stated that it is a modest development in an area of Manea which suits this type of development and will bring the opportunity forward for families to live together which suits the village of Manea as it is a multigenerational area.

Mr Hirson stated that the proposal is the ideal opportunity to bring honest housing forward for honest people at a time where it is fundamentally and crucially needed in a location where it benefits from the infrastructure invested in Manea Train Station and the surrounding area.

Members asked the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that there had been two previous applications, one in March 2024 for four dwellings refused and November 2022 for four dwellings which was also refused and she asked for clarification as to what has changed since the last application was refused in 2024, particularly now the number of dwellings has doubled. Mr Hall explained that the previous applications were for large four and five bedroomed dwellings, there has been a complete rethink on the proposal and smaller dwellings have been put forward, which has meant more of a dense development and had the application been for a smaller number of dwellings it would have meant a significant under development of the area.

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

- Councillor Mrs French referred to 5.7 of the officer's report relating to the Middle Level Commissioners and stated that if planning permission is granted it does not necessarily mean that it will get built out as there are strict rules with regards to the 9-metre access strip.

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

(Councillor Marks declared that the applicant is his former doctor and took no part in the discussion and voting thereon. He further declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Manea Parish Council but takes no part in planning)

(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Murphy declared that he knows the agent, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)

P91/25 **F/YR25/0739/O**
LAND SOUTH WEST OF 176 HIGH ROAD, GOREFIELD
ERECT UP TO 1 X SELF-BUILD/CUSTOM DWELLING, INVOLVING THE
DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS (OUTLINE APPLICATION WITH
MATTERS COMMITTED IN RESPECT OF ACCESS)

This application was withdrawn.

P92/25 **F/YR25/0806/PIP**
LAND SOUTH OF LAVENDER MILL CLOSE, FALLOW CORNER DROVE, MANEA
PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR UP TO 9 X DWELLINGS

Danielle Brooke presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall explained that the site has been in the ownership of the family for over 50 years and they farm 750 acres of land. He added that a yield map was submitted for the application site but unfortunately was not submitted on time, however, officers have included it to demonstrate the part of the field where the black grass is grown is of a poor yield compared to the rest of the field.

Mr Hall stated that Manea is a growth village under Policy LP3, where a small extension may be appropriate and the application site, in his opinion, abuts permanent development to the west, and he stated that over half of the objections are not from Fenland residents whereas all of the supporters are from Manea residents. He referred to the presentation screen and pointed out that to the north of the application site there is continuous residential development comprising of large individual houses and the hatched areas demonstrate the approvals given with some of them being in flood zones, with the dwellings located to the east being far closer to the Ouse Washes and pointing out that the blue hatched area received planning in principle approval for 5 dwellings, and the outline application has been submitted.

Mr Hall stated that he appreciates that there needs to be an ecology report submitted as there must be biodiversity net gain. He explained that along one side of Fallow Corner Drove to the west there have been properties which have already been built out and referred to the presentation screen, pointing out a hatched area in green located in the corner which was approved by the committee and that in 2018 a large dwelling was built out of the ground by 1.82 metres, with landscaped surroundings, which, in his view, looks extremely nice where it has been built on Fallow Corner Drove.

Mr Hall stated that Anglian Water and the Environment Agency raise no objections to the application, and he added that the applicants are members of Drainage Boards and are, therefore, aware of their responsibilities with regards to drainage. He added that houses along Fallow Corner Drove have septic tanks and treatment plants and the application site is a large site and it is expected that it will also be on the same method of disposal to negate extra pressure on Anglian Waters foul water treatment plant in Manea.

Mr Hall explained that on the indicative plan which was submitted he has not shown the layout of houses, but he has included all the large highway verge and there has been no objection from the

Highway Authority. He explained that it will allow for some community benefit such as the widening of Fallow Corner Drove or the introduction of a large layby if the application was approved and it would form part of the technical matters stage of the application process.

Mr Hall reiterated that Manea is a growth village, this is a small village extension in his opinion and is compliant with policy LP3. He expressed the view that there are numerous other approvals much further east and further down Fallow Corner Drove.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Marks asked for clarification as to where the location to Lavender Mill is sited? Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen, explaining that the yellow hatching located directly opposite the application site is an area of land which has a bungalow on it which has approval for several dwellings, with the green hatched area being the mill and the area further to the west is where there are two further houses which have already been built out.
- Councillor Purser asked for clarity with regards to the agricultural land which is believed to have a poor yield. Mr Hall explained that the land is still used for agriculture and referred to the yield map pointing out the area which has a poor yield.

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

- Councillor Marks explained that the application site is located within his ward and he has undertaken a great deal of work with Lavender Mill and the residents who live in the area and whilst he appreciates that people can look at the view across a field, he also notes that the piece of land falls into an area that could be built on. He added that it is only a PIP application and members do need to be consistent when they are considering flood zones and they have approved other applications in the vicinity. Councillor Marks made the point that the land has black grass on it which is dreadful to get rid of and he questioned what the land will be producing in years to come. He stated that when considering land usage, the Lavender Mill application has resulted in an improvement in drainage and there are no longer any flooding issues on the corner, with the Lavender Mill site discharging into the Anglian Water system and he highlighted the area to members by referring them to the presentation screen. Councillor Marks added that for those dwellings which are connected to septic tanks, in his view, that is a bonus and for the proposed dwellings to be connected to septic tanks is a bonus as it is not putting more pressure on Anglian Water for the sewage work. He referred to the presentation screen and indicated an area which has been given permission for 115 houses and the water from those homes will be discharging directly into the mains system which is going to cause issues. Councillor Marks referred to the presentation screen and pointed out that the area is a disused mill which is being used as a garage and he added that he understands that, in time, it will be removed and become a barn conversion.
- The Legal Officer stated that the application is subject to an objection from Natural England, and the habitats regulations requires that a planning authority has to conduct a screening exercise considering the ecological information that it is provided with. He added that as a result of the screening exercise it then must undertake an appropriate assessment as there are the SPA and SSI areas nearby, however, at the current time, members do not have any environmental information to support the application or any ecological information. The Legal Officer explained that if members are minded to approve the application, the habitat regulations would prevent an approval from being granted in the absence of ecological information. He explained that it would not only be a breach of guidance, but it would also be a breach of the regulations and as a result would mean it is an unlawful decision being taken against the regulations if approval were to be granted.
- Councillor Connor stated that as this application is for a PIP which is only concerned with land usage, the SSI and SPA can be considered at a later stage in the application process. The Legal Officer stated that is not correct as members are being asked today to determine an application in principle and conditions cannot be imposed on a PIP and even if they could it would not be possible to override the need to consider whether screening is

required. He added that members cannot grant permission and further down the line it may become apparent that there is going to be an adverse impact on the SSI or area of special conservation.

- Councillor Connor questioned that if the further detail does not meet the required specifications then it will not get built out anyway. The Legal Officer explained that the regulations stated that the Council does not grant a PIP application in the absence of any ecological supporting information. Matthew Leigh added that it is his understanding that the legislation is not solely based on planning and it is about any decision that the Council makes and it is the legislation which impacts on any decision that the Council makes. He added that the legislation imposes its own restrictions on planning outside of the normal decisions. The Legal Officer added that is correct and he is focussing on the application before members and the committee cannot lawfully grant the application but it can be deferred or refused but it cannot be granted otherwise it would be in breach of the regulations.
- Councillor Marks questioned that if the committee voted to defer the application it could be deferred on just the one item? The Legal Officer stated that technically yes, but the whole application would have to come back to members for reconsideration.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that there appears to be anomalies when considering PIP applications. The Legal Officer explained that he is advising the committee that English Nature have pointed out that the committee do not have the ecological information before them to make a decision in principle to approve the application. He added that if the applicant supplies the missing information then English Nature may then be happy but at the current time the information is not present.
- Councillor Connor stated that the Legal Officer has advised the committee that they can refuse or defer the application based on the legal advice provided.
- Councillor Benney expressed the opinion that based on the legal advice provided the application should be deferred in order to receive the ecological information and he questioned whether it can just be deferred on that aspect. The Legal Officer clarified that the application cannot be split into different elements for deferral and the application needs to be deferred in its entirety.
- Councillor Mrs French questioned whether there is going to be a timescale added to this application to allow the applicant to provide the missing information? Matthew Leigh explained that the advice that he would give the committee would be not to place a restriction on a deferral because if there is an issue to be resolved then that needs to be overcome.
- Councillor Murphy requested clarification that the advice that members are being given is to defer the application. Councillor Connor confirmed that is correct.

It was proposed by Councillor Murphy to refuse the application, which did not receive a seconder and, therefore, this proposal failed.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Marks and agreed that the application be DEFERRED for the applicant to provide ecological information.

(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Marks declared, in accordance with Paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he has been lobbied on this application. He further declared, in accordance with Paragraph 14 of the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters, that he is a member of Manea Parish Council but takes no part in planning)

(Councillor Murphy declared that he knows the agent but is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

P93/25

F/YR25/0802/PIP

**LAND NORTH WEST OF 176 HIGH ROAD ACCESSED FROM HASOCK HILL
DROVE, GOREFIELD
PERMISSION IN PRINCIPLE FOR 9 X DWELLINGS**

Danielle Brooke presented the report to members and drew attention to the update report that had been circulated.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Councillor Lorena Hodgson of Gorefield Parish Council. Councillor Hodgson explained that she is the Chairman of Gorefield Parish Council and she has lived in the village for 25 years whilst other councillors have lived there all their lives. She stated that the Parish Council support the officer's recommendation of refusal as per the executive summary in relation to location, land and the number of dwellings.

Councillor Hodgson stated that the location is in the open countryside and Hassock Hill Drove is a 60mph road, with the site having been a horse field for at least the last 25 years since she has known it, with flooding in that end and there is always a big pool there. She stated that the site is located outside of the Council's own Local Plan and is located in the highest flood level, with Anglian Water having commented on sewage and surface water and, in her view, it relates to the flood zone, and the water needs to go somewhere.

Councillor Hodgson referred to the issue of individual cess pits, which if you have got 14 houses means there will be a lot of tractors coming to collect a lot of sewage and the waste plants attributed to the houses are going to be small and will require regular emptying. She stated that the reason the application is before the committee is due to the letters of support and they refer to the proposal improving the street scene, infill, vitality, viability and the local economy, but at 9.4 of the report there is no previous improvement when that has been brought up in the past and those who are supporting the application are not supporting it with any planning consideration as referenced earlier.

Councillor Hodgson made the point that Gorefield is a small village in the Local Plan and the threshold has already been breached from 33 dwellings and now there are 85 already further into the village nearby with the five that are being built now which are already causing problems as they are large houses and access is already a problem as well as speeding cars. She explained that was approved last year and the Parish Council also objected to that application for the same reasons as today and they were disappointed with that decision last year because they have seen that the problems that they had objected to have now come true.

Councillor Hodgson made the point that the application is for nine dwellings but with the inclusion of the other five dwellings that will mean that there are 14 dwellings. She expressed the view that the sequential test should be district wide, but it is not and, in her view, that makes a difference as there are plenty of other places that can take development.

Councillor Hodgson added that she finds it interesting that the application amounts to 18 dwellings per hectare as locally it is 3.2 one side of the road and 8 to the other and density is part of the consideration for planning in principle applications. She stated that the Gorefield village sign was moved last year by one of the developers for the recent development, but it was right at the edge of the village with a factory opposite.

Councillor Hodgson highlighted that the view for people all coming out onto that road is a factor as the road is bouncy and visibility to the left will be difficult and using the crossroads will also be

problematic. She made the point that the committee have refused other applications with less issues than this application has and she asked the committee to consider refusing the application.

Members received a presentation, in accordance with the public participation procedure, from Matthew Hall, the agent. Mr Hall explained that the site has been in the applicant's family for over 50 years, which also used to include 167 High Road, which was sold a while ago, and has not been used as agricultural land for over 20 years and he referred to the presentation screen and pointed out the site which he considers to be part of Gorefield. He referred to Policy LP12 of the Local Plan where there are properties all at the front that are not shown on the map that were approved and he referred to policy LP16d which refers to making a positive contribution to the area.

Mr Hall stated that the site to the south was given planning approval by the committee and works have commenced on those plots which have all been sold with one already being built out, with these properties being approved in 2023 in Flood Zone 3 and they have been sold as people want to live there. He explained that he has reviewed the highway comments with the applicant and they are fully aware that a speed survey would need to be undertaken for the site and they will engage with a highways consultant to consider a possible reduction in the speed limit.

Mr Hall made the point that it is an indicative arrangement which has been submitted, and the Planning Officer has referred to that in her presentation, and the layout does show members what might be allowed on this site if it is approved, with there being more than adequate access within the site for a bin lorry, parking, turning, a fire engine and to exit in a forward gear within the site. He stated that one of the reasons for refusal is overdevelopment and the indicative proposal he has submitted for nine dwellings clearly shows that all those properties would have much more than a third garden area, adequate parking and be a mixture of properties.

Mr Hall referred to an earlier application in Doddington where it was considered by officers to be inefficient use of land, but with this application it is over development and there was a time where the ratio was 30 dwellings per hectare, but this is obviously a lot a lot less. He referred to the presentation screen and highlighted the site in red, and pointed out that to the east, north and south there a number of properties right next to this site, directly to the south a site was approved in 2023, and all of the properties have been sold, making the point that it is up to the members to decide whether the proposal forms part of the built-up form of Gorefield.

Mr Hall added that to the west of Hassock Hill Road it is open Fen land, even to the south here there are factory buildings, and dwellings all continuous to the east. He explained that, during the application process, the applicant was proactive and he provided an email which was sent to officers from Jonathan Lewis, Chief Executive Officer of Diamond Learning Partnership Trust and read from this e-mail which stated "the heads have forwarded me your latest email and ask me to respond. You'll understand this is a tricky situation for us to work in. So, I think the planning application and any support for the school need to be separated. However, if it's helpful, I thought it might be sensible to point you towards the document below on the County Council's website that shows in the future we are likely to have a falling pupil role and therefore growth in the area would help ensure we can continue to provide the high quality education we want for the community. You can open the document etc. the building is in a poor state of repair through age, not neglect and some much-needed investment required."

Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen which showed a table of data taken from the County Council website and that information was provided by the applicant and it shows for 2024 to 2025 total school places are 100 for Gorefield Primary School then numbers decrease between 2029 to 2034 from 100 to 84, with in the small print it states that major changes in future house building will also impact intake and cohort changes. He stated that there is an opportunity here, where a development such as the proposal with a mixture of homes, could support this school.

Members asked Mr Hall the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that this is a planning in principle application for nine dwellings and if it is approved, they do not have to supply any section 106 contributions. She added that she has listened to the point made concerning the school and stated that she is unsure whether those figures provided would be correct. Councillor Mrs French added that the speed reduction is badly needed, and she asked whether the two houses at the top form part of the ownership of this site or is a separate applicant? Mr Hall referred to the presentation screen and explained that the properties just below the red line to the south were owned by this applicant and he sold all those plots off. He added that he did formerly own those five plots and he has sold all of them off. Councillor Mrs French made the point that it appears it was the applicant's whole site which then makes the number of dwellings 11 which would then make it subject to Section 106 contributions.
- Councillor Benney questioned whether the applicant intends to provide anything to the school to help with the poor state of repair? Mr Hall explained that the applicant has spoken to the school and Jonathan Lewis, the Chief Executive Officer, has responded. He added that a speed reduction has been discussed and as Councillor Mrs French has stated that if the application is approved then it would be necessary to look at affordable housing and Section 106 contributions which he would be happy to go to the school and for an amount to be agreed with officers.

Members asked officers the following questions:

- Councillor Mrs French stated that she was under the impression that the number of dwellings was 11 but Mr Hall has confirmed that it is 14 and, therefore, that means it is now subject to Section 106 and affordable housing contributions, and she asked officers for clarification. Matthew Leigh explained that, when considering planning in principle (PIP) applications and legislation, if it is seen that an applicant has intentionally split a site to avoid financial contributions the Council can either refuse or seek additional contributions. He added that as this is a PIP, additional contributions cannot be sought because there is no legal mechanism in which to do so. Matthew Leigh explained that that there is case law on this aspect which looks at matters such as ownership, whether it could be classed as one development or was it one planning unit, which is more complex and there is a requirement to actually look at this in a whole way and assess the planning balance. He expressed the opinion that if members are concerned about this, he would advise that the best thing the committee can do is to defer it on this one item and officers can bring back a supplementary report that explains the case law, which will give officers time to look into this point and provide members with some information.
- Councillor Mrs French referred to the earlier application in Berryfield where there are 15 additional dwellings and not one penny towards any kind of affordable home or Section 106. She expressed the view that it appears that there is a policy for one application and there is another policy for another one and the planning policies appear to be contradicting each other. Matthew Leigh stated that they are not contradicting each other, and the policy acknowledges when a scheme is not viable and it is evidenced and independently reviewed then the NPPF accepts that there may be times where contributions are not sought. He added that the Council are trying to work with statutory consultees to have a better understanding of the harm that has happened from this ongoing shortfall in contributions. Matthew Leigh added that Full Council has now agreed to move forward on a new Local Plan and as part of that officers will be looking to bring forward an IDP (Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and other aspects which will give officers a lot more information and will actually be infinitely more helpful for officers to advise members and come to recommendations on viability. He explained that when considering this application there is no viability in front of the committee because that has not been looked at.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that there will be no new Local Plan until at least 2027/28 and it will not resolve the applications that are being submitted. Matthew Leigh stated that the IDP will help because that will give officers evidence and it is the evidence base which is needed. He added going forward as soon as any application is submitted it will mean that officers will be able to be a lot stricter because the evidence based on the new Local Plan is

still material consideration.

- Councillor Benney asked for confirmation as to whether a Section 106 Agreement can be undertaken in conjunction with a PIP and he was advised that you cannot. He added that if it came back in as a full application then if it was felt at that stage with the information provided, an assessment could be made as to whether there are any 106 contributions from that. He added that there is a live document within the Council that says that north of the A47 contributions do not need to be provided. Matthew Leigh stated that this document is no longer valid as this was an evidence base for the previous plan and the evidence basis for the new Local Plan is a material consideration, they are not policies but if a new housing needs assessment is undertaken and the evidence shows that there is a need for four bed houses or a need for one bed houses or whatever a new housing needs assessment would help the Council change the housing mix it was looking for. Matthew Leigh added that when considering infrastructure delivery, if information arises that shows that certain areas have a unbelievable shortfall in education or NHS and schemes in that area are not able to be self-sustaining in relation to contributions, it is much more likely that they will be refused because there is clear demonstrable harm whereas at the moment the IDP is relatively out of date itself.
- Councillor Benney stated that with this application as a PIP, whether it has got five houses or 15 houses on it, it does not make any difference at this stage, and it will be dealt with in a later application that follows on from this. Matthew Leigh explained that there is a cap on the number of dwellings that you can submit in a PIP and that goes hand in hand with the guidance on NPPF in relation to majors because of that requirement. He explained that the issue with this application is to ascertain whether or not arguably they have intentionally split the site and provided two different schemes and that is what Councillor Mrs French has asked. Matthew Leigh explained that is something that could be used as a reason to recommend refusal on a PIP if committee think that actually the site could accommodate more or that they have brought forward two schemes that are separate. He added that if members accept this is nine dwellings and do not look any deeper then that is the end of the matter but if members recommend approval and go against officer's recommendation and approve the scheme, Councillor Mrs French has raised an issue that has not formed a consideration and he explained that he is not comfortable in really going into too much detail on the specifics of this application because information is not before members as a committee.
- Councillor Marks stated that the gentleman has sold some plots but it is not known what has happened historically or what could happen in the future. Matthew Leigh stated that is correct to some extent but there is case law in relation to certain matters that mean that is not the case and there is case law that says if you split a site consciously then that should be read as one site irrespective of the number being considered.
- The Legal Officer stated that site aggregation is a known issue, a known problem for most planning authorities and he has not looked into this in detail either and he explained that if members are concerned that is what has happened with this application then it should be deferred so that officers can give proper advice when it is reconsidered.
- Councillor Marks stated that the committee are considering the application before them and if it is felt that there is some underhand action which has gone on behind the scenes previously then surely that is for Legal and Planning Officers to consider and, in his opinion, the committee should move forward with the application.
- Councillor Mrs French stated that she went to the application site and from what she saw and read in the report she would have agreed to go with the officer's recommendation to refuse but considering the houses that are already there along with the two being finished off, the proposed nine dwellings, in her opinion, will finish off that part of the village. She added that next to that there is another dwelling so it could be classed as an infill.

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

- Councillor Marks expressed the opinion that there has been a great deal of focus on historic matters in relation to the site and members need to consider what is proposed in front of

them and whether it is acceptable or not. He added that there has been some properties sold off previously, but that along with more houses will probably enhance the area.

Councillor Marks made the point that the report from the school makes interesting reading, and there are local facilities which need supporting so he is minded to grant the application.

- Councillor Benney stated that he was in support of the other houses and when he visited the site he was really surprised how nice they look and nice houses on the entrance to a village sets the scene for the village and the houses that are being built there look really nice. He stated that the application that is in front of committee is what members should be focussing on and Section 106 agreements cannot be tied to a PIP and if it comes back in with a later application with speed reductions introduced here he thinks it is only right, but planning is about land usage. Councillor Benney added that there is community benefit which comes with the application when considering the school numbers and the school needs support as the numbers are projected to fall and the only way the school number are likely to improve is to build houses and bring people here. He added that schools need to be retained as they are a major part of any development in any town or village and if you do not put houses there, schools will close and all the children in the village will end up being bussed off to somewhere else like Wisbech. Councillor Benney stated that the Parish Councillor stated that Gorefield has been overdeveloped as it was ear marked for 33 and it has got 85, yet the school numbers are falling still and that does not make sense in his view. He added that the school is a major part of an area and once a school is lost, it will never return and, in his opinion, he thinks the people of Gorefield deserve this to see the village grow, keep the pub open if it has one and the shop open.
- Councillor Connor stated that he likes to see villages grow by keeping local facilities open and he added that other villages have suffered as they have lost so many of their facilities. He added that the speed reduction is also a benefit to be considered, and Councillor Mrs French stated that cannot be included under a PIP. Matthew Leigh stated that Councillor Mrs French has suggested that there are material considerations that weigh in favour and as this is a PIP, it has to be looked at just on land use as to whether it is acceptable or not.
- Councillor Mrs French stated if the application is approved, when it goes for outline reserved matters then the fact of keeping the school open is a community benefit by keeping it open.
- Councillor Benney stated that the map demonstrates that the application is infill development as it is in Hassock Hill Drove which is a defining boundary line. He added that if you accept that this is a boundary line then it is not in the open countryside and is within the village of Gorefield.

Proposed by Councillor Mrs French, seconded by Councillor Benney and agreed that the application be GRANTED against officer's recommendation.

Members did not support the officer's recommendation of refusal as they feel that the community benefit of trying to keep the school open outweighs any objection and they do not consider the application to be over development but a good use of land.

(Councillor Benney declared that the agent has undertaken work for Chatteris Town Council and himself personally, but he is not pre-determined and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Murphy declared that he knows the agent, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)

(Councillor Purser declared that the agent has undertaken work for him, but he is not pre-determined, and will consider the application with an open mind)