

HOUGHTON AND WYTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the **Parish Council Meeting** held on Wednesday 6 November 2019, 7:30pm

Present: Cllr R Baxendale (Chair) Cllr D Bonny
 Cllr P Boothman Cllr M Curley
 Cllr N Elborn Cllr B Gilmour
 Cllr Mr D Keane Cllr C Spearing

There were also two members of the public present

ACTION

<p>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from C Cllr Mr I Bates and D Cllr Mr D Dew. The resignation of Cllr Steve Hodgson was noted. The councillors expressed their regret at his decision and respected the reasons that led to it. Mr Hodgson was thanked for the work he had done for the community while on the Parish Council.</p>	
<p>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>3. PUBLIC COMMENT A member of the public suggested that a tree was planted in the Wildflower garden, behind the Tennis Courts, in memory of ex-Tree Warden, Molly Gilbert. He also suggested that the plaque denoting the Rowan tree planted when Mrs Gilbert retired needs some attention and could be made more prominent.</p>	
<p>4. MINUTES RESOLVED: The minutes of the Houghton & Wyton Parish Council meeting of 2 October 2019 were approved. Proposed: Cllr Spearing; Seconded: Cllr Gilmour. For: 7, Abstentions: 1</p>	
<p>5. MATTERS ARISING The picnic table, bought with a donation from the WI, has been assembled and is on the Pavilion patio. This will be moved to its final position in the spring. The WI were thanked for this useful addition to the Playing Field. The WI would like to attach a plaque to the table, which will be arranged in the future. The contract for the remedial work at the play area has been let. The triangle of land at the junction of Huntingdon Road and the A1123 was sold before it got to auction. Cllr Elborn suggested that CCC are contacted about getting a group together to tidy up the area south of this area at the village entrance. It was agreed that C Cllr Bates would be asked for advice.</p>	RB
<p>6. DISTRICT AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS REPORTS D Cllr Keane reported that HDC has had to reorganise some of its meetings due to the recently called Parliamentary Election. HDC is planning its budgets etc for next year.</p>	
<p>7. RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S REPORT 7.1 To authorise payments due RESOLVED: All payments due be authorised. Proposed: Cllr Spearing; Seconded: Cllr Boothman. All in favour</p>	Clerk
<p>7.2. Precept request and draft budget 2020-21 There was discussion about the level of reserves that the Parish Council should hold. It was agreed that it was prudent to ensure that the reserves are sufficient to cover at least the amount of loan still owing. It was agreed that grants must be sought to allow projects to be carried out where possible. The draft budget will be subject to further review and discussed at the January Parish Council meeting. RESOLVED: Due to an increase in day-to-day running costs and payroll and</p>	Clerk

pensions, to aim towards a balanced budget, the precept will be increased by just under 5% per household. This will be calculated when the tax base is known. Proposed: Cllr Bonny; Seconded: Cllr Boothman. All in favour

7.3. Office Rental Increase

The Council was satisfied with the answers it received to queries about the increase in the rent. This is justified by increasing energy costs. However, the Council will suggest that the building can be made more energy efficient and look at their suppliers. An option of fitting 'smart meter sockets' in the office will be looked at. The rental payment will be added to the payments for December.

Clerk

8. PLANNING MATTERS

8.1.1. Detailed planning permission for residential development of 595 dwellings (C3) including 193 dwellings of retirement accommodation; 1,668 square metres of employment (B1,B2); a neighbourhood centre 1,227 sqm including shops, services (A1-A5); a community hub incorporating health uses (D1,D2) 1,935 sqm; open space, play areas, recreation facilities and landscaping; access improvements including new access points to the A141; associated road network and haul routes; footpath/cycle link to Wyton on the Hill; all associated ground works and infrastructure including two storm water pumping stations and foul water pumping stations; and 2. Outline planning permission for up to 105 Dwellings (C3) including 30 custom-build dwellings and 57 dwellings of retirement accommodation; 150 dwellings of extra care accommodation and 68 care beds (C2); up to 3,954 sqm of employment (B1,B2); up to 522sqm. Public House (A4); open space and play facilities including pavilion building; associated infrastructure including construction of new roads, hard and soft landscaping, creation of SuDs and haul routes. Land On Western Side Of RAF Wyton Airfield Sawtry Way Wyton Ref. No: 19/01836/FUL

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

There is an absence of Development Planning policy for support of a new strategic housing site in this area.
RAF Wyton as a strategic site was removed from the Draft Local Plan and the final version of the Local Plan was only adopted in May 2019.
The CPIER report which sets the strategy for development for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority prioritises development in Cambridge and Greater Cambridgeshire and advises against isolated settlements.
The reduction in size of the settlement proposed, from 4500 homes that had been considered and rejected, only serves to make the proposal less sustainable.
Consideration is still being given to Marshall's Aerospace relocating to Wyton Airfield and to other non-housing alternatives such as green energy production etc. Large parts of RAF Wyton are technically greenfield. New infrastructure in the form of the new A14 section and intersection with the old A14 could deliver a strategic location for new housing south of the river. This could allow previously developed land at RAF Wyton to return to or continue to be farmed.
The application only allows for 2 new bus stops as a meaningful public transport. It will be reliant on off-site schooling, the GP surgery and Pharmacy which will not be viable with only on site customers, the retail shop, with this limited population, would struggle to survive.
We see no statutory policy evidence for 'a common vision for the wider development Garden Village which has been bought into by the Combined

Clerk

Authority, Huntingdonshire District Council, DIO, and Crest'.

The C&PCA have still to complete the Non-Statutory Spatial Framework Phase 2, to help determine housing need beyond 2036 and how that might be delivered. The C&PCA Draft Local Transport Plan has only been through its first stage consultation. A transport study designed to consider alternatives for this particular area, has still to be commissioned. It is too early to determine whether there is a viable and sustainable solution.

A holistic, master planning approach to need and solution should be considered before significant development proposals such as this are determined. A piecemeal approach could end up with unintended consequences.

For these reasons we recommend the District Council rejects the application before them as there is currently no Objectively Assessed Need, no development policy supporting this as a strategic housing site, and the information required to assess and make a considered judgement with regard to development on this site, as specified in section 4.24 of the Local Plan is not currently available.

This planning application would result in the creation of an unsustainable, isolated settlement, disconnected from major infrastructure and market towns, not able to fully integrate with wider community.

Proposed: Cllr Boothman; Seconded: Cllr Bonny. For: 7; Abstentions: 1.

8.2. Change of use of an area of land previously used as paddocks, in association with the agricultural activities in the complex, to an outdoor storage area. New Manor Farm Sawtry Way Wyton Huntingdon PE28 2DY
Ref. No: 19/02107/FUL

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

Paragraph 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 states '*The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up to date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted*' (emphasis added).

We have sought legal opinion and for reasons set out below cannot see that the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036, and especially HLP 10 and HLP 19 of that plan, nor the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan 2018, notably HWNP 15 support this development.

- a) Fails Huntingdonshire Local Plan HLP 19 fundamental requirement - to have a genuine need to be located in the countryside
- b) The development would lead to loss of High-Quality Agricultural land
- c) The development would lead to loss of agricultural operations remaining as the dominant land use
- d) This development is an ill-conceived Farm Diversification Scheme
- e) The development fails Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan Policy HWNP 15. HWNP 15 states '*expanding businesses will be supported where appropriate to their rural setting and respect the character of the village, the countryside and wider landscape.*' (emphasis added).

HWNP 15 10.2 states '*in particular in a rural location, it is considered most appropriate to encourage small scale businesses which encourage and promote tourism and rural enterprise generally and/or benefit the local community.*'

The policy specifically uses the words 'encourage small scale businesses which

encourage and promote tourism and rural enterprise' – key words when considering the business expansion of Mick George Ltd which is a large scale, non rural, national concern and at odds with development in this countryside location.

Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan is very specific about valid concerns raised when formulating policy and restrictions that need to be applied to address these concerns at specific locations within the parish. HWNP 10.6 it states 'One caveat is the **concern over sprawling development along the main routes that surround the built up area – namelythe B1090**' (emphasis added).

It goes on to suggest that this would not be the best location for business expansion and development if it leads to further sprawl.

f) Conclusions:

In our considered opinion, any further expansion of this type of business operation needs to be located in one of the districts designated Established Employment Areas (LP18) and we therefore recommend refusal.

Proposed: Cllr Boothman; Seconded: Cllr Gilmour. All in favour

8.3. Proposed alpaca, lambing and cattle shed New Manor Farm Sawtry Way Wyton Huntingdon PE28 2DY Ref. No: 19/02108/FUL

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

a) Inconsistent and poor justification of need.

On 19 September 2019, the applicant was granted permission to change the use of an agricultural building on the east side of Mere Way (and connected through land ownership directly to the latest site in question) into residential accommodation, (19/01328/PMBPA). This was justified due to the reduction in agricultural practices on the applicant's land.

Now prime agricultural land needs to be lost to build another new building to support agricultural business.

A previous application to construct a cattle shed (17/01217/FUL) was withdrawn following questions about its size and why a redundant existing building (for which an application (17/01303/FUL) had been submitted to convert it to an industrial tool shed), had not been considered.

A single application for conversion to a tool storage shed was resubmitted (17/01791/FUL) and approved in December 2017, the applicant arguing that without change of use the building would otherwise be redundant, as the rural enterprise was no longer viable.

The planning system was not designed to be taken advantage of in this way.

b) Risk and consequences of future failure

In the last 2 years, this farm has applied for and had approved 5 buildings/pieces of land to be changed from their original purpose and away from rural enterprise, with a sixth Change of use of land previously used as paddocks in association with agricultural activities in the complex, to an outdoor storage area (19/02107/FUL), currently awaiting approval.

The numerous change of use approvals has already challenged the rural nature of the area and putting in danger the risk of creating an unintended / unplanned new industrial zone which is against both newly adopted Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

c) Expansion of the built area of the site, massing of development and breaking of the building line.

Clerk

Clerk

The scale of this new building adds to the inappropriate massing and concentration of development occurring in this rural location. See Section 10.6 and policy 15 of the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan 2018 (HWNP).

d) Views from houses to the south of the site

The Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan describes a vision for the village and sets objectives which make much of the special landscape that surrounds the village and need to protect it for residents and the tourism that it helps generate. The following sections of the HWNP refer: Section 3.4, HWNP Objective 2, HWNP Policy 17.

Views from the south from houses situated along the A1123 will be compromised Section 12 of the HWNP defines Character Areas and 12.11 describes how development either within or outside of the Character Area needs to be viewed and the need for a development to have 'due regard' for the Character Area.

e) Building design and scale – unfit for purpose.

The proposed shed is 8.5m tall and having a footprint of 1800 sq m. We are told that aspects of the design will be 'similar to what are now building supply, vehicle and tool storage buildings on site'.

The design of the proposed building does not appear to take into consideration the health and welfare needs of cattle as per guidance from Defra or the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB). Guidance highlights the accommodation must control three key environmental parameters: moisture management, fresh air and air speed; we do not believe this building will meet these requirements.

There may also be a potentially dangerous impact on human and animal health when it comes to removing slurry from the area and therefore be a breach of [Welfare of Farmed Animals \(England\) Regulations 2000](#) (S.I. 2000 No. 1870)

No explanation has been provided of how this will be dealt with, or any written confirmation that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists as per H&WNP 14 Flooding and Drainage.

f) Availability of land for grazing cattle:

Whilst we support the idea of more cattle returning to the area the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan suggests that summer pasture land locally is already at a premium.

This proposal removes more top quality grass land from the area. Refer to HWNP 5.44 Protection of agricultural and grazing land, HWNP 5.47 and *Policy HWNP7*
Proposed: Cllr Boothman; Seconded: Cllr Gilmour. All in favour

8.4. Replacement window to the rear Stuart House Huntingdon Road Wyton
Huntingdon PE28 2AD Ref. No: 19/01857/LBC

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **APPROVED** as this is necessary work to maintain this dwelling.

Proposed: Cllr Spearing; Seconded: Cllr Bonny. All in favour

8.5. Third River Crossing/ Transport Study consultation

A meeting has been requested with Rowland Potter at the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. There has been no response yet, this will be followed up via the County Councillor.

8.6. Other Planning Matters/Decisions

HDC are holding workshops at several locations on the Local Plan. It was agreed that councillors should attend the one in St Ives on 4 December if possible.

Attendance at the meeting in Huntingdon on 29 Jan 2020 may also be possible.

Clerk

RB

Clerk

<p>All councillors and the Clerk will be booked on to the workshop in St Ives. The Parish Council meeting due to be held on Wed 4 Dec will be moved to Thurs 5 Dec and re-located to The Pavilion.</p> <p>In response to a letter about lack of consultation on various types of permitted development applications, HDC planning have stated that there is no legal requirement to consult Parish Councils on these applications. This will be taken up with D Cllr Dew.</p>	
<p>9. PROJECT UPDATES</p> <p>9.1. Footpath – Victoria Crescent to car park</p> <p>A start date has not yet been received from the contractor. It was agreed that the contractor would be contacted to insist on a start date and completion of the work by mid-December. If this is not forthcoming another contractor will be appointed.</p> <p>9.2. Houghton Cemetery Path</p> <p>The appointed contractor has confirmed they can start work on 18 Nov. Grants for cleaning the War Memorial will be investigated.</p> <p>Footpath 16 – both HDC and CCC deny ownership of this path and are unwilling to do any work on the path or trees along here. It is thought that CCC paid the majority of costs associated with the hard surfacing of the path. This will be investigated.</p> <p>9.3. Electric Vehicle charging points</p> <p>Cllr Elborn gave details to CCC of two suggested sites in the village for fitting these chargers to lampposts. CCC suggested this would be 'challenging' and yet are looking at trialling this. Cllr Elborn will ask if we can be part of this trial to move this project forward. Installing bollards or new supply boxes would be more expensive. It was suggested that if invoicing for use of electricity was a problem, that CCC could run them and generate an income. This matter will be raised with C Cllr Bates.</p> <p>It was agreed that the status of the land adjacent to the church on Mill Street will be investigated, as this was suggested as a potential future charger site to serve residents here. It may also allow designated residents parking.</p>	<p>Clerk & DB</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>RB</p>
<p>10. PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE</p> <p>10.1. Tree Survey</p> <p>A quote has been received for the second phase of work recommended in the tree survey. This is due to be completed by Nov 2020 and the quote is valid until then. Cllr Curley will look for available grants.</p> <p>A quote has also been received for a survey of the closed churchyard of St Marys Church. The Church has agreed to remove the shoots at the base of the lime trees to enable a thorough survey to be done. A survey date will be confirmed when this work is complete; the surveyor will also be asked to quote for a survey of the trees on footpath 16 at the same time. Some of these trees have raised concern but ownership is unclear.</p> <p>A suggestion that residents could 'adopt' a tree and carry out minor care works such as cutting back ivy growth and reporting any concerns was well received. This will be further investigated in conjunction with the Timebank.</p> <p>Cllr Curley has contacted the football club to clarify the work needed to trees overhanging the touchline of their pitch.</p> <p>10.2. Cemetery Lych gate and entrance gates</p> <p>Grants for this work will be investigated. It was also noted that the height of the</p>	<p>MC</p>

<p>hedge at the front needs to be reduced.</p> <p>10.3. Local Highway Initiative funding application</p> <p>The application to reduce the speed limit on the A1123 has progressed to the second round. There will be a meeting in Feb 2020 when the Parish Council will be able to put its case and further evidence and answer questions on the project. Cllr Keane will ask Speedwatch to carry out a speed survey on the road.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>DK</p>
<p>11. POSTCODES FOR MEADOW LANES</p> <p>There are two roads in the parish called Meadow Lane. These roads are unconnected and yet have the same postcode. This causes residents problems with directing visitors or deliveries and is confusing for unfamiliar Royal Mail employees. The residents of the more southern Meadow Lane have drafted a letter to send to the Post Office asking them to change their postcode to help alleviate this problem.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The Parish Council support the actions of the residents of Meadow Lane (off Ansley Road), Houghton to change their postcode.</p> <p>Proposed: Cllr Bonny; Seconded: Cllr Gilmour. All in favour</p>	
<p>12. COMMEMORATION TREE FOR EX-TREE WARDEN</p> <p>It was agreed that a tree would be planted in an allocated space at Houghton Cemetery in memory of Mrs Gilbert. A Holly may be suitable, but advice will be taken from friends and relatives of Mrs Gilbert. It was agreed that the plaque at the tree planted on Mrs Gilbert's retirement as Tree Warden would be restored.</p>	<p>Clerk</p>
<p>13. FOOTBALL CLUB/PAVILION USE</p> <p>On two occasions this season the Football Club have failed to lock the Pavilion door after their use of the building. They have failed to respond formally to a letter from the Clerk. A further letter will be sent from the Parish Council Chair to represent the viewpoints of the councillors and outline the options which could be used to ensure more responsible behaviour. A Code of Conduct for all regular users of the facilities will be drafted.</p> <p>The Parish Clerk reported that a booking form will be sent to all Sports Clubs to complete with their annual fixtures. This will require them to state the times that they are using the pavilion for all activities, not just times of matches. It is hoped that this will give a clearer picture of when the Pavilion is in use and when available for other bookings. The Clerk will also monitor use of the Pavilion, and any use by the Clubs that is not booked with the Clerk will be charged at the standard rate, currently £10 an hour, in addition to their annual fee.</p>	<p>RB</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>14. CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>A communication about the national timetable for the 75th anniversary of VE Day celebrations in May 2020 was circulated. It was agreed that the British Legion were best placed to organise any events in the village. They will be contacted.</p> <p>It was also suggested that a tree be planted to commemorate this anniversary.</p> <p>A young resident has asked to discuss the possibility of having a skatepark in the village. He was unable to attend the meeting so a letter will be sent in response.</p> <p>Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority are running a survey on use of buses in the area. This has been advertised and is available at www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/futurebus or by calling 07377 001512 until 15 December.</p> <p>A paper by Friends of the Earth on how town and parish councils can take action on the climate and nature emergency was circulated to councillors.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>RB</p>

<p>Information on grants available to get gigabit broadband for homes and businesses was circulated. More information can be found at https://gigabitvoucher.culture.gov.uk/rural/</p> <p>The Bowls Club contacted the Parish Council about the request from Feast Week to install a permanent cold room in the Sports Compound as they had not been contacted by Feast Week. The Parish Council has had no further contact from any sports club or Feast Week and will make enquiries.</p>	RB & Clerk
<p>15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>Cllr Keane mentioned that Hemingford Grey Parish Council and the Scouts are going to build bird boxes to put up. He suggested this might be a good idea in the village to involve other groups</p> <p>Cllr Curley mentioned that the Woodland Trust are giving away trees to be planted and suggested that the school and pre-school may be interested.</p> <p>A question was raised about the mention in the draft budget of a management plan for the Thicket woodland. It was explained that the chance for the Parish Council to be involved in the management of this area, that sits in our parish and is managed by HDC, was suggested a few years ago. With the development on St Ives Golf Course and proposed country park along the Thicket footpath, this area may be put under more pressure and the Parish Council want to ensure this unique woodland is not lost. There are no firm plans to take over management at the moment.</p> <p>Some residents have mentioned to councillors that they believe there is human excrement at the edge of the footpath leading to the layby on the A1123. This will be brought to the attention of HDC Environmental Health.</p>	DK MC Clerk
<p>16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting will be on Thursday 5 December 2019, 7:30pm, The Sports Pavilion, Laughtons Lane, Houghton.</p>	

Signed:..... Date:

Appendix 1

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council's response to the following planning application.

1. Detailed planning permission for residential development of 595 dwellings (C3) including 193 dwellings of retirement accommodation; 1,668 square metres of employment (B1,B2); a neighbourhood centre 1,227 sqm including shops, services (A1-A5); a community hub incorporating health uses (D1,D2) 1,935 sqm; open space, play areas, recreation facilities and landscaping; access improvements including new access points to the A141; associated road network and haul routes; footpath/cycle link to Wyton on the Hill; all associated ground works and infrastructure including two storm water pumping stations and foul water pumping stations; and 2. Outline planning permission for up to 105 Dwellings (C3) including 30 custom-build dwellings and 57 dwellings of retirement accommodation; 150 dwellings of extra care accommodation and 68 care beds (C2); up to 3,954 sqm of employment (B1,B2); up to 522sqm. Public House (A4); open space and play facilities including pavilion building; associated infrastructure including construction of new roads, hard and soft landscaping, creation of SuDs and haul routes. Land On Western Side Of RAF Wyton Airfield Sawtry Way Wyton Ref. No: 19/01836/FUL

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

There is an absence of Development Planning policy for support of a new strategic housing site in this area.

High level planning policy is very up to date for Huntingdonshire. The Planning Inspector agreed to removal of RAF Wyton as a strategic site from the Draft Plan last year and the final version of the Local Plan was only adopted in May this year, so is barely 6 months old.

Considerable justification for this development is made by reference to the CPIER report which sets the strategy for development for the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority. However, CPIER prioritises development in and around Cambridge and Greater Cambridgeshire (defined in CPIER as comprising the City and parts of South Cambs – not Huntingdonshire) and favouring densification. CPIER advises against isolated settlements (the so called 'Dispersal Strategy').

Nothing has fundamentally changed since RAF Wyton was considered and rejected as a strategic site for the Local Plan.

There is no new Objectively Assessed Need to 2036 for a further Strategic Site within the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. Furthermore, the reduction in size of the settlement proposed from the 4500 homes that had been considered and rejected previously, whilst still a significant development, now only serves to make the proposal even less sustainable.

The Local Plan does remain open to development considerations for the whole site – however this now includes a study regards the so called Third River Crossing which has yet to be completed, the consideration of Marshall's Aerospace relocating as well as other non-housing alternatives such as green energy production etc. It must also take

into account the extent to which large parts of RAF Wyton are technically greenfield as well as the now obvious opportunities provided by valuable new infrastructure in the form of the new A14 section and intersection with the old A14 to deliver a strategic location for new housing development south of the river, as suggested by Mott Macdonald in the scenario planning Strategic Transport Study used for the Local Plan. Note the requirement to take green field land from between and around the A14 infrastructure could be mitigated by allowing previously developed land at RAF Wyton to return to or continue to be farmed.

This planning application smacks of development by stealth and taken on its own would result in the creation of an unsustainable, isolated settlement, disconnected from major infrastructure and market towns, not able to fully integrate with wider community.

The delivery of 2 new bus stops as a meaningful public transport, sustainable connection with the market towns is woefully inadequate and will force up car usage. Equally the application states it will be reliant on already over stretched off-site schooling, on building a GP surgery and Pharmacy which will not be viable without pulling in/dislodging the majority of its customer base from off site (having a capacity for 10,800 patients) as well as a retail shop which first-hand experience of our own village shop suggests that with this limited population base, it too would struggle to survive, since unlike our own, it would not have 150,000 plus day visitors p.a. to help it.

Contrast this with its sister site at RAF Alconbury - a genuinely strategic development site, designated an Enterprise Zone, having genuine proximity to A1 and A14 roads, large enough for a retail park and school, properly thought through and planned linkage to connect by car, bike on foot with Huntingdon town centre plus masses of open green infrastructure. Originally it was also planned to incorporate a new railway station connecting to London.

The Design & Access Statement claims that *'There is a common vision for the wider development Garden Village which has been bought into by the Combined Authority, Huntingdonshire District Council, DIO, and Crest'*.

However, we can see no statutory policy evidence for this. Where is the strategic planning document supporting this common vision?

The C&PCA have still to complete the Non-Statutory Spatial Framework Phase 2, which will go some way to determining the housing need in the area beyond 2036 and how that might be delivered.

In the meantime, what we do know is that for any development to be sanctioned on RAF Wyton, it needs a master Plan, which considers the implications for wider area and does not take a piecemeal approach to development, otherwise we will end up with unintended consequences.

We urge the District Council to take heed of the newly adopted Local Plan where in section 4.24 it clearly states that after careful consideration full or indeed slower rates of development are 'not deliverable at this time' and that the Combined Authority are considering potential ways in which this could be overcome (always assuming it is found that there is a pressing housing need beyond the current OAN).

The C&PCA Draft Local Transport Plan has only just been through its first stage consultation and we await the next iteration before it is approved. A transport study contained in this LTP and designed to consider alternatives for this particular area, has still to be commissioned. Consequently, it is far too early to determine whether there is even a viable and sustainable solution, or whether some of the alternatives mentioned earlier may be found to deliver greater benefits and sustainability. Section 4.24 of the Local Plan goes on to state *'The environmental constraints to the delivery of any transport solution are also very challenging and will need to be fully addressed before substantial redevelopment could be brought forward.'*

This is referring to the wider impacts – particularly to the sensitive River Great Ouse valley and again points to a more holistic, master planning approach to need and solution being considered before significant development proposals such as this are determined.

For these reasons we recommend the District Council rejects the application before them as there is currently no Objectively Assessed Need, no development policy supporting this as a strategic housing site, and crucially the information required to assess and make a properly considered judgement with regard to significant development on this site, as specified in section 4.24 of the Local Plan is not currently available.

Appendix 2

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council's response to the following planning application.

Change of use of an area of land previously used as paddocks, in association with the agricultural activities in the complex, to an outdoor storage area.

New Manor Farm Sawtry Way Wyton Huntingdon PE28 2DY Ref. No: 19/02107/FUL

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

Paragraph 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 states *'The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up to date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted' (emphasis added).*

We have sought legal opinion and for reasons set out below cannot see that the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2036, and especially HLP 10 and HLP 19 of that plan, nor the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan 2018, notably HWNP 15 support this development.

1. Fails Huntingdonshire Local Plan HLP 19 fundamental requirement - to have a genuine need to be located in the countryside

1.1 HLP 19 opens with a statement setting out the overarching principle purpose of this policy. In other words, the basic rule that explains how the policy should be interpreted and applied.

It states in 6.19 that *the **purpose** of this policy is to promote a vibrant rural economy within the district's extensive countryside **to support businesses with a genuine need to be located in the countryside** (emphasis added).*

1.2 In respect of established rural businesses, the policy talks of businesses as defined as being either 'industrial, agricultural, tourism or service sectors', but importantly not

ignoring the fact that in all cases the overarching principle applies which means that for a development to be supported by this policy a 'genuine need' to be located in the countryside needs to be established.

1.3 Examples of industrial businesses with a genuine need to be located in the countryside are given in the Local Plan e.g. mineral extraction – where the industrial business has to be located where the minerals actually exist in the ground, or a food processing plant located where the food in question is grown.

1.4 HLP 6.22 puts this distinction well when it states '*the primary justification for employment related business development in the countryside is where either a rural location is essential for the successful operation of the business or is dependent upon the natural resources only available in limited locations*'. (emphasis added).

1.5 Breaking this down, Mick George Ltd, is a business which does fall into the category of an 'established industrial' business. As such the applicant has sought to justify expansion through the Design and Access statement accompanying the planning application, based on the grounds of employment related development and farm diversification.

1.6 Unfortunately, this fails the first test as technically speaking the nature of the business, Mick George Ltd being that of a haulage and supply of building materials and tools business, does not constitute a 'genuine need' to be located in the countryside as defined. Haulage and supply of building materials and tools is neither 'essential' nor 'dependent' upon a countryside location but rather only requires a building within the operating radius of where those vehicles or materials are required, and access to a good road, suitable for HGV's to navigate safely alongside other road users.

2. Loss of high quality agricultural land.

2.1 Policy HLP 10 The Countryside states *that all development in the countryside must:*

a) *seek to use land of lower agricultural value in preference to land of higher agricultural value:*

i) *avoiding the irreversible loss of the best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1 to 3a) where possible*

2.2 HLP 6.23 goes further by highlighting that *Huntingdonshire has large areas of the best and most versatile agricultural land which is of high value for food production and in most cases agricultural activity should be retained on those higher quality soils (emphasis added).*

2.3 HLP 6.23 also states that '*when considering the sustainability of the proposal, the value of the land for agriculture will be considered and areas of high-grade agricultural land should preferably be avoided*' (emphasis added).

2.4 The land in question is green field, an agricultural paddock area, absent of built structures, and of high-quality Grade 2 soils, so clearly of high agricultural value.

2.5 From the application we have no evidence that a more suitable location such as an Established Employment Area within the district with lower agricultural value has been considered as per the requirement set out in HLP 10.

3. Loss of agricultural operations remaining as the dominant land use

3.1 As previously mentioned, the Design & Access statement accompanying the application also justifies this proposal on grounds of farm diversification, a principle which is certainly supported by policy HLP 19.

3.2 However HLP 6.24 states that '*Farm diversification schemes may consist of non-agricultural commercial activity, schemes relating to new forms of agriculture or food*

processing of crops produced on the farm enterprise, however, agricultural operations should remain the dominant land-use' (emphasis added).

3.3 We believe that the dominance of agricultural operations is being threatened by over expansion and concentration on this site of non-agricultural/non-rural practices, in part from the granting of multiple change of use permissions (particularly for B2 Industrial Storage).

3.4 This is a concern not lost on the applicant themselves, who in a planning application submitted and also being considered by HDC at the same time as this outside storage proposal states '*this proposal (ref 19/02108/FUL Proposed alpaca, lambing and cattle shed) is considered to be essential development to maintain the agricultural aspect of New Manor Farm' (emphasis added).*

3.5 It seems that even the applicant can see that the agricultural and rural aspect of the area is in danger of being lost through the industrialisation from over development of storage and non-agricultural activities.

4. Ill-conceived Farm Diversification Scheme

4.1 HLP 6.24 goes on to say that to be supported '*well-conceived farm diversification schemes will be of an appropriate scale for the location and fit into the landscape.*' (emphasis added).'

4.2 HLP 6.25 states that '*The Council is supportive where farm diversification schemes are being promoted on a comprehensive basis to retain a viable agricultural unit by seeking additional incomes from other sources which still relate to countryside*' (emphasis added).'

4.3 We consider that this proposal, taken together with the existing development already on this site together and planning permission for a large new vehicle and building materials storage shed, is of an inappropriate scale for the location and beyond the sort of diversification envisaged by the policy of still relating to the countryside.

4.4 The erection of an 8ft high solid skin metal fence running along the B1090 towards St Ives and blocking off of views (particularly in autumn winter time) will have significant impact on the surrounding character, and only exacerbate the perception of a sprawling, concentrated mass of industrial development, not relating to the landscape, and failing the genuine need test to be located in the countryside.

5. Fails Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan Policies HWNP 15.

5.1 At this point it is worth reminding ourselves that Local Plan policy can only be considered to take precedence over a Neighbourhood Plan policy when, and only when, Local Plan policy has been adopted more recently than the Neighbourhood Plan policy and importantly is in direct conflict with the Local Plan policy in question (NPPF para 30).

5.2 The Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan is in complete harmony with the Local Plan in supporting business development that has a genuine need to be based in the countryside, and particularly in supporting policy HLP 19.

HWNP 15 states '*expanding businesses will be supported where appropriate to their rural setting and respect the character of the village, the countryside and wider landscape.*' (emphasis added).

5.3 NPPF dictates that where supportive, the Neighbourhood Plan should be used to add local context, grain and texture to the on the ground delivery of those Local Plan policies, especially where local caveats and restrictions have been highlighted and justified within a Neighbourhood Plan that has been tested, examined, approved and 'made' in law.

5.4 NPPF para 9 states *Planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstances into account (emphasis added)*. Local circumstances, it goes on to explain, which can be identified, examined, adopted and implemented when making planning decisions by following the Neighbourhood Plan policies.

5.5 NPPF 2019 para 13 states *'Neighbourhood Plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans or spatial development strategies; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies' (emphasis added)*.

5.6 NPPF 2019 para 29 states *'Neighbourhood Planning gives communities the power to develop and shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood Planning can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development' (emphasis added)*.

5.7 In this way, whilst supporting the Local Plan, particularly Policy HLP 19, the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan looks to shape the business expansion and development within the parish in a number of ways.

5.8 Firstly HWNP 15 10.2 states *'in particular in a rural location, it is considered most appropriate to encourage small scale businesses which encourage and promote tourism and rural enterprise generally and/or benefit the local community.'*

The policy specifically uses the words *'encourage small scale businesses which encourage and promote tourism and rural enterprise'* – key words when considering the business expansion of Mick George Ltd which is a large scale, non-rural, national concern and at odds with development in this countryside location.

5.9 Secondly, the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan is very specific about valid concerns raised when formulating policy and restrictions that need to be applied to address these concerns at specific locations within the parish. HWNP 10.6 it states *'One caveat is the **concern over sprawling development along the main routes that surround the built up area – namelythe B1090**' (emphasis added)*.

It goes on to suggest that this would not be the best location for business expansion and development if it leads to further sprawl.

5.10 This proposal for a large outside storage area would extend the developed footprint area of the site significantly, would be clearly visible and add to both the actual and perception of development sprawl.

5.11 Finally this scheme is also considered ill-conceived, because it does not relate to the countryside, but instead relates to the large new industrial storage facility (18/01742/FUL) yet to be built.

5.12 When the application for this new storage building was submitted, there was no mention of the need for an outside storage area, nor that that is was needed for the efficient running of the building. Hence it seems odd that were we considering a professional, well-conceived farm diversification scheme, such an allegedly important omission to the success of the venture would not have been made.

5.13 The planning permission for 18/01742/FUL was hotly contested at the time and for good planning reasons, but sadly the eventual approval seems to have been based upon a poor interpretation of HLP19 and denial of the overarching principle of the policy requiring 'genuine need' to be based in the countryside, as explained at the beginning of this submission.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 NPPF 2019 para 12 states *the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for*

decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up to date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted (emphasis added).

6.2 This proposal conflicts with strategic policy HLP 10, non-strategic policy HLP 19, and policy HWNP 15 hence NPPF para 12 applies.

6.3 Specifically this farm diversification scheme proposal is ill-conceived and should not be supported as it fails the fundamental test of HLP 19, requiring a genuine need for a countryside location; removes valuable green, field high grade, agricultural land from the area; risks further tipping of the balance away from predominantly rural activity on the site; is an in-appropriate development and use for the location; and will lead to unnecessary developmental sprawl further along the B1090 the concern for which is highlighted and constrained through Neighbourhood Plan policy HNWP 15.

6.4 In our considered opinion, any further expansion of this type of business operation needs to be located in one of the districts designated Established Employment Areas (LP18) and we therefore recommend refusal.

6.5 Moreover, in view of the number of planning applications submitted for this site and the threat of more to come, as confirmed by the applicant to this Council, this is a case which warrants a master plan approach to further development.

Appendix 3

Houghton & Wyton Parish Council's response to the following planning application.

Proposed alpaca, lambing and cattle shed New Manor Farm Sawtry Way Wyton
Huntingdon PE28 2DY Ref. No: 19/02108/FUL

RESOLVED: Houghton & Wyton Parish Council recommend that this application be **REFUSED** for the following reasons:

1. Inconsistent and poor justification of need.

Despite stating that agricultural activities are still undertaken within the complex, the planning history of the site shows how the applicant has recently made the case for numerous changes of use, away from rural enterprise/agricultural based activities towards building supplies, plant vehicle and tool storage. This latest application suggests that previous applications for change of use were based on a false premise that the agricultural/rural enterprise side of the business was in decline and lacking viability. In doing so the applicant has already persuaded the council to allow good agricultural land and buildings to be converted away from rural enterprise to mainly B2 storage, including erecting a new building for this sole purpose.

Only as recently as 19th September 2019, the applicant was granted permission to change the use of a perfectly serviceable agricultural building located on the east side of Mere Way (and connected through land ownership directly to the latest site in question) into residential accommodation (planning ref: 19/01328/PMBPA).

The rationale given at the time for this change of use as set out in the applicant's covering letter to the District Council dated 1st July 2019 stated (see attached):

'The building in question is no longer required for agricultural purposes and the applicant has recognised the opportunity to convert an otherwise redundant building into residential dwelling and garage. The applicant (who is the farm owner) has recently reduced the intensity of the activities at Houghton Hall Alpacas Ltd (including a vast reduction of the herd). Two agricultural storage buildings are located to the north-west of this building as well as a further unit to the north of the building in question which will

more than fulfil the herd management and storage requirements for the farm complex.
(emphasis added).

Only a month later on we are told that the agricultural business is now short of buildings which are 'essential to maintain the agricultural aspect of Manor Farm', hence prime agricultural land (currently open grassland paddock) needs to be lost to build another new building i.e. the alpaca, lambing and cattle shed and to complete an about turn to expand this side of the business.

A similar application to construct a cattle shed was previously submitted by the applicant on 6th June 2017 (17/01217/FUL) but then quickly withdrawn following comments questioning amongst other things, its size and why a so called redundant existing building for which an application (17/01303/FUL) which had been submitted just two weeks later on 21st June to convert it to an industrial tool shed, was not been considered.

Both these applications were withdrawn and a single application for conversion to a tool storage shed resubmitted (17/01791/FUL) and approved in December 2017, the applicant arguing that without change of use the building would otherwise be redundant, as the rural enterprise was no longer viable.

It is therefore particularly disappointing to now see the resubmission of this previous 2017 application for a new building and especially now that the existing buildings that could have been used have now received change of use.

The planning system was not designed to be taken advantage of in this way.

2. Risk and consequences of future failure

To have one building fail in its original purpose and therefore require change of use might be considered unfortunate, but in the last 2 years, this farm has applied for and had approved 5 buildings/pieces of land to be changed from their original purpose and away from rural enterprise, with a 6th Change of use of land previously used as paddocks in association with agricultural activities in the complex, to an outdoor storage area (19/02107/FUL), currently awaiting approval.

Hence given this trend, were the District Council to now approve a new building for agricultural use following an apparent about turn, it must carry a higher than normal level of risk.

Section 20. of the Design & Access statement underlines this concern and possibly points to the future where such a situation may arise. 'The development will support existing consented activities and possible future proposals in relation to diversification, making use of land, which could have otherwise been made redundant, in a more sustainable and beneficial manner' (emphasis added).

The plural of consented activities brings into consideration B2 Industrial Storage and looking to the future as this paragraph suggests is the likelihood that this building too will require change of use from agricultural one day soon.

However, the numerous change of use approvals has already challenged the rural nature of the area and putting in danger the risk of creating an unintended / unplanned new industrial zone which is against both newly adopted Local and Neighbourhood Plan policies.

This is a fact not lost by the applicant themselves who states in the Design & access statement that this '*proposal is considered to be essential development to maintain the agricultural aspect of New Manor Farm'* (emphasis added).

It seems that even the applicant can see that the agricultural and rural aspect of the area is in danger of being lost through the industrialisation from over development of storage and non agricultural activities.

3. Expansion of the built area of the site, massing of development and breaking of

the building line.

The scale of this new building adds to the inappropriate massing and concentration of development occurring in this rural location.

The built up area footprint would increase by some 1800 sq m, extending outside the existing confines of the complex and moving the building line outwards behind what is already becoming a deep, sprawling area of developed land running parallel to Sawtry way.

Section 10.6 of the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan 2018 (HWNP) details a specific caveat to policy HWNP 15 Provision of the needs for expanded businesses specifically warning against sanctioning proposals that would lead to sprawling development along the B1090 Sawtry Way.

4. Views from houses to the south of the site

The Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan describes a vision for the village and sets objectives which make much of the special landscape that surrounds the village and need to protect it for residents and the important tourism that it helps generate.

The vision for Houghton and Wyton is as follows:

We are an active, thriving, dynamic and cohesive community; proud to live in this special landscape which we are keen to share with others.

HWNP 3.4 Protecting the landscape states that *it is necessary to protect our special landscape. As the landscape along the Ouse Valley is what makes this such a special place to live and visit, efforts should be made to enhance and protect the views, and to improve and extend the existing habitats and biodiversity.*

A stated objective HWNP Objective 2: is *to protect and enhance the views identified in the conservation review (2012) that characterise the village.*

The site overlooks what we believe to be the largest continuous conservation area in Huntingdonshire, yet unfortunately the existing buildings already present an imposing sky line before any new, huge additional mass is added.

HWNP17 states that *new development will be supported where it can demonstrate the following criteria are all met (emphasis added).*

It respects the character or appearance of the village and its heritage assets including the Conservation area and the setting of the Great Ouse Valley.

Views from the south from houses situated along the A1123 will be compromised from such a large and imposing structure on the skyline and from one which given its height and position will give a perception of being much closer than the existing buildings. Likewise the site is very visible from the road leading through the village climbing the hill through Hill Estate as it heads towards the A1123. Looking north, the existing scale and dominance of the building line on the horizon already looms, grey like a prison. The enormity of the proposed new build would only exacerbate this situation given it would be positioned on the edge of the slope and closer to the village.

Hill Estate forms one of the important character areas of the village which the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan is looking to protect.

Section 12 of the HWNP defines with these Character Areas and 12.11 describes how development either within or outside of the Character Area needs to be viewed and the need for a development to have 'due regard' for the Character Area.

Policy HWNP17 goes on to state that *Where the development is located at the edge of the settlement it takes account of, and respects the character of adjacent countryside by providing landscaping and / or developing at a lower height as appropriate to reflect its fringe location. (emphasis added).*

We do not believe that the building as proposed correctly addresses these requirements. For these reasons, we would not like to see any further concentration of building on this site and suggest that any new agricultural buildings are positioned away from this area.

5. Building design and scale – unfit for purpose.

The Design and Access Statement accompanying the application states that the new building would be '*a modest scale agricultural building for alpaca, lambing and cattle.*' and that purpose of the building is to allow the applicant to '*winter their cattle in a modern, controlled environment.*'

The proposed shed is 8.5m tall and having a footprint of 1800 sq m, which will be far from modest. We are told that aspects of the design will be '*similar to what are now building supply, vehicle and tool storage buildings on site*'.

Buildings suitable for storing building supplies, vehicles and tools are not immediately what one might think of when considering the design of a new build for overwintering animals.

We have concerns that the design of the proposed building does not appear to take into consideration all of the health and welfare needs of cattle as per guidance from Defra or respected bodies such as the Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board (AHDB).

There are many different building designs depending upon whether the building is for beef cattle or rearing calves, or even lambing, but in all cases guidance highlights the accommodation must control three key environmental parameters:

- MOISTURE MANAGEMENT
- FRESH AIR
- AIR SPEED

The target for most cattle buildings is to ensure a design that maximises ventilation potential on a still day, without exposing the livestock to elevated air speed when the wind is blowing. However in this case the proposed building seems unnecessarily tall and poorly ventilated.

Providing an external bund or windbreak via the block work plinth particularly on the windward side is a good feature and will reduce wind chill, however rising to 4m above ground, it is considerably taller than the cattle themselves and is then topped by 2.5m of profiled metal cladding to the eaves and a further 2m of roof bringing the height of the building to 8.5m and increasing its volume. Fresh air needs to pass through the building to maintain a healthy environment.

Given we are told that the design is as per the existing storage buildings, there appears to be no void spaces between the profile cladding and so fresh air ventilation will be non-existent.

If voids were to be built into the design, perversely the very high volume of this building would work against the health of the animals since high internal air volume reduces the effectiveness of ventilation in buildings. Low volume buildings actually produce higher airflow rates at animal height and at low wind speeds than higher volume buildings.

Were the building to be used for rearing calves or lambing as suggested, then guidance suggests such a high volume area would not be recommended.

Fresh air is a primary requirement for maximising health and productivity, and when designing a new building, or improving an old one, there is an absolute requirement to calculate the area of outlet required in a roof to allow heat, dusts, gases, micro-organisms and moisture from the livestock to escape by natural convection.

The building will never provide the benefits of fresh air ventilation unless there are holes in the roof and in this case the roof design shows no cowling or exhaust vents for gas escape.

We believe this will have a very negative impact on air temperature, air speed and moisture (increased build up of bacteria, virus survival, damp bedding etc.).

It may also have a potentially dangerous impact both human and animal health when it comes to removing slurry from the area and therefore be in breach of [Welfare of Farmed Animals \(England\) Regulations 2000](#) (S.I. 2000 No. 1870) Schedule 1, paragraph 13, states that:

- air circulation, dust levels, temperature, relative humidity and gas concentrations shall be kept within limits which are not harmful to the animals.

S74. All new buildings should be designed with the animals comfort in mind, and with the aim of preventing respiratory diseases. The buildings should provide enough ventilation throughout the year for the type, size and number of stock to be housed in them. Where appropriate, roofs should be insulated to reduce solar penetration.

S75. Where the ventilation in existing buildings is not good enough, you should adapt these buildings by improving air inlets and outlets, or by using mechanical equipment (such as a fan).

S76. When you are removing slurry from under slats, you must take special care to avoid fouling the air with dangerous gases (such as methane), which can kill both humans and animals. Ideally, slurry tanks should be emptied when the building is not in use. Where it becomes necessary to remove slurry when cattle are being housed, you should take all stock out of the building. Buildings should be well ventilated during this procedure.

Big cows are heavy and hence floor surface and design is critical.

The ability of the floor to cope with, contain and direct excess liquids towards competent drainage is a key design feature. However, there is no information supplies about whether the floor surface will be rough, smooth or grooved finished or indeed whether the floor may be slatted to remove the need for bedding materials and to take away or tank the slurry.

Animals – especially beef cattle overwintering in a building will produce a considerable amount of slurry waste.

No explanation has been provided of how this will be dealt with, or any written confirmation that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists as per H&WNP 14 Flooding and Drainage.

Policy HWNP14 - Flooding and drainage

Development will only be permitted in areas benefitting from defences where the sequential and exception tests are passed and residual risk of flooding has been considered and it can be demonstrated that the development will be safe.

Any development that which would reduce the flood plain storage capacity of a site will not be permitted unless an alternative storage facility is provided to compensate within the site on a level-for-level and volume-for-volume basis. Reference should be made to the SFRA maps which define the extent of the functional flood plain and any such facilities should be approved by the Environment Agency or other appropriate body.

Replacement dwellings and buildings will only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding if it can be demonstrated they will be substantially safer and will reduce flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change.

All developments will be expected to demonstrate that they have followed the surface water management hierarchy to ensure that infiltration and other methods of surface water disposal are considered and provided for before ahead of

maintaining any connection to surface water sewers. Such developments must demonstrate that, where possible, they have reinstated natural drainage flow pathways.

Any development increasing the demand on the drainage systems is required to provide written confirmation from the appropriate sewerage provider that sufficient infrastructure capacity exists, or that any required increase in sewerage capacity is completed prior to occupation of any part of the development.

Mitigation must be undertaken for all planning permissions for any cumulative impact of surface water and groundwater flooding that would be created by development.

Availability of land for grazing cattle:

Whilst we support the idea of more cattle returning to the area the Houghton & Wyton Neighbourhood Plan suggests that summer pasture land locally is already at a premium. This proposal removes yet another swathe of top quality grass land from the area.

HWNP 5.44 Protection of agricultural and grazing land

Policy Justification

The history of the parish is intertwined with farming and with cattle grazing before going to market at St Ives. Indeed the Splash on the A1123 was the watering stop for cattle travelling to market. With the loss of all the farms within the settlement has come the loss of grazing and agricultural land.

HWNP 5.47 Existing landowners who graze within the parish have highlighted the lack of grazing opportunities for farming their alpacas, cattle and goats. Policy HWNP7 therefore seeks to ensure that Grade 1, 2 and 3a agricultural land can only be brought forward for development if it can be demonstrated that it has not recently been in agricultural use and has little prospect of being brought back into productive use in the near future. The land must not have been farmed for at least two years, a period intended to ensure that speculative applications for development of high quality agricultural land are avoided, whilst at the same time still providing an opportunity for agricultural land that clearly has no prospect of re-use to come forward and address any additional needs over the short term (i.e. the next five years).