
MAIN CASE

Proposal: Outline application for up to 128 residential dwellings with all matters reserved apart from means for access.

Location: Land North Of Field End Witchford Cambridgeshire

Applicant: Gladman Developments Ltd

Agent:

Reference No: 14/00931/OUM

Case Officer: Penelope Mills

Parish: Witchford

Ward: Haddenham

Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Gareth Wilson
Councillor Ian Allen
Councillor Pauline Wilson

Date Received: 19 August 2014 Expiry Date:

[P135]

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 128 residential dwellings on land to the north of Field End in Witchford. Approval is sought for access as part of this application, with all other matters (landscaping, appearance, scale and layout) reserved for subsequent consideration.
- 1.2 The application follows a previous application for the same proposal which was refused by the Planning Committee on the 6th August. A copy of the decision notice is attached at Appendix 1. The previous application is now the subject of a Public Inquiry which is due to be held in March 2015.
- 1.3 At the time of the last application, the Council could not demonstrate that it had a five year supply of land for housing. As such, the application was assessed in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Council is now in a position, where it considers itself to have a five year supply and therefore all planning applications must be assessed against the relevant policies within the development plan.
- 1.4 The application site is located outside the settlement boundary for Witchford and the proposal is therefore a departure from the planning policies relating to development in the countryside, contained within the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy, which forms part of the Development Plan for the district. It is considered that there are no planning

reasons why these sound planning policies should be set aside in this case and the application is therefore recommended for refusal.

- 1.5 The County has confirmed that a financial contribution would be required in light of the additional places that would be needed for pre-school and primary school places as a result of the development. In the absence of a finalised legal agreement to secure such a contribution, the adverse effects on the local education infrastructure forms an additional reason for refusal.
- 1.6 The previous refusal for this development included reasons relating to highway safety and noise and air quality. These reasons were imposed by Planning Committee contrary to the officer recommendation. The applicant and consultees have provided more information to try and address the Committee's concerns. Having regard to the previous recommendation and this additional information it would not be possible for Officers to recommend that this application be refused on these grounds. The previous refusal also referred to insufficient evidence in relation to archaeology, however, further work has taken place which has led the County to remove its objection on this ground and instead recommend the use of a condition.

2.0 THE APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of up to 128 residential units with all matters reserved apart from means of access. The means of access is proposed from an existing field gate access from Field End.
- 2.2 The Design and Access Statement submitted with the planning application outlines the development and mix of uses proposed. The application site extends to 5.1 hectares, of which 3.82 hectares are proposed for residential development and 128 dwellings at a density of 33 dwellings per hectare. The applicant has stated that the development would provide a mix of dwellings and house types, providing 30% affordable homes, 0.83 hectares are proposed for informal open space with an equipped play area of 0.06 hectares, a balancing pond extending to 0.06 hectares and a pedestrian access point and paths and cycle ways.
- 2.3 The application is supported by the following plans and documents:
 - Location plan;
 - Vehicular access plan;
 - Indicative layout plan;
 - Assessment of 5 year housing supply (Updated May 2014);
 - Design and access statement;
 - Planning statement;
 - Socio-Economic Impact report;
 - Affordable housing statement;
 - Travel plan;
 - Drainage strategy;
 - Flood Risk Assessment and outline drainage strategy;
 - Noise assessment;
 - Statement of Community Involvement;

- Contamination preliminary risk assessment;
- Landscape and visual impact assessment;
- Ecological assessment;
- Archaeological desk-based assessment;
- Air quality screening report;
- Air quality assessment;
- Arboricultural assessment;
- Utilities and infrastructure report;
- Sustainability assessment.

3.0 THE APPLICANT'S CASE

- 3.1 The Applicant's case is set out in the Design and Access Statement, and Planning Statement and other supporting documentation listed above, which can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>. Alternatively, paper copies are available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, on the application file.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The site is located on the northern edge of Witchford, on land outside of the settlement boundary, to the north of Field End and to the west of Common Road. The land is a mix of Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land. The site is bordered to the north by the A142 and by a modern housing estate to the south on Field End. To the east of the site is the Greenham Business Park and a Depot (containing employment uses) and there is further agricultural land to the west. The site is located in the countryside and is bordered by a line of trees and hedges. An earth bund 4m in height is located along the boundary with the business park. There are a number of field accesses into the site, including 2 accesses from Field End.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1
- | | | | |
|--------------|--|---------|------------|
| 14/00248/OUM | Outline application for up to 128 residential dwellings with all matters reserved apart from means for access. | Refused | 07.08.2014 |
|--------------|--|---------|------------|

6.0 REPLIES TO CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 **Neighbours** – 65 neighbouring addresses were consulted on the application and a site notice was posted. At the time of writing the report 47 individuals had sent representations. 41 of these were objecting and 4 were in support, with a further 2 making comments. The following relevant points were raised in the consultation responses (full copies of the responses can be found on the application file or through public access using the following link: <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>)

Highways Issues

- Construction traffic through the village and onto the junction with the A142;
- Increase in traffic at the junction of Common Road with the A142, which is dangerous;
- General increase in traffic and number of people;
- Increased hazard to children and pets;
- Impact on road safety and unsafe access
- Development is proposed off a road with traffic calming in place;
- There should be a roundabout;
- Section 106 required for highway improvements;
- Field End too narrow;
- Cycle paths should be designed that give priority to cyclists crossing at side roads;
- Highway safety concerns in relation to Victoria Green play area;
- Already problems with on street parking.
- Transport report is inadequate and inaccurate. Quoted peak travel times are not actual peak travel times.
- No assessment of impact on A10

Sustainability

- We should be reducing vehicular traffic, discourage use of cars and increase use of sustainable travel modes;
- It is better to use infill sites within the village;
- Not an allocated site in the village vision;
- This is not sustainable development – should be in Market Towns not villages
- Failings in documents suggesting this is sustainable development
- Alternative sites would be better.
- Query amount of employment actually in surrounding area

Housing Scale/Mix/Type

- Scale of development is questioned;
- This village doesn't require any smaller or housing association properties;
- It should only be considered for affordable housing;
- Is there a need for so much affordable housing;
- An ECDC representative has said that the planned housing targets for Witchford are only 60 homes until 2025- will this development over provide;
- Are the thresholds for affordable housing provision still applicable on sites located in the countryside;

Infrastructure

- The development is not in the best interests of Witchford and its population;
- The schools are at capacity;
- Limited amenities – no doctor surgery in village, no dentist;
- Impact on local services, this could be of benefit and to their detriment;
- Insufficient play space within the village;
- Lack of existing facilities within the village;
- Will it result in need for additional community facilities;
- Only benefit is the proposed play area;

- Better connectivity between the proposed and existing open spaces should be made;
- Impact on infrastructure eg sewers
- Lack of green infrastructure
- Inadequate drainage capacity
- Burden on public transport.

Ecology / Biodiversity

- Demolition of hedgerows and loss of wildlife habitat;
- The hedge along Field End should be retained;
- Trees/ hedges must be protected.

Residential Amenity

- Impact on privacy and loss of views;
- Air and noise pollution for future occupants;
- Additional noise and disturbance from increase of cars on A142;

Other issues

- Loss of agricultural land;
- Adverse visual impact;
- No change since the last application;
- Drainage issues on the site;
- Impacts from construction;
- There is a lack of suitable properties on the correct side of Ely for a commute to Cambridge
- Failure to re-engage with the community with this application is contrary to NPPF guidance and the Localism Act 2011.
- Breach of privacy code in submitted Statement of Community Involvement
- There are monitoring stations, contrary to statement made in Air Quality Report
- Noise issues on this site are too great to be overcome by mitigation
- Adverse effects from vibration

6.2 **Councillor Bill Hunt-** Made the following comments on the previous application:

- This development is clearly outside the village development line and should be automatically refused. It would create an unsustainable load on local infrastructure and local facilities including schools and roads.

6.3 **Councillor Pauline Wilson-** Made the following comments:

- I would like to call in this planning application to the planning committee because these houses would be outside the village envelope and should be refused.
- Witchford village has one small shop which is a Post Office, there is no Doctors Surgery and the School and College are full to capacity.
- The exit from this site is out onto Field End, then turn left into Common Road, leading up to the junction of the A142. This road is already very busy and there have been numerous accidents along it, due to the sheer volume and speed that the vehicles are travelling at. These extra houses could put approximately an extra 250 cars turning right out onto the A142 which surely would be an accident waiting to happen. It just is not safe to have more vehicles turning right along this stretch of the A142.

- A most important point is that this land was supposed to be a buffer of clean air “green lung” between Witchford and the A142, not for houses to be built on. This is now a legal requirement, to have clean air and not to have pollutants causing ill health to residents which is what would happen with houses built right up to the busy A142 trunk road.
- Villages can cope with a few extra houses perhaps 10 to 20, but 128 houses is ridiculous as we do not have the infrastructure for such a large housing development.
- I would ask the planning committee to refuse this application on the grounds of all of the above.

6.4 **Councillor Charles Roberts-** Confirmed that he wished his earlier comments to stand:

- I agree with the comments made by Councillor Bill Hunt. The proposals very clearly conflict with our local plan and should be refused.

6.5 **Witchford Parish Council-** Object to the application for the following reasons:

General Points

- Objects to proposal for development outside the development envelope. The Parish remains supportive of housing within the village envelope or the provision of affordable housing on rural exception sites.
- The Parish Council rejects the supposition put forward in the Affordable Housing Statement appended to the application that an affordable housing element of only 30% is acceptable for this site.
- The Parish Council questions why ECDC is seemingly keen to accept this development on the grounds that it substantially contributes to meeting the housing shortfall of 320 dwellings identified by the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Examination Inspector in his Interim Conclusions of 14th July 2014. In paragraph 37 of his interim conclusions, the Inspector specifically states that the shortfall should be apportioned during the first 5 years of the Plan period. It appears to the Parish Council to be disproportionate for one settlement to contribute so significantly to reducing this shortfall, when clearly the Planning Inspector does not expect this to be the case.

Air Quality and Noise

- An air quality buffer zone of similar dimensions to that provided at the housing developments adjacent to the A10 on the west side of Ely must be incorporated into this development in addition to the public open space to be provided
- Noise monitoring should be carried out over a sustained period of some weeks, during normal working hours.
- The Parish Council asks whether ECDC is fully satisfied that the evidence submitted by the applicant adequately takes into account predictable future increases in traffic along the A142 Witchford bypass, particularly as this is the identified principal route for access to the Block Fen site in the Cambridgeshire Minerals and Waste Plan with an anticipated increase in daily lorry movements along the A142, and including the extra traffic that will be generated by the North Ely development and the Ely Southern Bypass.

Infrastructure

- There is inadequate social infrastructure to cope with increased population from this development. Both schools in Witchford are full with insufficient capacity to meet increased demand. Doctors' surgeries in Ely are already over-stretched.

Traffic

- Notwithstanding the fact that the County Council Highways Officer did not object to this development, Witchford Parish Council and local residents are of the certain opinion that the development has significant implications for traffic and road safety within the village. The experience of residents is that at most times of the day it is difficult and unsafe to try and turn right onto the A142 from Common Road. Most of the traffic leaving this site will as a result travel out of the village via Main Street. Many residents of the proposed development will work in Cambridge and so will preferentially drive through Witchford village to the Grunty Fen Road turning to use this short cut to Wilburton or Stretham. This will inevitably increase the existing traffic bottleneck at the Common Road/Main Street junction, which is particularly acute at the twice daily 'school run' periods. Witchford Parish Council considers this to be a significant road safety issue.

Drainage

- Adequate access must be retained for the District Council to undertake maintenance as necessary on public drain No1 which runs along the boundary of this site.

6.6 **Environment Agency:** Advised to refer to previous comments:

Waste water and water quality issues

- AW confirm that for 3 out of 6 measured flow scenarios in 2013, there would not have been sufficient capacity to accommodate 128 dwellings within the default dry weather flow discharge consent. However, it would be covered by AW's current temporary emergency (AMP5) discharge consent. A long term, sustainable solution is therefore required.
- On the basis that there are no specific allocations to Witchford, the Environment Agency can confirm that we would have no objections to the development on water quality grounds, subject to a condition as below. However, ECDC should be aware that granting planning permission for this development could seriously compromise significant further growth in Witchford until Anglian Water can produce and demonstrate a long term solution, as raised in the 2014 waste water joint position statement that accompanied the local plan.
- Conditions and informatives recommended.

6.7 **County Highways Officer-** No objection, recommend conditions.

- This application was recently submitted and refused under reference 14/00248/OUM, nothing has fundamentally changed with regards to the civil engineering aspects of the scheme. I therefore reiterate my predecessor's comments:
 - i) Whilst the increase in traffic would incrementally increase risk at the junction of Common Road with the A143, this increase is unlikely to be of a significant magnitude and is not considered by the Highway Authority to provide justification for an objection to the proposal.

- ii) The access to the site is acceptable as proposed, subject to proposed conditions.

6.8 Cambridgeshire County Council Transport Assessment Team- No objections:

- I have reviewed the document dated October 2014 and can confirm that the Revised TA included all the additional information requested in relation to the previous application and therefore the County Council would like to confirm that the TA is fit for purpose and would like to formally withdraw the holding objection on this site.

6.9 Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology- No longer objecting to proposals, pre-commencement condition recommended.

- Having visited the above site during archaeological evaluation, I can confirm that archaeological deposits (including human burial, cremations and settlement evidence) were present within the site bounds in two distinct areas. These will require further archaeological mitigation (in the form of a program of archaeological excavation), however due to the nature of the deposits we would have no objections on archaeological grounds to the mitigation being undertaken post-consent (should consent be granted) for the application in the form of a condition
- We therefore consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation and recommend that this work should be commissioned and undertaken at the expense of the developer. This programme of work can be secured through the inclusion of a negative condition such as the model condition 'number 55' contained in DoE Planning Circular 11/95: *"No development shall take place within the area indicated until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local planning authority."*
- The model condition also indicates: Developers will wish to ensure that in drawing up their scheme, the timetable for the investigation is included within the details of the agreed scheme.

6.10 Cambridgeshire County Council Development Strategy Team- made the following comments:

Education:

- This development falls within the catchment area of Rackham Primary School. The secondary school catchment is Witchford Village College. The development mix is unknown therefore County Council General Multipliers have been used to calculate the likely number of children arising from this development. When a detailed breakdown of the dwelling mix and tenure is provided these contributions can be adjusted accordingly. The general multipliers are as follows; Pre-school: 18-25 per 100 dwellings; Primary: 25-35 per 100 dwellings; and, Secondary: 18-25 per 100 dwellings.
- **Primary-** Based on the general multipliers this development is likely to result in demand for 32 pre-school places and 45 Primary School Places. Rackham Primary School is running at or close to capacity and would require more places in order to provide for the new development.

- **Secondary-** There is sufficient capacity at Witchford Village College to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers from this development. The County Council's costs are provided below.

Education Level	Cost per place	Number of space required	Amount to seek
Pre-School	£19,957	32	£638,624
Primary	£23,833	45	£1,072,485

- These contributions have been calculated by Cambridgeshire County Council's Quantity Surveyor and will be sought towards the works programme to extend the pre and primary schools in order to provide additional teaching space.

Ecology

- The ecological assessment submitted as part of the application identified there is limited ecological value at the site for nesting birds and foraging / commuting bats, but no detailed survey work was undertaken for this fauna. No detailed evidence has been provided as part of the submission to demonstrate that all bat foraging / commuting habitat will be retained (e.g. retention of all boundary vegetation and ensure a sensitive lighting scheme). It is therefore presumptive to assume there will be no detrimental impact on bats. Given that impact on protected species (including bats) is a material consideration in the planning process (ODPM Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system), we would expect the applicant to have undertaken detailed surveys to quantify bat activity at the site (in accordance with best practice guidelines) as part of the application submission and demonstrate that the proposals will have no overall impact on the favourable conservation status of the local bat population from the proposals.
- While we welcome the objective outlined in the Design and Access Statement to protect and extent the site's existing environment assets (bullet-point 5, page 3, D&A Statement), however, we would expect the submission to include a Green Infrastructure/ Landscape parameters plan to clearly demonstrate how this would be achieved. Under the current scheme, there is no guarantee that an appropriate green infrastructure / landscape scheme will be secured that will ensure the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. We would expect any Green Infrastructure scheme to include green links through the centre of the development (currently not shown on the illustrative master plan), including SuDS features (e.g. swales, green roofs).
- The following detailed matters should be covered by reserved matters: Ecology Design Strategy; Detailed Landscape Strategy; Tree Protection; and, Lighting scheme (designed sensitively for wildlife). These are to ensure the protection of existing biodiversity features, including priority/local BAP habitat (e.g. hedgerow, drainage ditches) and protected / priority species.

6.11 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue-** Request that adequate provision is made for fire hydrants, secured by way of planning condition or Section 106 agreement.

6.12 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer-** No objection, referred to previous comments:

- In terms of crime risk, I have on carried out research on Field End itself and not looked at the area overall. During the preceding 12 months, there has only been

one crime recorded, that being a domestic burglary where a vehicle was stolen from the property. There is no recorded anti-social behaviour for the area.

- I have viewed the illustrative masterplan (page 49 of DAS) along with the indicative layout drawing (page 51 of DAS) and have to comment that the layout is exactly as I would wish, providing active frontages, defensible space, back to back properties with the public space overlooked. There is a lack of rear parking which is a real positive in terms of layout and design.
- Should the application submit a RM application showing a site layout similar to the outline application I would have no issues and would fully support the applicant should they consider submitting a Secured by Design application. One thing I did find confusing was the reference 'By Design' in the DAS (Section 01 Background). I am not aware of this document and wonder whether the application was referring to Secure by Design with this reference, if so I am satisfied the principles of SBD have been followed. I am also happy with the reference to creating safe and desirable spaces within the DAS.
- I have no objection or further comment to make regarding this application.

6.13 Littleport and Downham Internal Drainage Board- No objection, but made the following comments:

- The application is outside the limit of the Littleport and Downham Internal Drainage District but within an area that drains into it.
- If the water is balanced on site and discharged into the mains sewer and there is no increase in flows to the Board's system, we would have no objection to the development.
- There is an East Cambs. Award Drain to the south of the site. This watercourse drains into the Board's Catchwater system, which does not have any residual capacity.
- The Board would wish to make comments on the detailed design of the surface water drainage for the site.

6.14 ECDC Development and Enabling Officer – made the following comments:

Should consent be granted there should be a section 106 Agreement securing the following affordable housing provisions: affordable housing in accordance with NPPF definition; details of location, type, tenure, design, layout size and phasing of affordable units; details of transfer; details of quality standards; details of nominations/allocations provisions; and , a requirement for the affordable provision to remain in perpetuity.

6.15 ECDC Waste Strategy- No objection, but made the following comments:

- Any private roads/lanes should be built to highway standards to allow waste vehicles to collect from the properties. The Council charges for the supply of wheeled bins, two bins per property are required.

6.16 ECDC Environmental Health (Noise)- Some concerns - conditions recommended:

- I have read the submitted noise report which clarifies further details will be required for the application/reserved matters stage. I agree that once the layout is known we will receive further details indicating the predicted noise levels and mitigation to ensure these fall within acceptable limits. As previously highlighted this pertains to external and internal areas, including with windows open.

- To ensure future residents of the proposed development are sufficiently protected against road noise, further mitigation is likely to be required, such as: An adequate distance between source and noise sensitive building or area; screening by barriers, other buildings or non-critical rooms in a building; and, good sound insulation. One of the main points to consider is achieving a clever design of the layout of the site, with careful thought of the orientation of windows, especially bedroom windows.
- The other factor that may impact upon the proposed residents is regarding the commercial units. I understand from the noise report that there is currently a high bund separating the site. Further details will be required regarding this.
- Conditions proposed requiring the following: submission of a noise assessment with appropriate mitigation measures to ensure noise levels at sensitive receptors are within appropriate limits; submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan regarding mitigation measures for noise, dust, lighting and vibration (piling activities) during the construction phases.

6.17 ECDC Scientific Officer:- Initial comments made and conditions recommended:

- I have reviewed the GEM Air Quality Ltd report entitled 'Air Quality Assessment' dated August 2014 and my comments in relation to this proposed development are below. The report covers both operational and construction phase impacts on air quality for both the existing receptors and the receptors (residents) associated with the new proposal.
- Generally I agree and accept the conclusions of this assessment, in that if some precautionary mitigation measures are employed, then impacts on local air quality associated with this proposed development are not unacceptable.
- The conclusion, with regard to the operational impacts, states that the façades of the proposed development must be at least 20m from the A142 to avoid the proposed development being exposed to nitrogen dioxide concentrations near or above the national air quality objective, as shown in Figure 5. This measure must be incorporated into the design of the development.
- For mitigating impacts during the operational phase, the measures outlined in Table 18 also need to be complied with. It is recommended that a planning condition be attached to this planning permission (if granted) to ensure adherence to these measures, please contact me if you consider a bespoke condition is necessary and we can provide one

Additional comments were made following a meeting and correspondence with a representative of the Villages HCV group:

- The group have undertaken some air quality monitoring of their own, independently funded, as well as various other environmental issues such as noise and vibration, primarily related to commercial vehicles travelling through those villages (Haddenham, Earith, Cottenham, Sutton etc).
- For the data provided, the techniques and instrumentation are not those typically associated with the local air quality management framework which is what the district council work under, so it is difficult to form any specific conclusions in relation to this development proposal in Witchford. However, there is reason to indicate that particulate concentrations may be more significant in close proximity to the A142 than would be typically considered the case due to a higher HCV proportion on the road than equivalent A-roads. Further, the most relevant

monitoring station that we operate, at Witcham Toll, measures nitrogen dioxide, not particulates and therefore potentially slightly mis-represents the particulate emissions which would typically be associated with HCVs and diesel engines.

- Alan also raises the impending requirement to monitor even finer particulates, PM2.5 (as oppose to PM10), and together with some data gathered by the HCV group has raised whether this issue could be a problem. It is difficult for Environmental Services to add any views on PM2.5 as we do not monitor for it (yet). It is a relatively new method and is expensive. So other than speaking relatively with the monitoring that we do have, i.e comparing Witcham Toll to other monitoring sites, we are slightly limited.
- Despite the points raised above, even though our Witcham Toll monitoring site may slightly mis-represent the traffic flow (and associated particulate concentrations), it still consistently achieves the national objectives, whilst being situated closer to the road than the Field End proposal (allowing for GEMS recommendations). So therefore I still don't consider that we have evidence to indicate that the proposed new properties at Field End will be exposed to unacceptable levels of air pollutants and therefore cannot object to the development on this basis.
- However, given the PM2.5 issue raised above and the HCV group's data, if it would be possible, and I'd take your advice on whether it is, if a Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy could be applicable to this proposal for PM2.5 monitoring in the area, that would be very beneficial in both assessing the impacts to and from this proposal as well as future proposals along the A142.

6.18 **ECDC Forward Planning-** A memo was received from the Principal Forward Planning Officer, stating the following:

A hearing session was held by the Planning Inspector earlier today (11th November 2014), to discuss the Further Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan (the additional Soham allocations that were approved by Full Council in September 2014). This briefing note seeks to provide you with an update on the proceedings, and the next steps towards the adoption of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

In summary:

- The Inspector indicated that he will consider the evidence presented to him, over the next few days.
- The Inspector will contact us by Friday 14th November if he has concerns about the Further Proposed Modifications, and the Council's ability to demonstrate that it has a five year supply of housing land.
- If we don't hear from the Inspector by Friday 14th November, it can be read as an indication that he is content regarding our five year supply calculations. The Council can therefore continue to operate on the basis that it has a five year supply of land, in advance of receiving the Inspector's final report.
- The Inspector will finalise his report. Unfortunately due to other work commitments the Inspector is unlikely to be in a position to release his report to the District Council (for fact checking) until mid-February 2015. The final date will be confirmed by the Planning Inspectorate office.

7.0 **THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

7.1 East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009

CS1	Spatial Strategy
CS2	Housing
CS6	Environment
CS7	Infrastructure
CS8	Access
H1	Housing Mix and Type
H2	Density
H3	Affordable housing
S4	Developer contribution
S6	Transport impact
S7	Parking provision
EN1	Landscape and settlement character
EN2	Design
EN3	Sustainable construction and energy efficiency
EN4	Renewable energy
EN5	Historic conservation
EN6	Biodiversity and geology
EN7	Flood risk
EN8	Pollution

7.2 East Cambridgeshire Draft Local Plan Pre-submission version (as amended June 2014)

GROWTH 1	Levels of housing, employment and retail growth
GROWTH 2	Locational Strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
HOU 1	Housing mix
HOU 2	Housing density
HOU 3	Affordable housing provision
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 4	Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology
ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 9	Pollution
ENV 14	Sites of archaeological interest
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision

8.0 **CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY**

8.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

	Core Planning Policies
4	Promoting sustainable transport
6	Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
7	Requiring good design

- 8 Promoting healthy communities
- 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

9.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

- 9.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development Plan for the District currently comprises the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy, 2009 and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan 2012.
- 9.2 The emerging Local Plan is currently under Examination, and the Local Plan Inspector issued an Interim Conclusions Report in July, stating that in his view there was a shortfall of 320 dwellings in the Council's five year housing land supply.
- 9.3 In the absence of a five year supply of land for housing paragraph 49 of the NPPF applies, which states that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date, and housing applications, should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. For this reason, the previous application for this development (14/00248/OUM) which went to Planning Committee on 6th August 2014, was assessed using the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 9.4 The Hearings for the Examination of the Local Plan were deferred for two months to allow the Council to address this issue and during this time the Council has been out to consultation on a series of proposed modifications to the Local Plan. These modifications consist of five additional housing allocations on the edge of Soham, which were assessed by the Inspector at the second examination on 11th November.
- 9.5 At the examination on 11th November the Inspector stated that he would contact the Council by Friday 14th November if he had concerns about the further proposed modifications, and the Council's ability to demonstrate that it has a five year supply of housing land. Having had no correspondence from the Inspector, and in light of the legal advice previously obtained, it is considered that the Council should regard itself as having a 5-year supply of land for housing.
- 9.6 Planning applications should therefore be assessed against the policies contained within the development plan, with consideration given to the emerging policies within the draft Local Plan.
- 9.7 The main considerations in determining this application are therefore:
- Planning Policy and the principle of development in this location
 - Visual impact of the development
 - Issues of highway safety and accessibility
 - Impacts on residential amenity, including noise and air quality
 - Impacts on existing infrastructure
 - Impacts on the historic environment

- Flood risk and drainage issues
- Impacts on ecology and biodiversity

The principle of development in this location

- 9.8 The application site is located outside the development envelope for Witchford, on land designated as ‘countryside’, where development is strictly controlled. Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy states that development in such locations is ‘restricted to that which is essential to the efficient operation of local agriculture, horticulture, forestry, permitted mineral extraction, and outdoor recreation’ – or to other uses specifically identified within the Core Strategy which would support the rural economy, meet affordable or special housing needs or provide essential rural services and infrastructure.
- 9.9 Policy GROWTH 2 of the Draft Local Plan reiterates that development will be strictly controlled within the countryside and both policy CS2 of the Core Strategy and GROWTH 2 of the Draft Local Plan outline the possible residential exceptions that may be acceptable on sites outside the development envelope. These include affordable housing, rural workers dwellings, re-use and replacement of dwellings and Gypsy and Travelling Showpeople sites.
- 9.10 The proposed development does not fall within any of the possible exceptions covered by Core Strategy or draft Local Plan policy.
- 9.11 Paragraph 50 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that *“to deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should... identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand”*. As part of the plan-making process, and in light of the guidance contained within the NPPF, appropriate housing allocations have been proposed to address the housing needs of the district. A Locational Strategy, outlined policy GROWTH2 of the draft Local Plan states that the majority of development will be focussed on the market towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport, as this is considered to represent the most sustainable pattern of development. In terms of development within the villages, the District Council has worked extensively with Parish and Town Councils and local communities to identify local needs and priorities and these are reflected in the ‘Village Visions’ within the draft Local Plan.
- 9.12 The ‘Village Visions’ are neighbourhood plan-style documents, developed in close collaboration with Parish Councils and local communities. The high level of local engagement and empowerment has enabled the Council to closely “reflect the needs and priorities” of communities within the Local Plan as advocated by the NPPF (paragraphs 1 and 17) and this approach also accords with the Government’s Localism agenda
- 9.13 The responses from the Witchford Village Vision questionnaire indicated that a majority (52.3%) thought that there should be no further housing growth on the edge of Witchford. The rest of those who responded in favour of some growth were primarily in favour of small-scale growth with only 5.8% supporting large scale housing, defined as more than 20 houses. These responses informed the Village Vision for Witchford and

the lack of specific large allocations for the village reflects the local perception of the need for new housing development.

- 9.14 It is considered that the Council has taken a constructive approach to new development in the district, allocating sufficient sites to meet the identified housing need and support the rural communities within the district. The Council has embraced the spirit of localism and worked closely with local communities to deliver levels of growth that reflect local needs and priorities.
- 9.15 In this case, permission is sought for a large residential development on land outside the village envelope, which is both contrary to policies within the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan and is at odds with the local aspirations for the future development of Witchford. It is considered that there are no material planning reasons, in this case, that would justify setting aside sound planning policies within the adopted Development Plan. The principle of this development in the location proposed is therefore considered to be unacceptable.

Visual Impact

- 9.16 When this development was previously considered by the Planning Committee (application 14/00248/OUM at the Planning Committee on 6th August 2014), the visual impact of the proposal was not considered to be a reason upon which to refuse the application. There has been no change either on site, or in the proposed development that would impact on the nature of the visual impact of the development as described in the previous Committee Report, which is attached at Appendix 2.
- 9.17 Whilst the erection of up to 128 houses on the northern edge of Witchford would significantly increase the size of the settlement, due to the existing topography, landscape features and pattern of existing development, the actual visual impact of this would be limited. It is considered, on balance, that any potential adverse effects could be either successfully 'designed out' at the reserved matters stage or successfully mitigated for through careful landscaping. As such, there would not be any significant adverse effects on visual amenity and the development is considered to be in accordance with policies EN1 and EN2 of the Core Strategy 2009 and policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the draft Local Plan (as amended June 2014), in relation to its visual impact.

Highway Safety and Accessibility

- 9.18 When this proposal previously came before the Planning Committee, concerns were expressed by Members regarding the adverse effects on highway safety as a result of the development, and this matter forms one of the reasons for refusal on the previous application. Highways concerns have again been raised by the Parish Council and members of the public during the course of this application.
- 9.19 A consolidated Transport Assessment has been submitted with the application, which the County Council has confirmed is fit for purpose. In addition to addressing policy issues and the sustainability of the development, the assessment considers the traffic impact of the additional traffic on the road network that would be generated by the development. The Key junctions identified are set out below:

- A142 / Sutton Road – priority junction at western end of bypass
- A142 / Common Road – priority junction
- A142 / Witchford Road / Lancaster way – roundabout
- Main Street / Grunty Fen Road – priority junction

9.20 The specific analysis carried out and the resulting junction impact and traffic flow diagrams are attached in Appendix 3, in an extract from the Transport Assessment. The whole document can be viewed online through public access using the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications> or alternatively a paper copy is available to view on the file.

9.21 In assessing the junctions, the key statistics are the ratio of flow to capacity (RFC) and queue lengths. A junction is considered to be at practical capacity if the RFC exceeds 0.85. The resulting analysis, contained in Appendix 3, demonstrates that all of the junctions assessed would be well within capacity, with no junctions reaching 0.85. The difference between the likely queue lengths in 2019 with and without the development are also, in the majority of cases, the same, or only slightly greater if the development takes place.

9.22 On the basis of the analysis, the Assessment concludes that there would be no material traffic impact as a result of the development. This is a view shared by the County Council, who did not object to the previous application and has maintained their position in relation to this recent application. Whilst they acknowledge that the increase in traffic would incrementally increase risk at the junction of Common Road with the A142, they consider that this increase is unlikely to be of a significant magnitude and is not considered by the Highway Authority to provide justification for an objection to the proposal.

9.23 Given the level of local concern the Highways Officer has been asked to provide additional information explaining the County's position and addressing specific points raised by the Parish Council. In this respect, the following comments have been received:

"National planning policy requires that for an objection to be justified, the proposal must result in a severe impact.

The highway network is a hazardous environment by its very nature, and the increase in traffic will result, statistically in an increased risk. However that increased risks resultant from the proposal could not, in my opinion, be demonstrated to be severe. Junctions, because of the conflicts engendered by turning movements crossing, tend to be locations where accidents occur.

The junction of Common Road with the B1123 was designed to design standards current at that time, with compliant geometry and visibility.

In the previous 5 years there has been one personal injury accident recorded at this junction, involving an elderly pedestrian crossing the road.

Compared to other junctions of a similar layout this accident history is not of a level that would trigger immediate concern.

There is, in my opinion, no historic identifiable pattern of accidents from which it could be demonstrated that there would be a significant additional risk resultant from the proposal.

The parish has identified the junction of Common Road with Main Street as a hazardous junction, however in the last 5 years there have been two personal injury accidents, but, again, no identifiable accident pattern upon which to surmise that, other than by intensification of use, the accident numbers would be increased and, again, this only incrementally, rather than significantly.

The junction complies with current guidance contained in Manual for Streets for a junction within a 30 MPH speed limit and it is against this advice that the geometry of the junction would most likely be assessed by an Inspector at appeal.

Whilst the school is located opposite the junction and this leads to congestion at dropping off and picking up time, the issue raised by the Parish of this congestion resulting in a significant increase in risk due to increased commuter traffic could not, in my opinion, be demonstrated, particularly given that commuters travelling to Cambridge from Witchford intending to commence work at, or before 9.00 am would already have passed through the junction before the main period of school drop off.

Given the above, I do not consider that the proposal could demonstrably be considered to result in severe impact upon highway safety."

- 9.24 In light of the continued advice from the Local Highway Authority that a reason for refusal on highway safety grounds would not be justified, and the findings of the Transport Assessment, it is considered that the proposal would be acceptable on highway safety grounds, subject to the use of appropriate highways conditions. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009 and to policies COM7 and COM8 of the draft Local Plan.

Residential Amenity – including noise and air quality

- 9.25 The level of residential amenity which would be enjoyed by both future occupiers of the development and occupiers of existing properties close to the site are key planning considerations in determining applications, even at the outline stage.
- 9.26 It is considered that in terms of impacts from the development itself; garden sizes, overlooking, overshadowing, and buildings being overbearing, that an acceptable development could be designed at the reserved matters stage, to ensure there would be no adverse effects on residential amenity either for future occupiers or existing neighbours.
- 9.27 Due to the location of the site, a further issue to consider in terms of amenity is the potential impact on the development from the adjacent A142, in terms of noise and disturbance and air quality. This was an issue that was raised by Members when the

last application came before the Planning Committee, and subsequently formed one of the reasons for refusal.

- 9.28 In terms of Air Quality, the applicants have submitted an Air Quality Report, which did not form part of the earlier application. This report has been reviewed by the Council's Scientific Officer, who generally agrees and accepts the conclusions, in that if some precautionary mitigation measures are employed, then impacts on local air quality associated with this proposed development are not unacceptable.
- 9.29 Discussions have taken place between Officers and a representative of the villages HCV Group, which has undertaken some air quality monitoring of their own, independently funded, as well as monitoring of various other environmental issues such as noise and vibration, primarily related to commercial vehicles travelling through the villages.
- 9.30 The Scientific Officer has confirmed that for the data provided by the HCV Group, the techniques and instrumentation are not those typically associated with the local air quality management framework, which is what the district council work under. It is therefore difficult to form any specific conclusions in relation to this development proposal in Witchford. However, there is reason to indicate that particulate concentrations may be more significant in close proximity to the A142 than would be typically considered the case due to a higher HCV proportion on the road than equivalent A-roads.
- 9.31 Notwithstanding the above, having considered the additional information, it is the opinion of the Scientific Officer that we do not have sufficient evidence to indicate that the proposed new properties at Field End will be exposed to unacceptable levels of air pollutants. It therefore would not be possible to object to the development on that basis. In order for East Cambridgeshire District Council to refuse planning application outright based on air quality, the monitoring techniques used to inform that decision would have to comply with the approved methods set out by DEFRA/European bodies, which isn't the case with the HCV group data.
- 9.32 Whilst it would not be possible to refuse the application based on air quality, it may be possible to secure PM2.5 monitoring in the area, through a S106 Agreement, which would be very beneficial in both assessing the impacts to and from this proposal.
- 9.33 Turning to the impacts in terms of noise, the Council's Environmental Health Officer has read the submitted noise report, which clarifies that further details will be required at the reserved matters stage. Once a final design and layout is proposed in a reserved matters application, the predicted noise levels and appropriate mitigation can be assessed, to ensure acceptable limits are adhered to. Further information regarding potential noise from the adjacent commercial units would also be required at this stage.
- 9.34 Given the proximity of the highway, it is likely that mitigation measures will be required. However, appropriate mitigation could be achieved through a variety of measures: a layout achieving an adequate distance between source and noise sensitive building or area; screening by barriers, other buildings or non-critical rooms in a building; and, good sound insulation.

- 9.35 In light of the fact that there are mitigation measures that could be demonstrated at the reserved matters stage to ensure that the levels of noise experienced by future occupants of the development would be within acceptable levels, Environmental Health are unable to recommend refusal at this outline stage, due to adverse noise impacts.
- 9.36 The Parish has raised concerns regarding the predictable future increases in traffic along the A142 with associated noise increases. In order to ensure that this is taken into consideration the calculated road traffic noise, including calculations for the future traffic noise, would need to be included and used appropriately in the noise assessment required under a planning condition.
- 9.37 On balance, whilst there are both issues of noise and air quality relating to this application, they are not matters that could be reasonably used to recommend the refusal of the application. This is due both to an absence in the appropriate evidence to justify such a position and to the fact that there would be an opportunity to 'design out' any adverse effects at the reserved matters stage.
- 9.38 It is important to note that the development proposed is for up to 128 dwellings. If it was found at the reserved matters stage that a significant buffer was required between dwellings and the A142, this could be accommodated by a reduction in the number of units.
- 9.39 It is therefore considered that the application is acceptable in terms of residential amenity, including potential impacts from noise and air quality issues, and is in accordance with policies EN2 and EN8 of the Core Strategy 2009 and policies ENV2 and ENV9 of the draft Local Plan (as amended June 2014)

Impacts on existing infrastructure

- 9.40 Concerns have been raised during this and the previous planning application, relating to local infrastructure, with particular concerns in relation to the capacity of Witchford School. Indeed, the adverse effects on the local education provision due to the insufficient capacity to meet the needs of the additional population resulting from the development, formed one of the reasons for refusal determined by members on the previous application.
- 9.41 The County Council has advised that based on the general multipliers, this development is likely to result in demand for 32 pre-school places and 45 Primary School Places. Rackham Primary School is running at or close to capacity and would therefore require more places in order to provide for the new development. In terms of secondary school provision, the County has advised that there is sufficient capacity at Witchford Village College to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers from this development.
- 9.42 In order to address the capacity issues for pre-school and Primary School places, the County has advised that a contribution of £1,711,109 is required (for 128 dwellings).

- 9.43 Given that this is not an allocated site and therefore would not have formed part of the CIL calculations, it is considered that it would be possible to seek payment of the above contribution, through a S106 agreement to address the impact that this particular development would have on education provision in Witchford.
- 9.44 The applicant has stated that they have no evidence, at this stage, to take a different view on the appropriate contribution to be made to address the impacts of their development proposal on education facilities. As such, they have confirmed that they are prepared to pay this contribution if the application is approved and ask that the application is formally considered on this basis.
- 9.45 Given that the principle of the development is considered to be unacceptable, a draft S106 Agreement has not been produced and the absence of appropriate contributions in relation to local education provision would form an additional reason for refusal. This approach is considered to be reasonable and appropriate, as should an appeal be lodged, the applicant could easily address this issue should they wish to, though the submission of an appropriate unilateral undertaking.

Impacts on the historic environment

- 9.46 When this proposal previously came before the Planning Committee, the Historic Environment Team at the County Council had highlighted the archaeological potential of the site and objected to the application on the basis that it provided insufficient archaeological information. The absence of information at that time meant that the local planning authority were unable to properly assess the nature and extent of the impact on potential archaeological remains within the site, and this formed one of the reasons for the refusal for that application.
- 9.47 Further archaeological evaluation has now taken place, and archaeological deposits (including human burial, cremations and settlement evidence) were found to be present within the site bounds in two distinct areas. The County has advised that these areas will require further archaeological mitigation in the form of a program of archaeological excavation, however due to the nature of the deposits County has no objections on archaeological grounds to the mitigation being undertaken post-consent, in the form of a pre-commencement condition.
- 9.48 In light of the updated advice from the County, it is considered that the applicant has provided sufficient evidence to allow the impact on archaeological remains to be assessed and the concerns of the Planning Committee overcome. The application is therefore considered to be in accordance with policy EN5 of the Core Strategy 2009, policy ENV14 of the draft Local Plan (as amended June 2014) and part 12 of the NPPF.

Flood risk and drainage issues

- 9.49 During the course of the previous application, the Environment Agency raised concerns over the capacity to accommodate the proposed development and the associated increased in sewage discharge from Witchford Water Recycling Centre (WRC).

- 9.50 At the time at which members considered the application, further information had been received from Anglian Water and the Environment Agency had confirmed that they would have no objections to the development on water quality grounds, subject to the use of a condition requiring details the proposed waste water infrastructure on and off site, including details of conveyance, treatment, discharge, and phasing.
- 9.51 In light of the Environment Agency advice, neither flood risk or water quality issues formed any of the reasons for refusal as determined by the Planning Committee. There has been no material change in circumstances or to the development proposals that would affect these issues, and the Environment Agency has confirmed that its earlier comments still stand.
- 9.52 It is therefore considered that the proposal would be acceptable in terms of flood risk and impacts on water quality in accordance with policies EN7 and EN8 of the Core Strategy 2009 and policies ENV8 and ENV9 of the draft Local Plan (as amended June 2014).

Impacts on ecology and biodiversity

- 9.53 Concerns have been raised during the course of this application, as they were with the previous application, relating to the loss of wildlife habitat and the potential adverse impact on protected species.
- 9.54 Members did not resolve to refuse the application on the basis of adverse effects on ecology, biodiversity or protected species, and there have been no material change in circumstances or changes to the development proposals that would affect these issues. The short length of time between this application and the one previously considered by committee also means that no new survey work is required.
- 9.55 Whilst the County Council has not objected to the proposal, they have raised some concerns regarding the absence of detailed surveys to quantify bat activity at the site in order to demonstrate that the proposals will have no overall impact on the favourable conservation status of the local bat population. They also raise concerns regarding the lack of Green Infrastructure/ Landscape parameters plan to clearly demonstrate how the site's existing environment assets would be protected.
- 9.56 In response to the County's comments, the applicant has advised that their ecologist has commented that there is no requirement for bat activity surveys, given that there are no internal hedgerows, no boundary hedgerows are to be lost, the access points are as existing (through existing gaps in vegetation) and the boundary features (i.e. hedgerows and strip of woodland screening from the road) are being reinforced with additional planting. They also highlight that the one boundary of the site that is adjacent to open space (the western boundary), is where the new open space is proposed and the other boundaries are industrial, road and residential already so likely to be already impacted from lighting to some extent.
- 9.57 In light of the information submitted, the local planning authority is satisfied that there would be no adverse impact on protected species as a result of the development. Landscape features could be retained as part of the development and additional biodiversity features could be incorporated into the design, layout and landscaping.

The application therefore satisfies the requirements of policy EN6 of the Core Strategy and with the guidance contained within the NPPF, which states that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Summary

- 9.58 When the Planning Committee previously considered an application for this development, the Council could not demonstrate that it had a five year supply of land for housing. As such, the application had to be assessed in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Council is now in a position where it considers itself to have a five year supply and therefore all planning applications must be assessed against the relevant policies within the development plan.
- 9.59 The proposed development is located outside the settlement boundary for Witchford and the proposal is therefore a departure from the planning policies relating to development in the countryside, contained within the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy, which forms part of the Development Plan for the district. It would also be contrary to the policies contained within the draft Local Plan, which similarly restricts residential development in the countryside. It is considered that there are no planning reasons why these sound planning policies should be set aside in this case.
- 9.60 The Council has taken a constructive approach to new development in the district, allocating sufficient sites to meet the identified housing need and support rural communities. The Council has worked extensively with Parish and Town Councils and local communities to identify local needs and priorities and these are reflected in the 'Village Visions' within the draft Local Plan. The lack of any allocations in Witchford reflects the local perceptions of the need for large scale growth and this proposal, for a large residential development on land outside the Witchford Village Envelope, is therefore not only contrary to the policies within the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan, but is also at odds with the local aspirations for the future development of Witchford.
- 9.61 The County has confirmed that a financial contribution would be required in light of the additional places that would be required for pre-school and primary school places as a result of the development. In the absence of a finalised legal agreement to secure such a contribution, the adverse effects on the local education infrastructure forms an additional reason for refusal.
- 9.62 The previous refusal for this development included reasons relating to highway safety and noise and air quality. These reasons were imposed by Planning Committee contrary to the officer recommendation. The applicant and consultees have provided more information to try and address the Committee's concerns. Having regard to the previous recommendation and this additional information it would not be possible for Officers to recommend that this application be refused on these grounds. The previous refusal also referred to insufficient evidence in relation to archaeology, however, further work has taken place which has led the County to remove its objection on this ground and instead recommend the use of a condition.

10.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

RECOMMENDATION: Refusal, for the following reasons:

1. The construction of up to 128 residential dwellings on an unallocated site in the countryside, would be contrary to policies CS1 and CS2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009, which restricts residential development in such locations. It would also be contrary to policies GROWTH1 and GROWTH2 of the draft East Cambridgeshire Local Plan February 2014 (incorporating Modifications in October 2013, April 2014 and September 2014). It is considered that there are no material planning reasons, that would justify setting aside these sound planning policies.

The Council has taken a constructive approach to new development in the district, allocating sufficient sites to meet the identified housing need and support rural communities. The Council has worked extensively with Parish and Town Councils and local communities to identify local needs and priorities and these are reflected in the 'Village Visions' within the draft Local Plan. The lack of any allocations in Witchford therefore reflects the local perceptions of the need for large scale growth. This proposal, for a large residential development on land outside the Witchford Village Envelope is therefore not only contrary to the policies within the adopted Core Strategy and the emerging Local Plan, but is also at odds with the local aspirations for the future development of Witchford.

2. The proposed development would result in adverse effects in terms of local education provision, as there is insufficient capacity to meet the needs of the additional population resulting from the development. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policy CS7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009 and policy GROWTH 3 of the draft East Cambridgeshire Local Plan February 2014 (incorporating Modifications in October 2013, April 2014 and September 2014).

11.0 **APPENDICES**

11.1 Appendix 1 – Decision Notice for 14/00248/OUM

11.2 Appendix 2 – Planning Committee Report for 14/00248/OUM

11.3 Appendix 3 - Excerpt from Transport Assessment

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location(s)</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
Case File and associated documents / consultation responses	Penelope Mills Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Penelope Mills Senior Planning Officer 01353 665555 penny.mills@eastcambs.gov.uk



EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Gladman Developments Ltd
C/O Savills (UK) Ltd
Fao: Mr Andrew Hodgson
Unex House
132-134 Hills Road
Cambridge
CB2 8PA

This matter is being dealt with by:

Penelope Mills

Telephone: 01353 665555
E-mail: penny.mills@eastcambs.gov.uk
My Ref: 14/00248/OUM
Your ref

7th August 2014

Dear Sir/Madam

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

REFUSAL OF OUTLINE PLANNING PERMISSION

The Council hereby **refuses** the following development:

Proposal: Outline application for up to 128 residential dwellings with all matters reserved apart from means for access.
Location: Land North Of Field End Witchford Cambridgeshire
Applicant: Gladman Developments Ltd

The Council hereby refuses outline planning permission for the application reference **14/00248/OUM** registered 7th March 2014.

REASONS FOR REFUSAL

- 1 The occupants of the proposed development would suffer from adverse effects in terms of noise and air pollution from the adjacent A142. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies EN2 and EN8 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009, which seek to ensure there are acceptable levels of amenity and that there are no unacceptable impacts on health and safety of the public. The proposal would also be contrary to policy ENV2 of the draft Local Plan (as amended June 2014) and the guidance contained within paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which states that the planning system should prevent both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of air or noise pollution.
- 2 The application provides insufficient archaeological information to enable the local planning authority to properly assess the nature and extent of the impact on potential archaeological remains within the site. There is insufficient evidence to understand the potential impact of the proposed development, as required by paragraph 128 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012. The application

therefore fails to demonstrate that the requirements of policy EN5 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009 and policy ENV14 of the draft Local Plan 2014.

- 3 The proposed development would result in adverse effects in terms of highway safety and would therefore be contrary to policies S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy and policy COM7 of the draft Local Plan (as amended June 2014).
- 4 The proposed development would result in adverse effects in terms of local education provision, as there is insufficient capacity to meet the needs of the additional population resulting from the development. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policy CS7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009 and policy GROWTH 3 of the draft Local Plan (as amended 2014).

**SIGNATURE
REDACTED**

Dated: 7th August 2014

Principal Development Management Officer

MAIN CASE

Proposal: Outline application for up to 128 residential dwellings with all matters reserved apart from means for access.

Location: Land North Of Field End Witchford Cambridgeshire

Applicant: Gladman Developments Ltd

Agent: Savills (UK) Ltd

Reference No: 14/00248/OUM

Case Officer: Penny Mills

Parish: Witchford
Ward: Haddenham
Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Gareth Wilson
Councillor Ian Allen
Councillor Pauline Wilson

Date Received: 7 March 2014 Expiry Date:

[P58]

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 128 residential dwellings on land to the north of Field End in Witchford. Approval is sought for access as part of this application, with all other matters (landscaping, appearance, scale and layout) reserved for subsequent consideration.
- 1.2 The site is located outside the settlement boundary for Witchford and the proposal is therefore a departure from planning policies contained within the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy, which forms part of the Development Plan for the district.
- 1.3 The application has been called to the Planning Committee by the ward Councillor Pauline Wilson, County Councillor Bill Hunt and Councillor Charles Roberts.
- 1.4 The Council cannot currently demonstrate a robust five year housing supply and therefore the policies within the Core Strategy relating to the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date. In light of this, applications for housing development, such as this one, should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.5 This application for up to 128 residential dwellings, would go some way to address the five year housing supply shortfall, which the Planning Inspector has advised amounts

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to 320 dwellings. The benefit of this development is therefore the contribution it would make in terms of housing supply within the District as a whole as well as the economic benefits of construction and additional population to support local businesses, and the provision of affordable housing.

- 1.6 The key considerations in determining this application are therefore: whether any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development, as set out above, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole and against the policies within the Core Strategy which do not specifically relate to the supply of housing; or, whether any specific policies within the NPPF indicate that the development should be restricted.
- 1.7 In making the above assessment, the following material considerations are relevant:
- Settlement strategy and sustainable patterns of development;
 - Impacts on visual amenity and the character of the countryside and the setting of Witchford;
 - Impacts on ecology and biodiversity;
 - Flood risk and drainage issues;
 - Impacts on the historic environment;
 - Issues of highway safety and accessibility; and,
 - Impacts on residential amenity.
- 1.8 Witchford is close to Ely with good public transport and pedestrian and cycling links. There is also access to employment. Thus the location of the development is compatible with reducing out-commuting and the need to travel by car. This supports the emphasis on reducing carbon emissions and energy use which is a fundamental part of the environmental strand of sustainability in the NPPF. The benefits of the scheme are the contribution to meeting housing supply in the District as well as the economic benefits of construction and additional population to support local business and the provision of affordable housing. There would be no adverse impacts in terms of residential amenity, visual amenity or ecology and biodiversity that would significantly outweigh the benefits of the development. The issues relating to archaeology, foul water capacity, floodrisk and drainage can be addressed through the submission of additional information.
- 1.9 It is therefore recommended that the application be delegated to the Principal Development Control Manager for approval, subject to finalisation of the attached draft conditions and any additional conditions required following responses from consultees, the completion of a satisfactory S106 Agreement and submission of sufficient information in respect of archaeology and foul water capacity to address the concerns of County Archaeology and the Environment Agency.

2.0 THE APPLICATION

- 2.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for the erection of up to 128 residential units with all matters reserved apart from means of access. The means of access is proposed from an existing field gate access from Field End.

- 2.2 The Design and Access Statement submitted with the planning application outlines the development and mix of uses proposed. The application site extends to 5.1 hectares, of which 3.82 hectares are proposed for residential development and 128 dwellings at a density of 33 dwellings per hectare. The applicant has stated that the development would provide a mix of dwellings and house types, providing 30% affordable homes, 0.83 hectares are proposed for informal open space with an equipped play area of 0.06 hectares, a balancing pond extending to 0.06 hectares and a pedestrian access point and paths and cycle ways.
- 2.3 The application is supported by the following plans and documents:
- Location plan;
 - Vehicular access plan;
 - Indicative layout plan;
 - Assessment of 5 year housing supply (Updated May 2014);
 - Design and access statement;
 - Planning statement;
 - Socio-Economic Impact report;
 - Affordable housing statement;
 - Travel plan;
 - Drainage strategy;
 - Flood Risk Assessment and outline drainage strategy;
 - Noise assessment;
 - Statement of Community Involvement;
 - Contamination preliminary risk assessment;
 - Landscape and visual impact assessment;
 - Ecological assessment;
 - Archaeological desk-based assessment;
 - Air quality screening report;
 - Arboricultural assessment;
 - Utilities and infrastructure report;
 - Sustainability assessment.

3.0 THE APPLICANT'S CASE

- 3.1 The Applicant's case is set out in the Design and Access Statement and the Planning Statement, which can be viewed online via East Cambridgeshire District Council's Public Access online service, via the following link <http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>.
- 3.2 Alternatively a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, on the application file.

4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The site comprises undeveloped farmland to the north of Field End and to the west of Common Road. The land is a mix of Grade 2 and 3 agricultural land. The site is bordered to the north by the A142 and by a modern housing estate to the south on Field End, the gardens of the dwellings face towards the site. To the east of the site is the Greenham Business Park and a Depot (containing employment uses) and further

agricultural land to the west. The site is located in the countryside and is bordered by a line of trees and hedges at a height of 3m. There are a number of field accesses into the site, including 2 accesses from Field End.

- 4.2 The site is relatively flat and is located on the northern edge of Witchford, on land outside of the settlement boundary. The site area extends to 5.1 hectares and has a deep ditch running close to its south eastern corner, a earth bund 4m in height is located along the boundary with the business park. The western-most field was ploughed at the time of the case officer's site visit.

5.0 PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 None relevant

6.0 REPLIES TO CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 **Neighbours** - At the time of writing this report, 30 people had commented on the application. Of these, 21 explicitly expressed that they objected to the proposal. One representation was received in support of the proposal. The following relevant points were raised in the consultation responses (full copies of the responses can be found on the application file or through public access using the following link:
<http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Highways Issues

- Construction traffic through the village and onto the junction with the A142;
- Increase in traffic at the junction of Common Road with the A142;
- General increase in traffic and number of people;
- Increased hazard to children and pets;
- Impact on road safety and unsafe access
- Development is proposed off a road with traffic calming in place;
- Section 106 required for highway improvements;
- Cycle paths should be designed that give priority to cyclists crossing at side roads;

Sustainability

- We should be reducing vehicular traffic, discourage use of cars and increase use of sustainable travel modes;
- It is better to use infill sites within the village;
- Not an allocated site in the village vision;
- This is not sustainable development;

Housing Scale/Mix/Type

- Scale of development is questioned;
- This village doesn't require any smaller or housing association properties;
- It should only be considered for affordable housing;
- Is there a need for so much affordable housing;
- An ECDC representative has said that the planned housing targets for Witchford are only 60 homes until 2025- will this development over provide;

- Are the thresholds for affordable housing provision still applicable on sites located in the countryside;

Infrastructure

- The development is not in the best interests of Witchford and its population;
- The schools are at capacity;
- Impact on local services, this could be of benefit and to their detriment;
- Insufficient play space within the village;
- Lack of existing facilities within the village;
- Will it result in need for additional community facilities;
- Only benefit is the proposed play area;
- Better connectivity between the proposed and existing open spaces should be made;

Ecology / Biodiversity

- Demolition of hedgerows and loss of wildlife habitat;
- The hedge along Field End should be retained;

Policy

- Will this result in the settlement boundary being altered;
- How will the affordable housing be monitored and will provision be made for local people;

Residential Amenity

- Overlooking and loss of privacy;
- Loss of view;
- Noise from the A142;
- Noise, disruption and mess during construction;
- The noise issues are too great to be overcome by mitigation;

Visual Amenity

- Potential for cramped development;
- It will excessively enlarge the village;
- Impact on character of the village;

Inaccuracies/insufficiencies

- The traffic statement is flawed;
- The noise assessment is not truly representative of local conditions;

Flood Risk/Drainage

- How will run-off be dealt with;
- Existing issue with groundwater;
- Impact on drainage;
- SUDS proposals are too dismissive of use of swales and above ground storage- thereby allowing biodiversity opportunities.

Other matters

- Purely speculative development;

- The settlement boundary is there for a reason;
- Increase in crime and anti-social behaviour;
- Motives of the applicant are questioned;

6.2 **Ely Cycle Campaign-** We would expect to see separate cycleways, not shared use paths on the final plans, these should a minimum width of 2.1m and provide direct routes into Witchford and its local facilities. We would expect to see the provision of cycleways along Field End and Common Road. Junction improvements required where Common Road meets the A142 and monies should go towards the provision of a roundabout.

6.3 **Sport England-** No comments.

6.4 **Councillor Bill Hunt-** This development is clearly outside the village development line and should automatically be refused. It would create an unsustainable load on local infrastructure and local facilities including schools and roads.

6.5 **Witchford Parish Council-** Object to the proposed development on the following grounds:

- Outside the village development envelope;
- Remain supportive of housing development within the village envelope and for affordable housing/mixed on exception sites outside the settlement boundary.

6.6 **Anglian Water-** There are assets owned by Anglian Water or those subject to an adoption agreement within or close to the development boundary that may affect the layout of the site. The foul drainage from this development is in the catchment of Witchford Sewage Treatment Works that at present has available capacity for these flows. Development will lead to an unacceptable risk of flooding downstream and mitigation as outlined in the Developer Impact Assessment will be required. Recommend a condition in respect of the submission of a foul water strategy.

6.7 **Environment Agency-** Advise that a final decision on the application is deferred until:

- The status of the allocated site has been established;
- Evidence has been provided to demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development in Witchford and any additional windfall sites;
- Evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the increased sewage discharge from Witchford WRC can be achieved within the limits of conventionally applied technology and will not lead to a breach of WFD objectives;
- It has been established whether phasing controls will be necessary.

The Environment Agency have confirmed to the Planning Officer that this is not a principle objection and they are comfortable with the issues being resolved following the decision of the Planning Committee as set out in the recommendation of this report.

6.8 **CCC Archaeology-** Recommend that further archaeological evaluation to be commissioned and undertaken prior to any planning determination.

- 6.9 **ECDC Access Group-** We look forward to viewing plans when full application is made.
- 6.10 **Police Architectural Liaison Officer-** There has been one recorded crime and no record of anti-social behaviour in this area over the past 12 months. The indicative layout is welcomed, it includes active frontages, defensible space, back to back properties, overlooking of public space and lack of rear parking areas. I would fully support the applicant should they submit a Secure by Design application. No objection and no further comments to make.
- 6.11 **Environmental Health (Noise)-** I agree that once the layout of the reserved matters is submitted further details in respect of noise and mitigation will be required. To ensure future residents of the proposed development are sufficiently protected against road noise, further mitigation is likely to be required. Recommend conditions in respect of a noise assessment, construction management plan and construction times.
- 6.12 **Councillor Pauline Wilson-** These houses are outside of the village envelope and should be refused. Witchford has limited local facilities, some of which are near capacity. The exit onto Common Road and towards the junction with the A142 is extremely busy and cannot cope with additional traffic. Villages can cope with a few additional houses but not with the amount being proposed.
- 6.13 **Environmental Health (Contaminated Land)-** I agree with the findings of the air quality assessment and don't consider it necessary to undertake further work. I agree with the findings of the risk assessment and note that further intrusive works are necessary to establish whether the site is suitable for its end use. Recommend conditions in respect of a contaminated land investigation to be undertaken.
- 6.14 **Littleport and Downham Internal Drainage Board-** This application is outside of the IDB Drainage District but in an area that could drain into it. If surface water is balanced on site and there is no increase in flows to the IDB's system, then no objection. There is an East Cambridgeshire Award ditch to the south of the site, this watercourse flows into the IDB's Catchwater system and there is no residual capacity. The Board would wish to make comments on the detailed design of the surface water drainage for the site.
- 6.15 **Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue-** Adequate provision be made for fire hydrants, secured by way of planning condition or Section 106 agreement.
- 6.16 **Councillor Charles Roberts-** I agree with the comments made by Councillor Bill Hunt. The proposals very clearly conflict with our local plan and should be refused.
- 6.17 **CCC Highways-** Comments made in relation to the civil engineering aspects of the development. The increase in traffic would incrementally increase risk at the junction of Common Road with the A142, this increase is unlikely to be of a significant magnitude and is not considered to provide justification for objecting. The access to the site is acceptable as proposed, subject to conditions in relation to access specification, drainage measures to address surface water run-off, visibility splays and submission of a traffic management plan.

- 6.18 **CCC Transport Assessment Team-** Initial holding objection, which was removed following the submission of additional transport information.
- 6.19 **ECDC Waste Strategy-** Any private roads/lanes should be built to highway standards to allow waste vehicles to collect from the properties. The Council charges for the supply of wheeled bins, two bins per property are required.
- 6.20 **ECDC Forward Planning-** Initially commented in defence of the Council's five year housing supply (see discussion in Planning Comments). However, the Planning Inspector has subsequently confirmed that there is a shortfall of 320 dwellings.

7.0 THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

7.1 East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009

CS1	Spatial Strategy
CS2	Housing
CS6	Environment
CS7	Infrastructure
CS8	Access
H1	Housing Mix and Type
H2	Density
H3	Affordable housing
S4	Developer contribution
S6	Transport impact
S7	Parking provision
EN1	Landscape and settlement character
EN2	Design
EN3	Sustainable construction and energy efficiency
EN4	Renewable energy
EN5	Historic conservation
EN6	Biodiversity and geology
EN7	Flood risk
EN8	Pollution

7.2 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan Pre-submission version (February 2013)

GROWTH 1	Levels of housing, employment and retail growth
GROWTH 2	Locational strategy
GROWTH 3	Infrastructure requirements
GROWTH 4	Delivery of growth
GROWTH 5	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
HOU 1	Housing mix
HOU 2	Housing density
HOU 3	Affordable housing provision
ENV 1	Landscape and settlement character
ENV 2	Design
ENV 4	Energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction
ENV 5	carbon offsetting
ENV 7	Biodiversity and geology

ENV 8	Flood risk
ENV 14	Sites of archaeological interest
COM 7	Transport impact
ENV 9	Pollution

7.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations
Design Guide

8.0 **CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY**

8.1 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 1 Building a strong, competitive economy
- 4 Promoting sustainable transport
- 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
- 7 Requiring good design
- 10 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

9.0 **PLANNING COMMENTS**

- 9.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires that decisions on planning applications are made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The statutory Development Plan for the District currently comprises the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy, 2009 and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Plan 2012.
- 9.2 The proposed development is located outside the development envelope on unallocated land, and would therefore normally constitute a departure from both Core Strategy and draft Local Plan policies. However, the current Core Strategy 2009 is based on evidence now considered to be out of date. The emerging Local Plan is currently under Examination, and the Local Plan Inspector has recently issued an Interim Conclusions Report (appendix 1) stating that in his view there is a shortfall of 320 dwellings in the Council's five year housing land supply. He has advised that the Hearings for the Examination be deferred for two months to allow the Council to address this issue.
- 9.3 Therefore, whilst the Inspector is satisfied that a robust supply of housing land has been demonstrated for the Plan period as a whole (13,000 dwellings), and that the use of a 5% buffer in calculating housing supply is acceptable, the Council cannot demonstrate a robust five year housing supply at the present time, due to the shortfall highlighted above.
- 9.4 Members should note that whilst there is currently a lack of 5 year housing land supply, the Council is due to consider a series of proposed modifications to the Local Plan to address the issue, at the Full Council meeting on 4th September. It is therefore

anticipated that at some stage in the near future, the Council will be able to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply.

- 9.5 Notwithstanding the ongoing work to address the housing land supply shortfall, at the present time, paragraph 49 of the NPPF applies, which states that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date, and housing applications, such as this one, should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 9.6 The presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key principle underpinning the NPPF. The sustainability or otherwise of a particular development proposal is therefore a key material consideration in determining planning applications, particularly in those cases where relevant housing policies are considered out-of-date, due to the absence of a five year housing supply.
- 9.7 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF defines sustainable development as having three dimensions: economic, social and environmental. These give rise to three key roles of the planning system:
- An economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
 - A social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - An environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of these, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 9.8 In practice, the presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals should be approved unless any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole and against the policies within the Core Strategy which do not specifically relate to the supply of housing; or, whether any specific policies within the NPPF indicate that the development should be restricted.
- 9.9 The benefits of the development, against which any adverse impacts must be weighed, are: the contribution that it would make in terms of addressing the housing supply shortfall, within the District as a whole; the economic benefits of construction and additional population to support local businesses; and the provision of affordable housing to meet the needs of the district as a whole.
- 9.10 In making this assessment of impacts against benefits, the following material considerations are considered to be relevant:

Environmental Sustainability

- Settlement strategy and sustainable patterns of development
- Impacts on visual amenity and the character of the countryside and the setting of Witchford
- Impacts on ecology and biodiversity
- Impacts on the historic environment
- Flood risk and drainage issues

Social Sustainability

- Issues of highway safety and accessibility
- Impacts on residential amenity
- Provision of affordable housing to meet district-wide need

Economic Sustainability

- Impacts on existing infrastructure
- Economic benefits of construction industry jobs
- Increased population supporting local businesses

Settlement strategy and sustainable patterns of development

- 9.11 The importance of sustainable development emphasised in the NPPF is echoed in the policies of the Core Strategy and the draft Local Plan. One of the key ways in which sustainable development is achieved is through a clear settlement strategy and policies directing development to the most sustainable locations. These policies do not specifically relate to the supply of housing and as such are still a relevant consideration in determining this application.
- 9.12 Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy states that *“all new development should contribute to the delivery of sustainable development, by being designed and located to minimise carbon emissions and the use of non-renewable resources”* and policy CS8 makes it clear that reducing the need to travel by car involves *“ensuring development is located where it is most accessible and can help to increase the use of non-car modes.”*
- 9.13 In the emerging Local Plan, the locational strategy set out in policy GROWTH2 is designed to ensure that growth is sustainable, by focussing the majority of new development on the Market Towns of Ely, Soham and Littleport. These locations have a wide range of jobs, services and facilities and better transport infrastructure. Locating development in these locations can therefore help to reduce out-commuting, the need to travel, carbon emissions and energy use.
- 9.14 The site proposed in this application is on the edge of Witchford and therefore, it does not technically accord with the locational strategy set out above. However, Witchford is located approximately 1 mile from Ely and has good pedestrian and cycle links to the city as well as a regular bus service both to Ely and from there on to Cambridge.

- 9.15 As well as being close to the City of Ely, Witchford also benefits from significant employment sites, which are close to the settlement, namely: Lancaster Way Business Park; Greenham Park and Sedgeway Business Park.
- 9.16 In light of the close proximity of Witchford to Ely, the existing links between the two settlements in terms of both public transport and pedestrian/cycle links, and the amount of employment opportunities in the surrounding area, it is considered that the location for the proposed development would be compatible with the desire to help reduce out-commuting and the need to travel by car. This in turn supports the emphasis on reducing carbon emissions and energy use, which are a fundamental part of the environmental strand of sustainability enshrined within the NPPF.
- 9.17 Witchford is a relatively large village with a reasonable level of services, and it is anticipated that it will grow over the Plan period through infill sites within the village. The 'Village Vision' for Witchford set out in the draft Local Plan, is a neighbourhood plan-style document, which was developed in close collaboration with the Parish Council and the local community. The high level of local engagement and empowerment has enabled the Council to closely "reflect the needs and priorities" of the community, as advocated by the NPPF (paragraphs 1 and 17). This approach also accords with the Government's Localism agenda.
- 9.18 The responses from the Witchford Village Vision questionnaire indicated that a small majority (52.3%) thought that there should be no further housing growth on the edge of Witchford. The rest of those who responded in favour of some growth were primarily in favour of small-scale growth with only 5.8% supporting large scale housing, defined as more than 20 houses. These responses informed the Village Vision for Witchford and the lack of specific allocations in the draft Local Plan reflects the local feeling towards new housing development. However, in light of the five year housing supply shortfall, the policies relating to the supply of housing are not up-to-date and cannot be referred to in determining this application. Instead it is the policies within the NPPF as a whole, which must be considered.
- 9.19 Assessing the proposal against the policies contained within the NPPF as a whole, as required by the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF paragraph 14), there would be no adverse impacts in terms of its location and the proximity to Ely and other employment opportunities to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development, in terms of helping to address the existing five year housing land supply shortage.
- 9.20 It should be noted that this presumption in favour of sustainable development allows little weight for the opinions expressed in the Village Vision Questionnaire, and certainly not sufficient weight to override the benefit of an increased five year housing land supply delivered in a relatively sustainable location.
- 9.21 Whilst Witchford is not identified as a focus for growth in the Core Strategy or the draft Local Plan it is close to and well-linked with Ely, one of the main centres of growth in the district. Furthermore, as Witchford has not had any specific allocations in the draft Local Plan, it is not possible to argue that there would be any particular cumulative impacts arising from the development.

Visual impact and impact on the countryside

- 9.22 The application site is located on the northern edge of Witchford on agricultural and between the A142 to the north and the existing residential development to the south. The site is adjacent to Greenham Park employment site and 'Greys of Ely to the east'. To the north, on the other side of the A142, is the Sedgefield Business Park. The site is relatively well-screened and does provide a green edge along this part of Witchford. However, given the presence of the A142 and the nearby business parks, the site does not form an important part of the rural setting of Witchford, nor does it play a particular role in terms of space between settlements.
- 9.23 An indicative layout design (illustrative masterplan) has been submitted with the planning application which shows the means of access from Field End positioned centrally along the southern boundary of the site. This indicative plan shows that the dwellings will typically be arranged facing towards the estate roads with their rear elevations and gardens facing towards Field End and the A142 (i.e. the northern and southern boundaries). Indicative heights of dwelling are stated as being between 2-2.5 storeys.
- 9.24 The application seeks to demonstrate that the development of the site will not result in any adverse visual impact on the character of the area. The open agricultural character of the land will inevitably be lost through the urbanising effects of the development. However the application has demonstrated that there will be opportunities to ensure the balance between providing homes and providing an attractive and green development of a high quality could be delivered through any reserved matters planning application.
- 9.25 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment has been submitted with the planning application. This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (or LVIA) guidance and considers the potential effects of the proposed development upon:
- Individual landscape feature and elements;
 - Landscape character;
 - Visual amenity and the people who view the landscape.
- 9.26 The landscape assessment takes account of 23 differing viewpoints, considered to be reflective of key viewpoints across, into and around the site. The assessment concludes that the site has a relatively small zone of visual influence, due to existing vegetation and built form. From the north (the A142) views are limited by existing vegetation and further screening is suggested as a means of screening the site. From the east the site is screened by a combination of mature trees and hedges along Common Road and by the buildings within the Greenham Business Park. From the south (Field End) mature trees and hedgerows filter views into the site, and views will primarily be available from upper floor windows in residential properties that line the southern boundary of the site. Further screening is also proposed in the form of open space along the south western and western boundaries of the site

- 9.27 The erection of up to 128 houses on the northern edge of Witchford will significantly increase the size of the settlement. However due to the existing topography, landscape features and pattern of existing development, the actual visual impact of this would be limited. On balance it is considered that any potential adverse effects could be either successfully 'designed out' at the reserved matters stage or successfully mitigated for through careful landscaping. As such the impacts on visual amenity would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development as previously discussed.

Residential amenity

- 9.28 The level of residential amenity which would be enjoyed by both future occupiers of the development and occupiers of existing property close to the site are key planning considerations and fall within the social aspect of sustainability as set out in the NPPF.
- 9.29 The main issues to be considered in relation to residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers are the loss of light/overshadowing, light pollution, increased noise, vibration and disturbance and loss of privacy/overlooking.
- 9.30 Core Strategy policies EN2 and EN8 address the above issues, seeking to ensure light, air quality, noise and water pollution are minimised. These objectives are also reiterated in draft Local Plan policies ENV2 and ENV8. Two areas need to be considered in addressing this subject, the construction phase and the final operational phase of the development. The construction phase will be temporary and the impacts will change as the development progresses and the operational phase of the development will be permanent. As layout, appearance and scale are not being assessed at this stage, the reserved matters applications would need to ensure that the proposed development would create an acceptable level of amenity for future occupants as well as safeguarding the amenity of those that occupy existing properties which adjoin the site, through addressing issues relating to overshadowing and overlooking.
- 9.31 The area to the south of the site consists of modern housing built at a relatively high density. The submitted Design and Access Statement states that the proposed density for the application site would be 33 dwellings per hectare. It is considered that this would be acceptable both in terms of reflecting the existing pattern of development and in terms of ensuring sufficient garden/amenity space and separation distances to ensure an acceptable level of residential amenity for future occupiers of the development. It would also allow for sufficient space to ensure that the required separation distances to existing properties on Field End can be achieved.
- 9.32 The residents which are adjacent to the proposed development site are those located along Field End, Victoria Green, Granary End, Briars End and Elm Close. The Framework plan submitted with the planning application shows structural landscaping along the southern boundary and the provision of an open space in the south western corner. The structural landscaping, together with the provision of the public open space will provide some degree of screening and separation from existing properties without resulting in overshadowing or loss of privacy. The site boundary in the south eastern corner retreats a considerable amount from the point at where it meets Field

End, this is a distance of approximately 70m and would ensure sufficient safeguarding distance from properties along Field End, Granary End, Briars End and Elm Close.

- 9.33 Given the close proximity of the A142, a further issue for consideration is noise and the potential for loss of residential amenity to both existing and proposed occupiers of dwellings.
- 9.34 A noise report has been submitted with the planning application which concludes that to achieve the limit of 50dBL in outdoor living areas (patios, gardens etc.), acoustic mitigation will be required for those areas nearest to, and with a direct line of sight to the A142. Mitigation/attenuation is proposed by way of locating gardens on the screened side of dwellings (i.e. not facing towards the A142) or through the installation of closed boarded fencing. Properties further into the site will be screened by the residential buildings proposed to the north and would therefore be likely to achieve the required acceptable daytime noise levels.
- 9.35 The Council's Environmental Health Officer is generally in agreement with the findings of the acoustic report, and they agree that the final layout of the scheme (to be considered at reserved matters stage) will help to determine noise levels and whether mitigation is required.
- 9.36 The Environmental Health Officer concludes that a more detailed noise assessment is required to identify the likely noise impacts, including from the commercial units on the adjacent site and to determine the exact nature of mitigation measures to be used, once the construction methods, locations and noise levels of equipment etc. are known. This could be secured by way of planning condition.
- 9.37 Environmental Health have recommended conditions in respect of working hours and noise levels, including restriction of plan noise, both during construction and during the operational phase. Additional conditions are recommended in respect of the submission of a construction management plan to deal with noise, dust, lighting and vibration during the construction phase, including timescales, together with a condition restricting construction and delivery times. It is considered that these recommended conditions would ensure that sufficient safeguards are in place to protect existing and proposed residential occupants, particularly during but not specifically limited to the construction period. The use of standard techniques such as housing layouts, the orientation of buildings and the associated open spaces at reserved matters stage could control the effects of road noise on the new dwellings within the site.
- 9.38 On balance it is considered that the proposed development would not result in any significant adverse impacts in terms of residential amenity which could not be either designed out at the reserved matters stage or mitigated through the use of conditions.

Highway safety and accessibility

- 9.39 The means of access is proposed from an existing field gate access located on the northern side of Field End. This will be delivered by way of a simple priority junction providing access to the wider highway network along Victoria Green and Common Road.

- 9.40 Whilst concerns have been raised regarding highway safety in neighbour representations, no objections have been received from CCC Highways in respect of the means of access, pedestrian or highway safety. The proposed vehicular access is considered to afford good visibility in both directions along Field End and is located sufficient distance (70m) from the traffic calming measures already in place along Field End so as to not result in the blocking or obstruction of these measures.
- 9.41 The Transport Assessment (TA) has been amended at the request of the Cambridgeshire County Council Transport Assessment Team and they have confirmed that the issues they raised previously have been adequately addressed. The County has therefore removed their holding objection subject to the use of their suggested planning conditions, which have been included at the end of the report under the recommendation.
- 9.42 In light of the position of the County Council Transport Assessment Review, the local planning authority must acknowledge that the proposal would be acceptable on highway safety grounds and that any potential adverse effects could be mitigated by the use of conditions. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with policy S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009 and to policies COM7 and COM8 of the draft Local Plan.

Flood risk and Drainage

- 9.43 The application site is not situated within a designated flood zone. However, a flood risk assessment is required in support of the development, due to its scale
- 9.44 A Flood risk and drainage strategy and foul drainage assessment have been submitted with the planning application, which states that the proposed development will connect to the public sewer, maintained by Anglian Water. The report concludes that Anglian Water has sufficient time following the grant of planning permission to fully assess the impact of development on its sewerage network and sewage treatment works to plan and implement any improvement works necessary prior to the connection of the development to the foul sewer.
- 9.45 Notwithstanding the lack of an objection from Anglian Water, the Environment Agency has commented on the drainage proposals and recommended deferral of the planning application, until such time that additional survey work is undertaken to demonstrate that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development and to show that the increased in sewage discharge from Witchford Water Recycling Centre (WRC) can be achieved, and will not lead to a breach of Water Framework Directive objectives.
- 9.46 Having discussed this matter with the Environment Agency it is considered that this issue does not constitute an objection to the development in principle and as such, could be addressed through the submission of additional information prior to a decision being issued. Certainly, it is considered that sufficient information could be obtained to satisfy the Environment Agency and ensure that there would no adverse effects in terms of floodrisk, drainage and water quality.

- 9.47 Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that given the nature and location of the development is such that any potential impacts would be unlikely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development.

Historic Environment

- 9.48 The application site is not within a Conservation Area and, due to the distances involved, no listed buildings within Witchford would be adversely affected as a result of the development.
- 9.49 Ely Cathedral is located approximately 3.2 miles to the North West. Given that there is a high density of new residential development on the south western and western edge of Ely and due to the topography of the Isle of Ely (with the Cathedral located in the centre of the settlement), the proposed residential development, with dwellings at a maximum height of 2.5 storeys is not considered to impact on the character, appearance or setting of Ely Cathedral, nor is it considered to conflict with long-distance views of Ely Cathedral.
- 9.50 An Archaeological desk-based assessment has been submitted with the planning application. This assessment concludes that there are no designated or non-designated heritage assets on the study site, the site has low potential for any archaeological evidence and therefore no archaeological mitigation appears necessary. However, the Historic Environment Team at the County Council have highlighted that the site could have archaeological potential and in this respect they have objected to the application on the basis that it provides insufficient archaeological information.
- 9.51 The applicant has been unable to carry out the necessary archaeological investigations to satisfy the County Historic Environment Team, due to the presence of crops on the application site. It is therefore recommended that, following Planning Committee, the necessary archaeological work is carried out alongside the completion of the S106, prior to a decision being issued. If the archaeological work brought to light new information which had a fundamental impact on the acceptability of the proposal in terms of its impact on the historic environment, then the application would be brought back to Planning Committee for Member's consideration.
- 9.52 Provided that archaeological work provides the evidence required by the county to ensure that there would be no significant adverse effect on the archaeological record, then again, there would be no adverse impact that would outweigh the benefits of the development.

Ecology/Biodiversity

- 9.53 Objectors have raised concerns over the loss of wildlife habitat and the potential adverse impact on protected species. Policies EN6 and ES6 of the Core Strategy and draft Local Plan respectively, seek to ensure that the impact on wildlife is minimised and that opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are taken. The site is not in close proximity to any designated sites and does not have any designations itself. Given the scale of the proposal and the undeveloped nature of the site, it is appropriate that the impacts on biodiversity and protected species are assessed in line with local and

national Planning Policy, and with regard to the Natural England Standing Advice on Protected Species. In this respect, an Ecological Assessment has been submitted with the application, which includes details of an extended phase 1 habitat survey.

- 9.54 The survey indicates the presence of priority habitat hedgerows. However, the majority of these would be retained, with new, native hedgerow planting to mitigate for any losses. Mitigation has also been recommended that would prevent unlikely but possible negative impacts on protected species including nesting birds, foraging bat, badgers and Great Crested Newts. With regards to the more general loss of habitat and impacts on biodiversity, the report suggests a number of possible biodiversity enhancements and it is considered that appropriate provisions for habitat creation and biodiversity features could be achieved on site.
- 9.55 In light of the information submitted, the local planning authority can be satisfied that there would be no adverse impact on protected species as a result of the development. Landscape features could be retained as part of the development and additional biodiversity features could be incorporated into the design, layout and landscaping. The application therefore satisfies the requirements of policy EN6 of the Core Strategy and with the guidance contained within the NPPF, which states that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Other Material Matters

Impact on local services

- 9.56 Concerns have been raised, particularly in relation to the capacity of Witchford School, and the impact that these development would have. Education contributions are usually obtained through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). However, in this case, as this is not an allocated site, the impact of this development would not have been considered when drawing up CIL. It is considered that it would be appropriate, in this case to seek a specific payment, through a S106 agreement, to address the impact that this particular development would have on education provision in Witchford. Indeed, the application has indicated that education would be one of the heads of terms of such an agreement.

Summary

- 9.57 The Council cannot currently demonstrate a robust five year housing supply and therefore the policies within the Core Strategy relating to the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date. In light of this, applications for housing development, such as this one, should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 9.58 The key considerations in determining this application are therefore: whether any adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole and against the policies within the Core Strategy which do not specifically relate to the supply of housing; or, whether any specific policies within the NPPF indicate that the development should be restricted.

- 9.59 In light of the close proximity of Witchford to Ely, the existing links between the two settlements in terms of both public transport and pedestrian/cycle links, and the amount of employment opportunities in the surrounding area, it is considered that the location for the proposed development would be compatible with the desire to help reduce out-commuting and the need to travel by car. This in turn supports the emphasis on reducing carbon emissions and energy use, which are a fundamental part of the environmental strand of sustainability enshrined within the NPPF.
- 9.60 The benefits of this development are the contribution it would make in terms of housing supply within the District as a whole as well as the economic benefits of construction and additional population to support local businesses, and the provision of affordable housing.
- 9.61 On balance it is considered that there would be no adverse impacts either in terms of the sustainability of the location, residential amenity, visual amenity or ecology and biodiversity that would significantly outweigh the benefits of the development.
- 9.62 It is considered that issues relating to archaeology, foul water capacity, floodrisk and drainage could be addressed through the submission of additional information.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

10.1 It is therefore recommended that the application be delegated to the Principal Development Control Manager for approval, following the completion of a satisfactory S106 Agreement and submission of sufficient information in respect of archaeology and foul water capacity to address the concerns of County Archaeology and the Environment Agency, and subject to the finalisation of the following draft conditions and any additional conditions required following responses from consultees.

1 Approval of the details of the landscaping, appearance, scale and layout (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority in writing before any development is commenced, and shall be carried out as approved. Application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made within 3 years of the date of this permission.

1 Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

2 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 2 years of the date of the approval of the last of the reserved matters.

2 Reason: To comply with Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.

3 No development shall take place until an investigation and risk assessment of the nature and extent of any contamination on the site, whether or not it originates on the site, has been undertaken. The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons, and a written report of the findings must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The report of the findings must include:

- (i) A survey of the extent, scale and nature of contamination;
- (ii) An assessment of the potential risks to: human health
property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets,
woodland and service lines and pipes;
adjoining land;
groundwaters and surface waters; ecological systems;
archaeological sites and ancient monuments;
- (iii) An appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option(s).

This must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination, CLR 11'. Any remediation works proposed shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details before any development takes place.

3 Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors, in accordance with policy EN8 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

4 In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing to the Local Planning Authority within 24 hours. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where remediation is necessary, a remediation scheme must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The necessary remediation works shall be undertaken, and following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

4. Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors, in accordance with policy EN8 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

5. No trees shall be pruned or removed/felled and no shrubs or hedges shall be removed without the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.

5. Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the countryside, in accordance with policies CS1, EN1 and EN2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

6. No development shall take place until a scheme for the replacement of trees has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Planting shall take place in accordance with the approved details in the first planting season following completion of the development or in accordance with a programme of planting to be approved by the Local Planning Authority. If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any tree that tree, or any tree planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or becomes, in the opinion of the local planning authority, seriously damaged or defective, another tree of species, size and siting to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to planting, shall be planted in the planting season

following failure or in accordance with a programme approved by the Local Planning Authority.

6. Reason: To assimilate the development into its surroundings, in accordance with policy EN1 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

7. Details of the energy and sustainability strategy for the site, including details of on-site renewable energy technology, energy efficiency measures and sustainable construction methods to be incorporated into the development, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority at reserved matters stage. Such methods shall secure at least 10% of energy needed on site from decentralised and renewable or low-carbon sources. All development shall be carried out in full compliance with the agreed strategy.

7. Reason: To ensure that the development takes the opportunities available to contribute to delivering the Government's Climate Change Programme and energy policies, and in doing so contribute to global sustainability, and to contribute effectively to tackling climate change, in accordance with Policy EN4 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

8. Prior to commencement of development details of
(a) a sustainable surface water system to accord with Policy EN7 of the Core Strategy; and
(b) details of how any other surface water discharged from the site shall be attenuated to greenfield run off rates
shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for consultation with the Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency. The agreed scheme shall thereafter be fully implemented.

8 Reason: To prevent flooding by ensuring the satisfactory storage/disposal of water from the site in accordance with Policy EN7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

9 Notwithstanding the details shown on the illustrative masterplan plan, a detailed arboricultural assessment of the sustainability of the trees and hedges on the site shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority at reserved matters stage to justify the removal of any trees or hedges. The scheme shall include mitigation measures and proposed new planting to encourage displaced biodiversity and provide new habitats, together with tree protection measures during construction for any trees to be retained.

9 Reason: To ensure that the trees on site are adequately protected, to safeguard the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policy EN6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

10 Construction work on site and deliveries to the site shall only be carried out between the hours of 8.00 and 18.00 Mondays to Fridays and 8.00 to 13.00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays. No machinery or plant shall be operated outside of the above times.

10 Reason: To protect the reasonable residential amenities of adjacent occupiers in accordance with Policy EN2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

11 No development shall take place until a scheme for the protection during construction of the trees and hedges on the site, in accordance with BS 5837:2005 - Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall show the extent of root protection areas and details of ground protection measures and fencing to be erected around the trees, including the type and position of these. The protective measures contained with the scheme shall be implemented prior to the commencement of any development, site works or clearance in accordance with the approved details, and shall be maintained and retained until the development is completed. Within the root protection areas the existing ground level shall be neither raised nor lowered and no materials, temporary buildings, plant, machinery or surplus soil shall be placed or stored thereon. If any trenches for services are required within the fenced areas they shall be excavated and backfilled by hand and any tree roots encountered with a diameter of 25mm or more shall be left unsevered.

11 Reason: To ensure that the trees on site are adequately protected, to safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policies EN1 and EN2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

12. All applications for reserved matters approval of layout and appearance shall be accompanied by a noise assessment, undertaken by a competent person, specifying the predicted impact of noise from, and to, all aspects of the end use of the development, on noise sensitive properties. This shall include but not be limited to road traffic noise, and noise from the adjacent commercial units and shall detail mitigation measures to ensure noise levels at sensitive receivers are within appropriate limits. Mitigation measures for all aspects of noise from and to the site shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority and implemented prior to the use of the development and adhered to thereafter.

12.Reason: To safeguard residential amenity in accordance with policy EN2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

13. Prior to any work commencing on the site a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Local Highway Authority and Environmental Health regarding mitigation measures for noise, dust, lighting and vibration (piling activities) during the construction phase. These shall include, but not be limited to, aspects such as access points for deliveries and site vehicles, and proposed phasing/timescales of development etc. The CEMP shall be adhered to at all times during all phases, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority .

13.Reason: To safeguard residential amenity in accordance with policy EN2 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

14. The dwelling mix for the development (both market and affordable) shall provide a mix of dwelling types and sizes that contribute to the housing needs of the locality at the time of submission of the Reserved Matters application. The mix of housing shall be fully justified by providing robust evidence related to the identified level of housing need of the locality. The

evidence base supplied to support the proposed mix shall be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

14. Reason: To ensure that the development provides a satisfactory mix of dwelling types in accordance with Policy CS2 in the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy (2009) and Policy HOU1 in the East Cambridgeshire Draft Local Plan (2013).

15. A minimum of 5% of residential dwellings that are provided on the site shall be developed as either 'Custom Build' or 'Self-Build' dwellings.

15. Reason: To ensure that the development provides a satisfactory mix of dwelling types in accordance with Policy CS2 in the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy (2009) and Policy HOU1 in the East Cambridgeshire Draft Local Plan (2013).

16. A minimum of 20% of residential dwellings (Use Class C3) forming part of the development shall be designed to meet the following criteria from the Habinteg Lifetime Homes Standard:

- Walls in bathrooms and toilets should be capable of taking adaptations such as handrails; and
- Potential for the provision of a stair lift or a suitably identified space for a through-the-floor lift from the ground to the first floor, for example to a bedroom next to a bathroom. There must be a minimum of 900mm clear distance between the stair wall (on which the lift would normally be located) and the edge of the opposite handrail/balustrade. Unobstructed 'landings' are needed at top and bottom of the stairs.

16. Reason: To ensure that the development provides a satisfactory level of adaptable housing in accordance with Policy CS2 in the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy (2009) and Policy HOU1 in the East Cambridgeshire Draft Local Plan (2013).

17. Prior to commencement of development full details of the new priority junction into the site as indicated on Drawing 4746/15/01 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority. The submitted details shall include a programme of implementation for agreement with the Local Planning Authority, and the works shall thereafter be completed in accordance with the agreed details.

17. Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policies S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009 and to ensure the appropriate infrastructure is provided in a timely manner.

18. No development shall take place on any phase of development until full details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority to illustrate the full internal road layout of the site.

18. Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

19. No development shall take place on any phase of development until full details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the

Highway Authority to illustrate the parking and cycle parking provision, which shall as a minimum be in accordance with the Council's approved Parking Standards.

19.Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

20 The development shall not be occupied until a Residential Travel Plan has been submitted, approved and signed off by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

20. Reason: To encourage the use of modes of transport other than the private car to ensure the sustainability of the scheme in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

21. Prior to the first occupation of any dwelling the road(s), footway(s) and cycleway(s) shall be constructed to at least binder course surfacing level from the dwelling to the adjoining County road in accordance with the details approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority.

21. In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policies S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009 and to ensure the appropriate infrastructure is provided in a timely manner.

22. The gradient of the vehicular access shall not exceed 1:12 for a minimum distance of 5.0m into the site as measured from the near edge of the highway carriageway.

22.In the interests of highway safety in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

23 Prior to the first occupation of the development the vehicular access where it crosses the public highway shall be laid out and constructed in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council construction specification.

23 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

24. Prior to the first occupation of the development sufficient space shall be provided within the site to enable vehicles to:

- a) Enter, turn and leave the site in forward gear
- b) Park clear of the public highway

The area shall be levelled, surfaced and drained and thereafter retained for that specific use.

24. Reason: In the interests of satisfactory development and highway safety, in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

25. Temporary facilities shall be provided clear of the public highway for the parking, turning, loading and unloading of all vehicles visiting the site during the period of construction.

25 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies S6 and S7 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

26. No part of any structure shall overhang or encroach under or upon the public highway and no gate / door / ground floor window shall open outwards over the public highway.

26. Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

27. The proposed new highway boundary shall be marked out on site prior to commencement of construction of any part of the development fronting the highway.

27. Reason: To prevent any building being constructed within the proposed highway boundary in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

28. A metalled surface shall be provided for a minimum distance of 20m along the access road from its junction with the public highway. No works shall commence on site unless/until wheel washing facilities have been provided in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority. The approved wheel washing facilities shall be provided and shall be available for use throughout the construction period.

28. Reason: To prevent mud and extraneous material being deposited on the highway in the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

29. No works shall commence on site unless/until a route for all traffic associated with the construction of the development (or associated with the use of the site) has been provided and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority together with proposals to control and manage traffic using the agreed route and to ensure no other local roads are used by construction traffic (or site traffic).

29. Reason: In the interests of maintaining highway efficiency and safety in accordance with policy S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

30 The access shall be constructed with adequate drainage measures to prevent surface water run-off onto the adjacent public highway, in accordance with a scheme submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, in consultation with the Highway Authority.

30 Reason: To prevent surface water discharging to the Highway, in accordance with policies EN2, EN7 and S6 of the East Cambridgeshire Core Strategy 2009.

31. No development shall commence until a foul water strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. No dwellings shall be occupied until the works have been carried out in accordance with the foul water strategy so approved unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

31. Reason: To prevent environmental and amenity problems arising from flooding in accordance with policy EN7 in the East Cambridgeshire Core Spatial Strategy 2009.

32 The details for landscaping submitted at the reserved matters stage shall include the ecological enhancements set out in paragraph 5.12 of the submitted 'Ecological Appraisal', dated February 2014.

32. Reason: To ensure that sufficient biodiversity enhancements are secured in accordance with policy EN6 of the East Cambridgeshire District Core Strategy 2009.

33. All work on site shall be carried out in strict accordance with the mitigation measure details within the submitted 'Ecological Appraisal', dated February 2014.

33. Reason: To ensure that protected species are adequately mitigated for in accordance with policy EN6 of the East Cambridgeshire District Core Strategy 2009.

<u>Background Documents</u>	<u>Location(s)</u>	<u>Contact Officer(s)</u>
The application file	Penny Mills Room No. 011 The Grange Ely	Penny Mills Senior Planning Officer 01353 665555 scott.jackson@eastcambs.gov.uk

<http://pa.eastcambs.gov.uk/online-applications/>

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan – post-hearing work and proposed modifications

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/d%26t%20cttee%20report%20on%20post%20hearing%20work%2014apr14.pdf>

Core Strategy

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/local-development-framework/adoption-core-strategy>

Draft Local Plan

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/local-development-framework/east-cambridgeshire-local-plan>

6.0 TRAFFIC IMPACT

6.1 Access

Access to the site is taken directly from Field End via a simple priority junction. A layout plan is shown in Appendix 2. It is understood that it was confirmed in initial discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council that a single access was acceptable and that Manual for Streets principles would apply. As can be seen on the layout plan appropriate visibility splays are easily obtainable. The Development Framework Plan also allows for a pedestrian/cycle only access in the south western corner of the site.

6.2 Traffic Impact

Clearly, despite the sustainability of the site, the proposed development will generate additional traffic on the road network and the impact of this needs to be assessed. Traffic flows within the village were observed to be modest so the key junctions were identified as:

- i) A142 / Sutton Road – priority junction at the western end of the bypass
- ii) A142 / Common Road – priority junction
- iii) A142 / Witchford Road / Lancaster Way – roundabout at the eastern end of the bypass
- iv) Main Street / Grunty Fen Road – priority junction (with Grunty Fen Road forming a further route out of the village to the south)

The approach for the analysis was as follows:

- i) Establish base 2013 traffic flows via traffic surveys.
- ii) Growth to 2019 (five years after submission) using TEMPRO factors.
- iii) Calculate trip rates and traffic generation for the development using the TRICS database.

- iv) Distribute/assign traffic to the network based on National Census journey to work data.
- v) Add to ii) to obtain 2019 with development flows.
- vi) Test junction capacity using the TRL programs ARCADY and PICADY.

6.2.1 Base Traffic Flows

Traffic surveys were carried out on Tuesday 19th November 2013 and the survey results are enclosed as Appendix 3. The resultant peak hour flows are shown on Figures 3 and 4 at the rear of this report.

These flows were then growthed to 2019 (five years after application) using TEMPRO growth factors. The TEMPRO printout is enclosed as Appendix 4 with the factors being 1.080 (AM peak) and 1.084 (PM peak). The resultant 2019 base flows are shown on Figure 5 and 6.

6.2.2 Development Related Flows

Peak hour trip rates for the development were obtained from the TRICS database and the TRICS printout is enclosed as Appendix 5. Applying these rates to 130 units results in the following traffic generations for the site:

Number of Houses: 130				
	Trip Rates		Development Trips	
	Arrive	Depart	Arrive	Depart
AM Peak	0.153	0.391	20	51
PM Peak	0.378	0.237	49	31

This traffic was distributed based on the National Census Journey to Work (Car Driver) database for Haddenham and Ely South Wards. The Census data and resultant distributions are enclosed as Appendix 6 and the percentage distribution shown as Figure 7. Assigning the development related traffic flows in these proportions results in the development related traffic flows on Figure 8 and 9. Adding these figures to the 2019 baseflows results in the 2019 with development traffic flows shown in Figures 10 and 11.

6.2.3 Traffic Impact

The key junctions were analysed using the TRL programs ARCADY8 and PICADY8 using the DIRECT option for traffic flow input. In the analysis the key statistics are the ratio of flow to capacity (RFC) and the average maximum queue lengths. If the RFC value exactly equals 1.0 then flow equals theoretical capacity. Cambridgeshire County Council considers a junction is at practical capacity if the RFC exceeds 0.85.

The table below shows the maximum RFC values and queue lengths and the full ARCADY and PICADY printouts are enclosed as Appendix 7.

Residential Development (130 Houses), Field Road, Witchford - Junction Analysis (using DIRECT flows input in 15 min segments)

1. A142/Sutton Road – PICADY8 Results

AM

Arm	Turn	2013 base		2019 without dev		2019 with dev	
		Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue
Sutton Road (minor)	Left	0.13	0.2	0.15	0.2	0.15	0.2
	Right	0.01	0.0	0.02	0.0	0.02	0.0
A142 W	Right	0.17	0.2	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2

PM

Arm	Turn	2013 base		2019 without dev		2019 with dev	
		Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue
Sutton Road (minor)	Left	0.18	0.2	0.21	0.3	0.21	0.3
	Right	0.05	0.1	0.06	0.1	0.06	0.1
A142 W	Right	0.18	0.2	0.21	0.3	0.21	0.3

2. Main Street/Grunty Fen Road – PICADY8 Results

AM

Arm	Turn	2013 base		2019 without dev		2019 with dev	
		Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue
Grunty Fen Road (minor)	All	0.46	0.8	0.51	1.0	0.53	1.1
Main Street W	All	0.27	0.5	0.29	0.6	0.33	0.7

PM

Arm	Turn	2013 base		2019 without dev		2019 with dev	
		Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue
Grunty Fen Road (minor)	All	0.57	1.3	0.63	1.6	0.66	1.9
Main Street W	All	0.13	0.2	0.15	0.2	0.17	0.3

3. A142 Sutton Road/Common Road – PICADY8 Results

AM

Arm	Turn	2013 base		2019 without dev		2019 with dev	
		Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue
Common Road N (minor)	Left	0.06	0.1	0.06	0.1	0.06	0.1
	Right	0.04	0.0	0.05	0.1	0.05	0.1
A142 W	Right	0.23	0.2	0.26	0.3	0.27	0.4
Common Road S (minor)	Left	0.15	0.2	0.16	0.2	0.19	0.2
	Right	0.09	0.1	0.10	0.1	0.21	0.3
A142 E	Right	0.07	0.1	0.08	0.1	0.08	0.1

PM

Arm	Turn	2013 base		2019 without dev		2019 with dev	
		Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue
Common Road N (minor)	Left	0.06	0.1	0.06	0.1	0.06	0.1
	Right	0.08	0.1	0.09	0.1	0.09	0.1
A142 W	Right	0.12	0.1	0.13	0.2	0.16	0.2
Common Road S (minor)	Left	0.15	0.2	0.17	0.2	0.18	0.2
	Right	0.10	0.1	0.13	0.2	0.18	0.2
A142 E	Right	0.02	0.0	0.03	0.0	0.03	0.0

4. A142/Witchford Road/Lancaster Way – ARCADY8 Results

AM

Arm	2013 base		2019 without dev		2019 with dev	
	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue
A142 W	0.63	1.6	0.68	2.1	0.70	2.3
A142 E	0.71	2.4	0.77	3.3	0.78	3.3
Lancaster Way	0.09	0.1	0.10	0.1	0.10	0.1
Witchford Road	0.36	0.6	0.40	0.7	0.40	0.7

PM

Arm	2013 base		2019 without dev		2019 with dev	
	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue	Max RFC	Queue
A142 W	0.47	0.9	0.52	1.1	0.53	1.1
A142 E	0.60	1.5	0.65	1.8	0.67	2.0
Lancaster Way	0.67	2.0	0.76	3.0	0.77	3.1
Witchford Road	0.29	0.4	0.34	0.5	0.34	0.5

From the table it is clear that all the key junctions are operating well within capacity in 2019 with the development in place with maximum RFC values all below 0.85. Furthermore by observation traffic flows on Field End are modest and therefore, with the relatively modest level of development traffic, clearly capacity at the access is not an issue.

Overall therefore it is concluded that there is no material traffic impact as a result of these proposals.

6.3 Road Safety

Traffic accident data for the last five available years (01/01/2009-31/12/2013) has been obtained from the County Council's web site and the accident plot is included in Appendix 8 together with a summary table.

The plot shows the whole of Witchford and the A142. The following observations are made:

- i) There are a total of 26 personal injury accidents. Over a five year period over a significant network including a heavily trafficked 'A' road this is not a materially high number.
- ii) The majority of accidents are around the A142 itself and its junctions with the minor roads. Given the level of flow on the A142 this is to be expected.
- iii) None of the main road junctions have, on average, more than one accident per year.
- iv) Within the village there have been only eight accidents over five years. Of these only one is classified as serious (when a car hit a pedestrian). All the others are classified as slight.
- v) Of all the accidents only four involved pedestrians.
- vi) Of all the accidents only two involved cyclists.
- vii) There are no accidents on Field end itself or at its junction with Common Road.

Against this background the modest increase in flow caused by the proposed development must also be considered. In particular on the A142 percent increase in traffic flows are just over 1% west of the Common Road junction and 1.5% east of the junction in the AM peak hour. These are not material increases in traffic flow. Similarly increases within the village in the AM peak are just 31 vehicles on Common Road South of Field End and along Main Street to the east. This is one extra vehicle every two minutes on average which is a very marginal increase.

Overall therefore there is not an existing material road safety issue in the area, and the impact of the development traffic is very small and certainly not at a level likely to impact on the current situation.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, therefore, the following conclusions are reached:

- i) This is an outline application for a residential development. The Development Framework Plan shows a development of up to 128 units.
- ii) Access to the required design standards is proposed.
- iii) The site is well located to allow travel by the more sustainable modes.
- iv) A Framework Travel Plan accompanies the application.
- v) There are no material traffic impacts associated with the proposal.
- vi) There are no road safety issues associated with the development.

Overall, therefore, it is concluded that there are no material transport issues associated with the application.

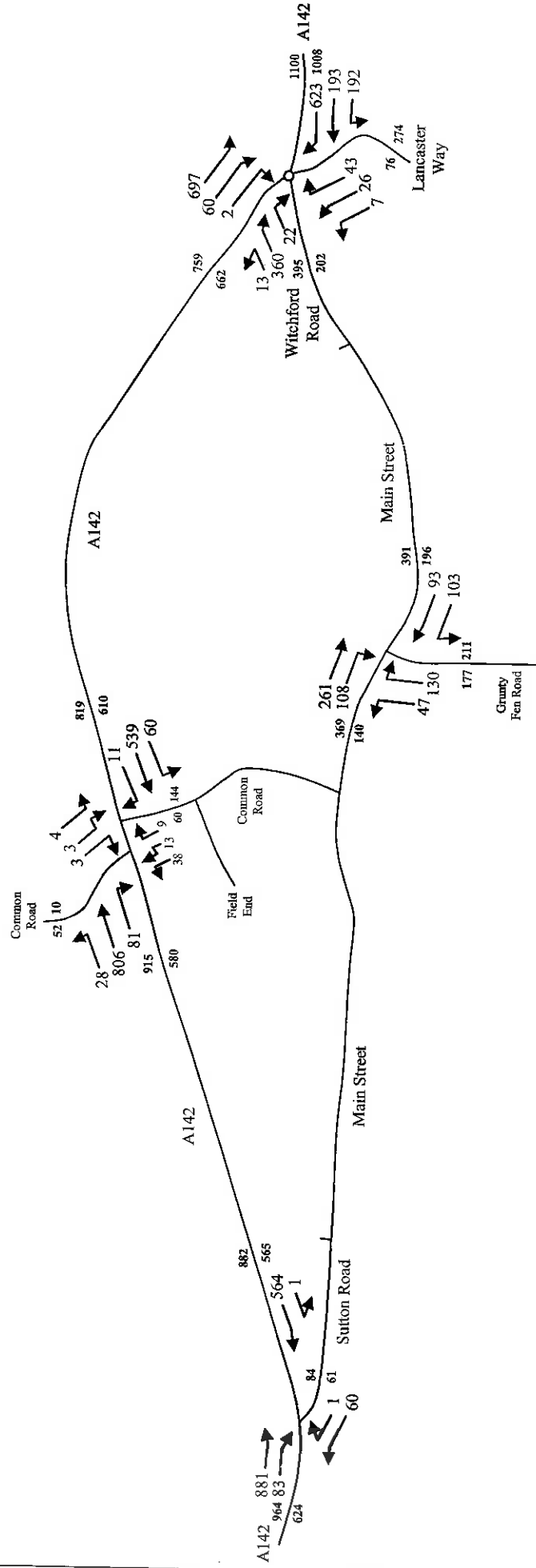
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FIGURES 3-11

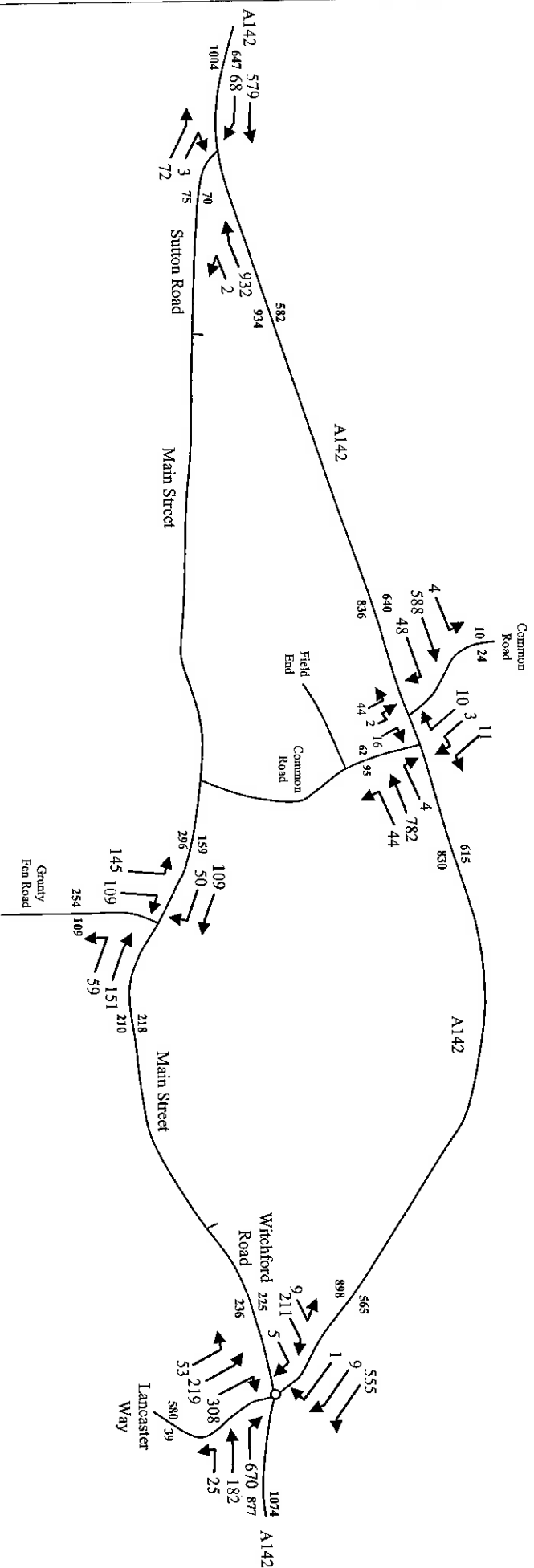
Traffic Flow Diagrams

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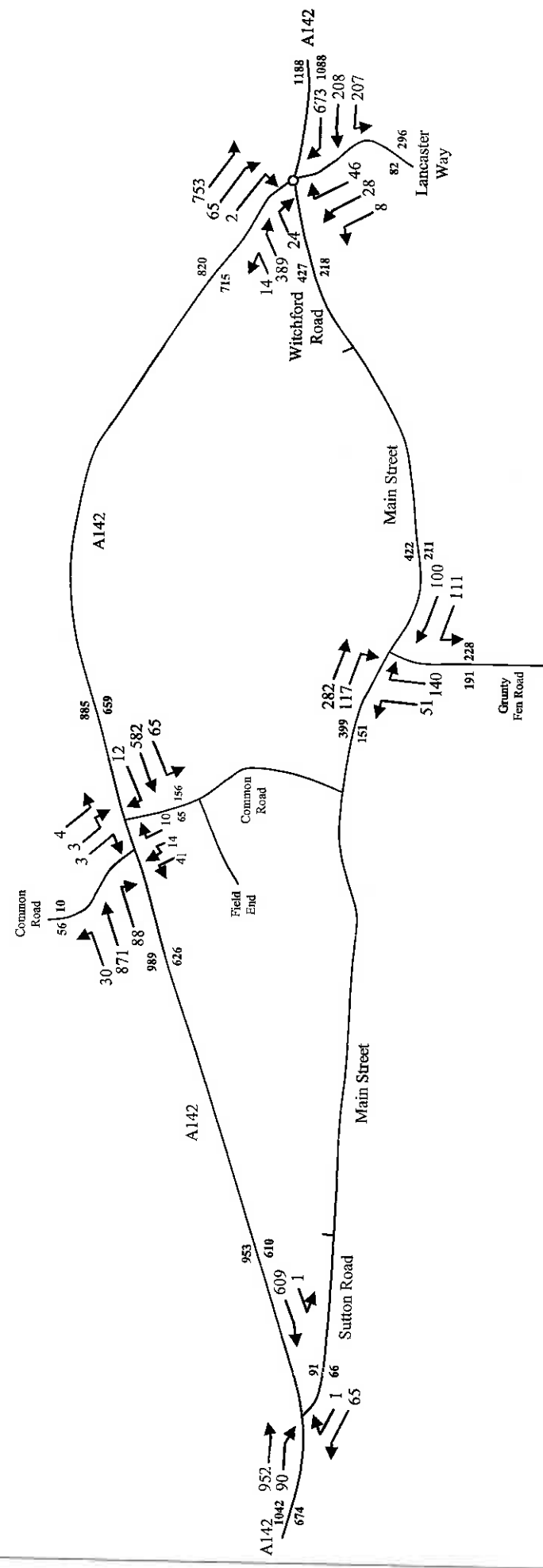
**Proposed Residential Development on
Land at Field End, Witchford
Transport Assessment**



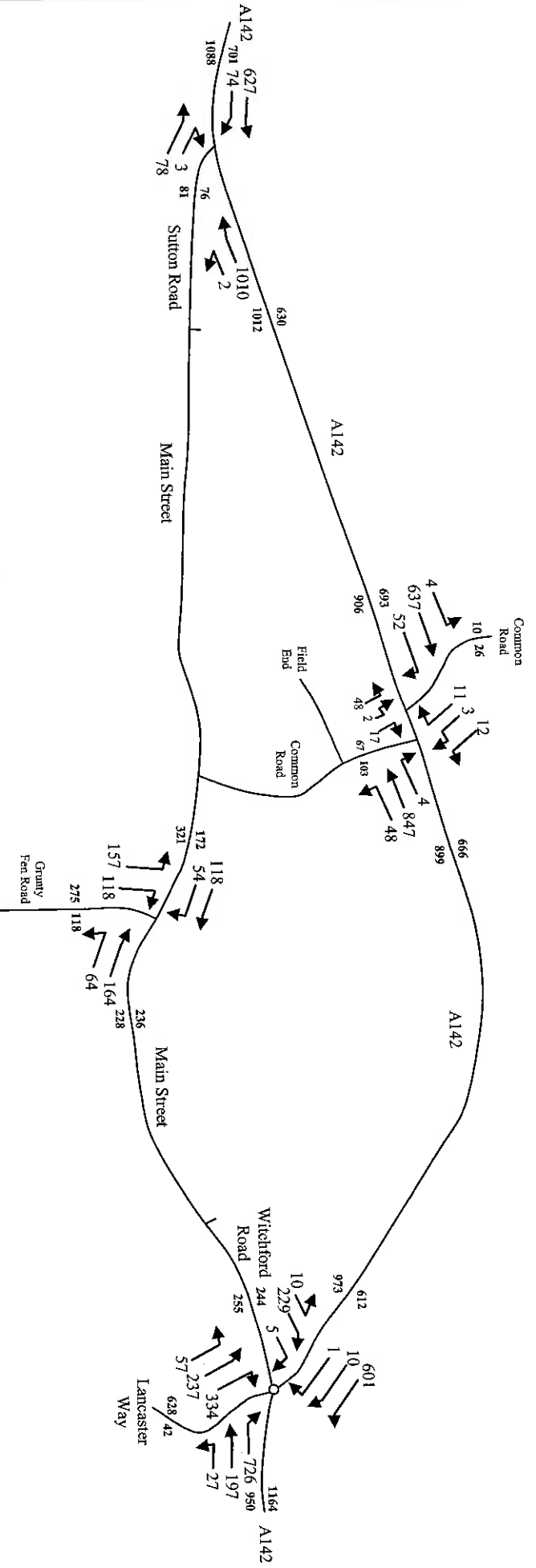
STIRLINGMAYNARD Transportation Consultants Woolstone Centre 1-2 Mill Lane Woolstone Milton Keynes MK15 0AJ	Drawing	2013 AM Peak (0745-0845) Observed Turning Flows			Figure No 3
	Project	Field End, Witchford	Drawn	HC	Checked NW
	Client	Gladman Developments Limited	Scale	NTS	Date Jan 2014



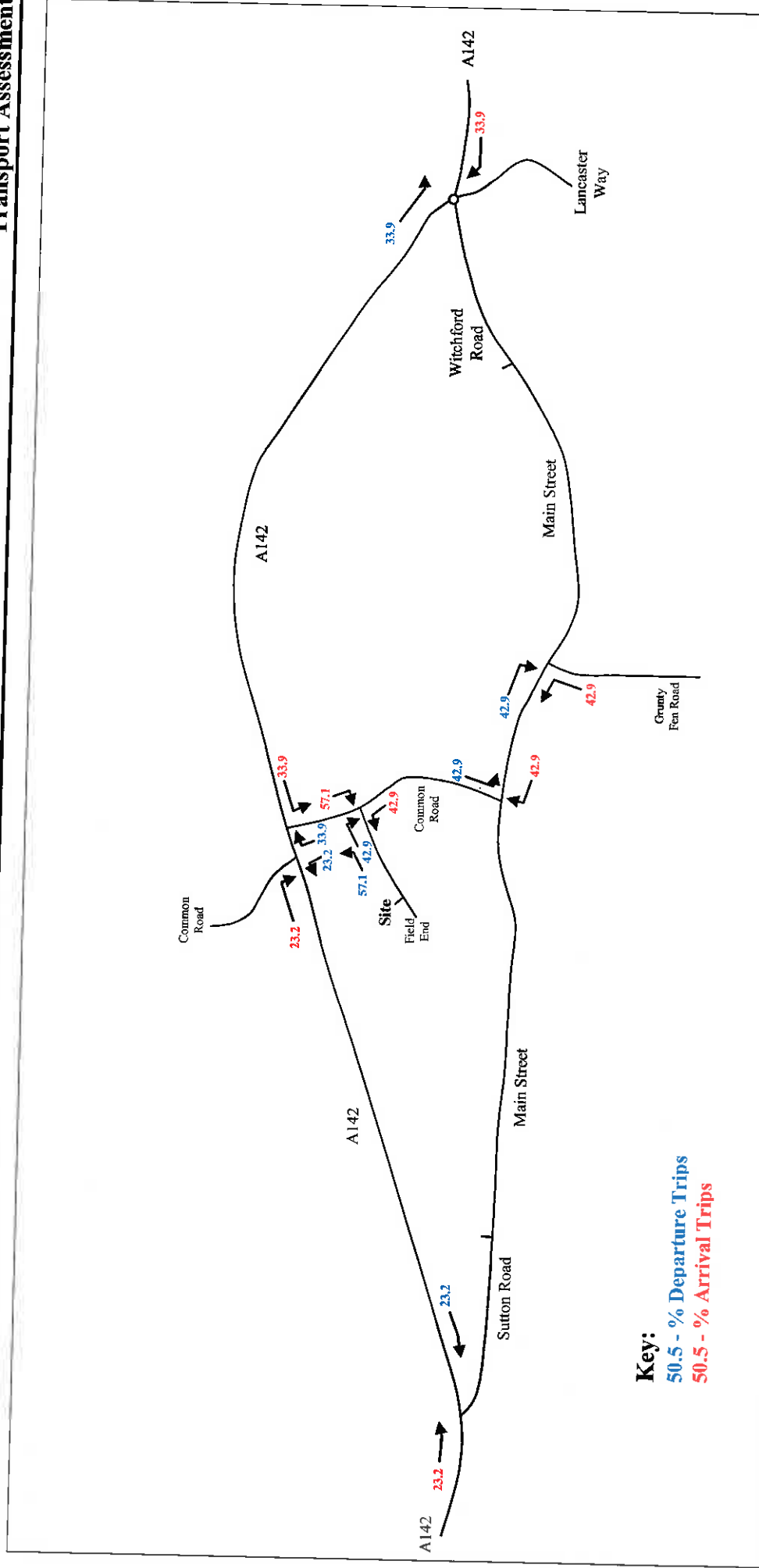
STIRLINGMAYNARD Transportation Consultants Woolstone Centre 1-2 Mill Lane Woolstone Milton Keynes MK15 0AJ	Drawing	2013 PM Peak (1645-1745) Observed Turning Flows		Figure No 4
	Project	Field End, Witchford		Drawn HC
	Client	Gladman Developments Limited		Checked NW
		Scale	NTS	Date Jan 2014



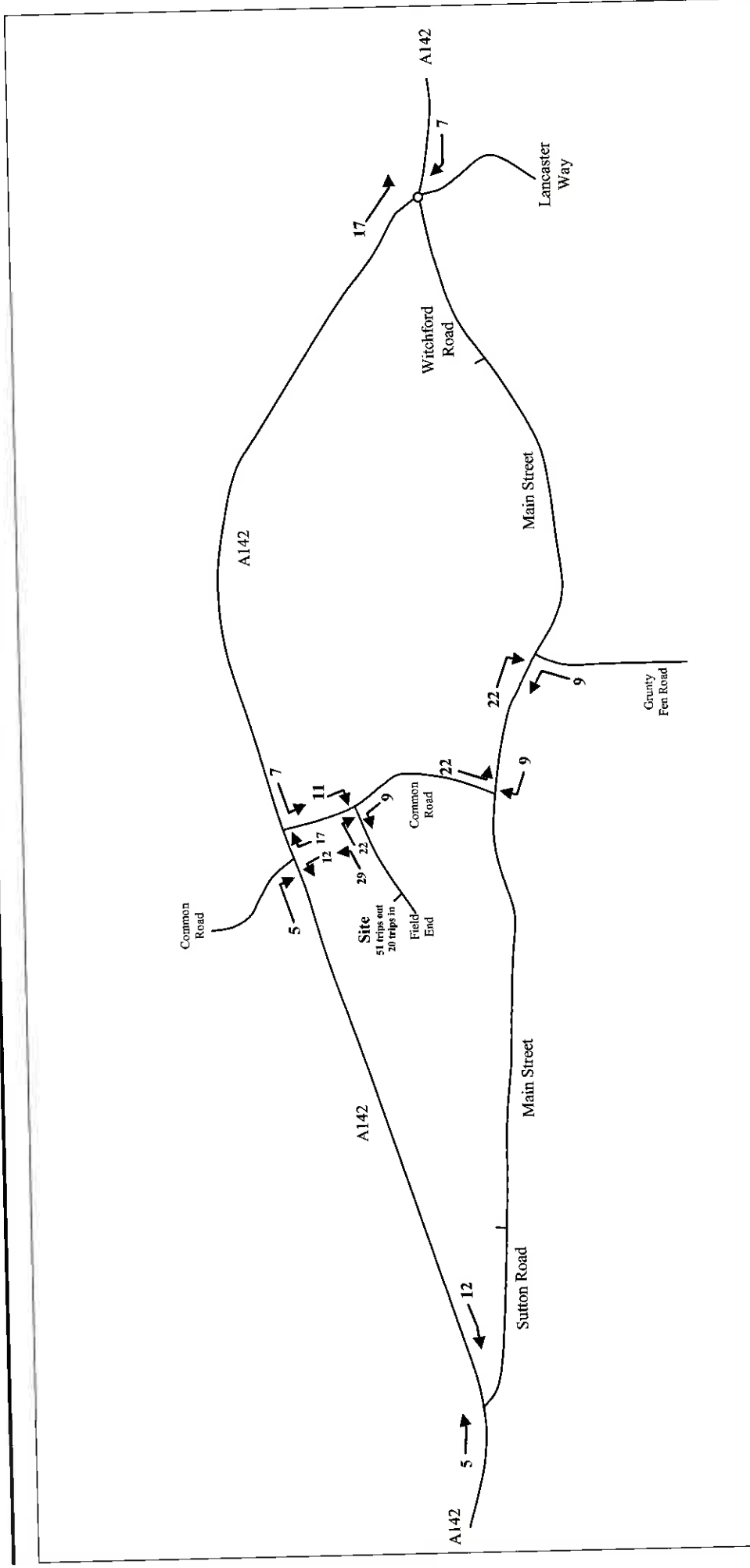
<p>STIRLINGMAYNARD Transportation Consultants</p> <p>Woolstone Centre 1-2 Mill Lane Woolstone Milton Keynes MK15 0AJ</p>	Drawing	2019 AM Peak Turning Flows Without Development			Figure No 5
	Project	Field End, Witchford	Drawn	HC	Checked NW
	Client	Gladman Developments Limited	Scale	NTS	Date Jan 2014



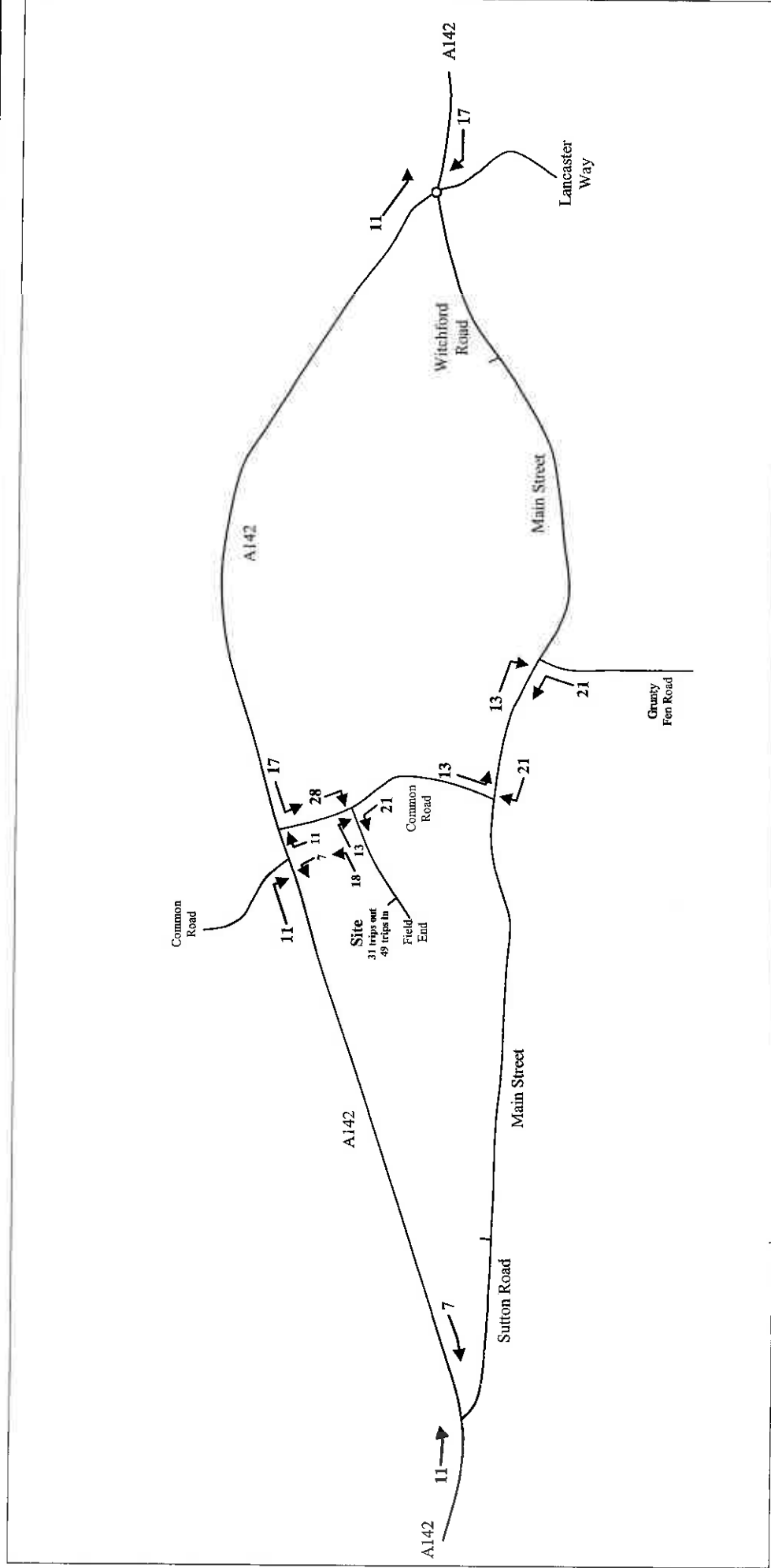
STIRLINGMAYNARD Transportation Consultants Woolstone Centre 1-2 Mill Lane Woolstone Milton Keynes MK15 0AJ	Drawing	2019 PM Peak Turning Flows Without Development		Figure No	6
	Project	Field End, Witchford		Drawn	HC
	Client	Gladman Developments Limited		Scale	NTS
				Date	Jan 2014



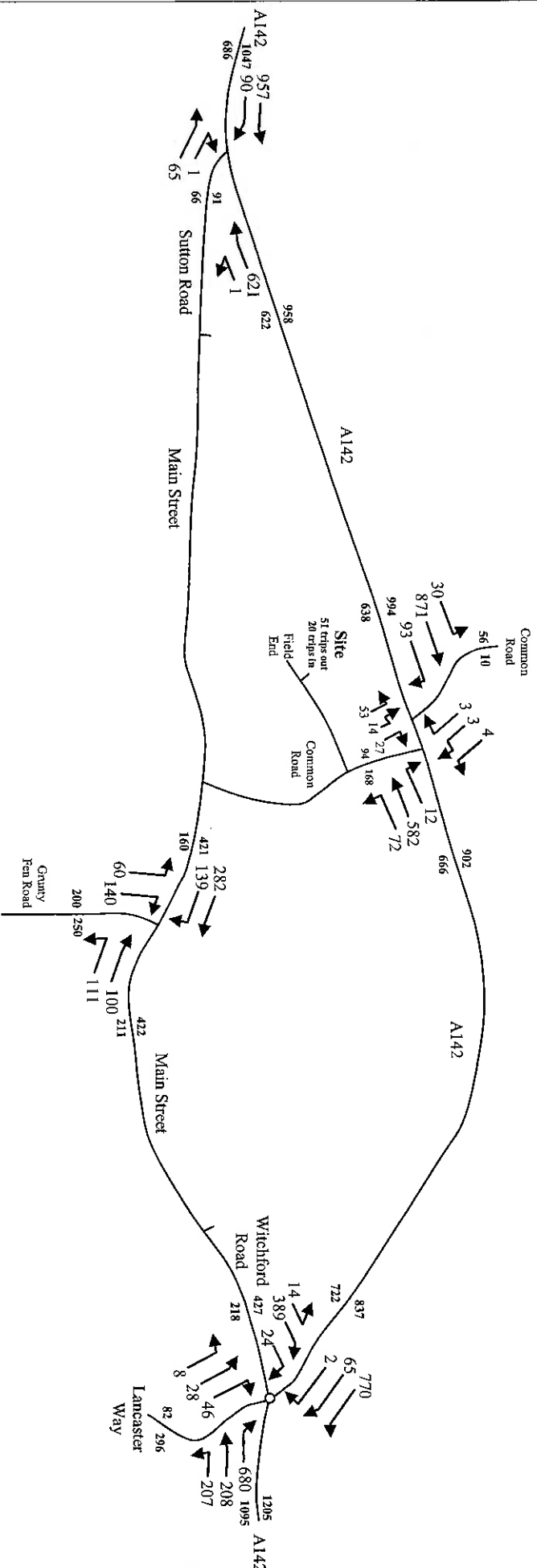
STIRLINGMAYNARD Transportation Consultants Woolstone Centre 1-2 Mill Lane Woolstone Milton Keynes MK15 0AJ	Drawing	Percentage Development Distribution			Figure No 7
	Project	Field End, Witchford			Drawn HC
	Client	Gladman Developments Limited			Checked NW
					Scale NTS
					Date Jan 2014



STIRLINGMAYNARD Transportation Consultants Woolstone Centre 1-2 Mill Lane Woolstone Milton Keynes MK15 0AJ	Drawing	AM Development Flows		Figure No 8
	Project	Field End, Witchford	Drawn HC	Checked NW
	Client	Gladman Developments Limited	Scale NTS	Date Jan 2014



STIRLINGMAYNARD Transportation Consultants Woolstone Centre 1-2 Mill Lane Woolstone Milton Keynes MK15 0AJ	Drawing	PM Development Flows			Figure No 9
	Project	Field End, Witchford			Drawn HC
	Client	Gladman Developments Limited			Checked NW Scale NTS Date Jan 2014



STIRLINGMAYNARD
Transportation Consultants

Woolstone Centre
1-2 Mill Lane
Woolstone
Milton Keynes
MK15 0AJ

Drawing
2019 AM Peak Turning Flows With Development

Figure No
10

Project
Field End, Witchford

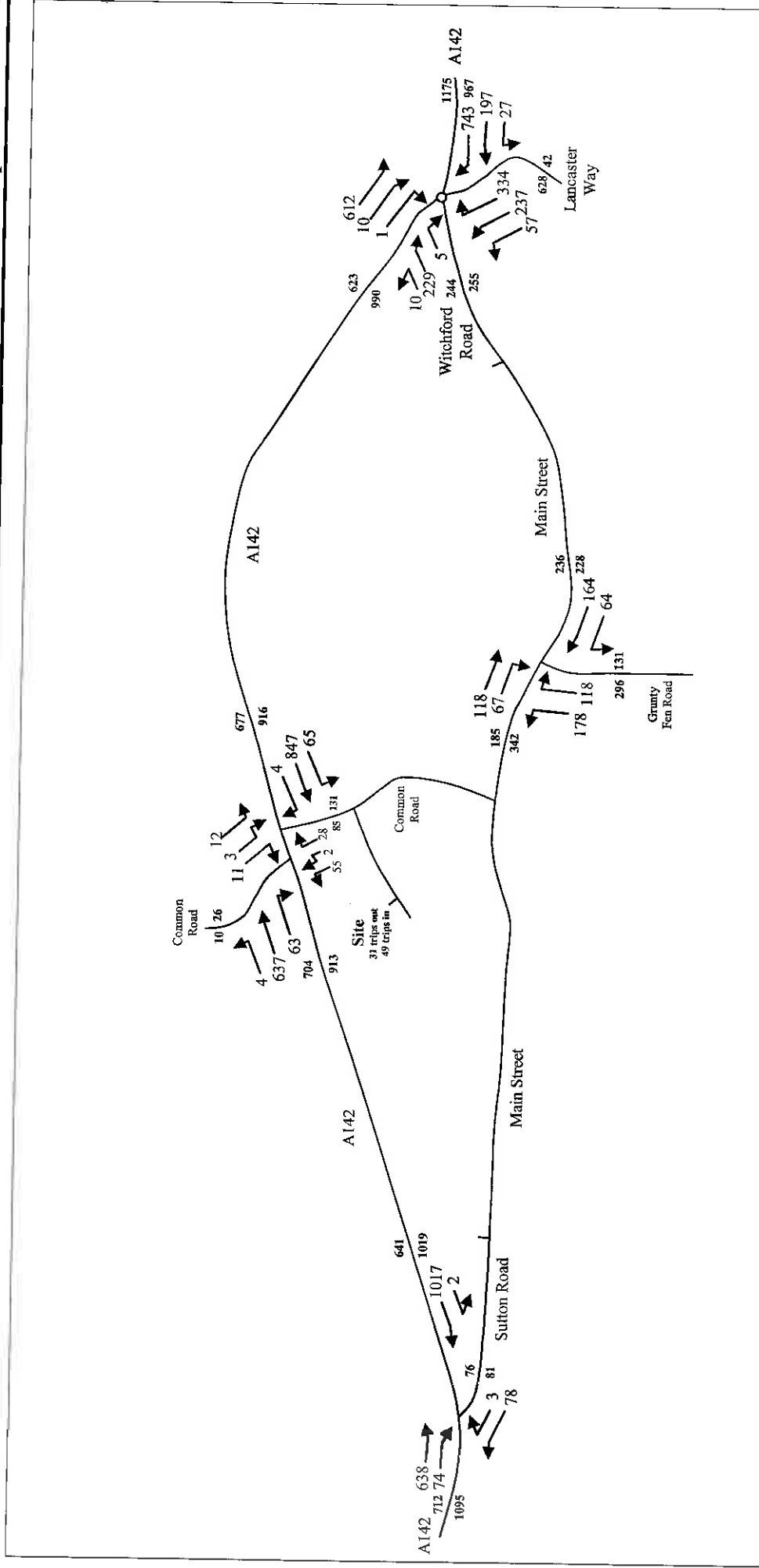
Drawn
HC


Checked
NW

Client
Gladman Developments Limited

Scale
NTS

Date
Jan 2014



 STIRLINGMAYNARD Transportation Consultants Woolstone Centre 1-2 Mill Lane Woolstone Milton Keynes MK15 0AJ	Drawing	2019 PM Peak Turning Flows With Development			Figure No 11
	Project	Field End, Witchford	Drawn HC		Checked NW
	Client	Gladman Developments Limited	Scale NTS		Date Jan 2014

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