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**MAIN CASE**

**Reference No:** 16/00660/ESF

**Proposal:** The proposed development of four glasshouses, up to 15MW combined heat and power (CHP) plant, two heat storage tanks, two water storage tanks, a packing & distribution unit, cold store, irrigation room and control centre, offices, parking, surface water attenuation lagoons, upgraded access track and other ancillary development

**Site Address:** Land Off Ely Road Chittering Cambridge Cambridgeshire

**Applicant:** AGR Renewables Limited And FC Palmer And Sons

**Case Officer:** Julie Barrow Senior, Planning Officer

**Parish:** Stretham

**Ward:** Stretham

Ward Councillor/s: Councillor Bill Hunt  
Councillor Charles Roberts

**Date Received:** 19 May 2016 **Expiry Date:** 8 September 2016

[R77]

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1.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

Members are requested to APPROVE the application subject to the conditions listed below (with any minor revisions to the conditions delegated to the Planning Manager). The full planning conditions can be read in full on the attached Appendix 1.

- 1 Approved plans
- 2 Time Limit -FUL/FUM/LBC
- 3 Final glasshouse detail
- 4 Landscaping
- 5 Phase II Site Investigation
- 6 Reporting Unexpected Contamination
- 7 Archaeology
- 8 Decommissioning
- 9 Restoration of land
- 10 Car parking
- 11 HGV Routing strategy
- 12 Construction Environmental Manage Plan
- 13 Staff Travel Plan

14	Glasshouse lighting and screens
15	Materials
16	Construction noise mitigation
17	Construction lighting
18	Construction times
19	Noise levels
20	Operational hours
21	CHP doors
22	Reversing alarms
23	External lighting
24	Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan
25	Surface water drainage
26	Ecology recommendations
27	Visibility splays

## 2.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

2.1 The application seeks consent for the development of four glasshouses, a 15MW combined heat and power (CHP) plant, two heat storage tanks, two water storage tanks, a packing and distribution unit, cold store, irrigation room and control centre, offices, parking, water attenuation lagoons, upgraded access track and other ancillary development.

The proposed development would comprise the following key elements:

- Four glasshouses (c. 210,000m<sup>2</sup> (21ha/ 51.9 acres) in area and c. 7.5m to ridge)
- Two natural gas fired power generation engines (up to 7.5MW each), housed within an Energy Centre building (c. 1,440m<sup>2</sup> and c. 10m to ridge)
- Two emission stacks from the Energy Centre with a height of c. 15m
- Two heat storage tanks (c. 25m diameter and c. 14m high, providing an overall storage capacity of c. 13,700m<sup>3</sup>)
- Two water storage tanks (c. 32m diameter and c. 5m high, providing an overall storage capacity of c. 8,000m<sup>3</sup>)
- A water storage lagoon adjacent to the glasshouses – 32,000m<sup>3</sup>
- A water storage lagoon adjacent to the car parking and circulation area – swale plus basin of 1528m<sup>3</sup>
- Irrigation room (c. 1,680m<sup>2</sup> and c. 7.5m to ridge)
- A cold store (c. 240m<sup>2</sup> and c 7.5m to ridge)
- A packing/distribution building (c. 1,600m<sup>2</sup> and 7.5m to ridge)
- Office block and staff facilities (c. 720m<sup>2</sup> and c. 10m to ridge)
- Car parking areas (50 spaces adjacent to Energy Centre & 10 adjacent to Offices)
- 6m wide access road with passing places from former section of A10 used to access The Produce Connection
- Other ancillary development

Construction is expected to take approximately 9 months.

2.2 The full planning application, plans and documents submitted by the Applicant 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 a paper copy is available to view at the East Cambridgeshire District Council offices, in the application file.**

2.3 This application has been brought to Planning Committee as it involves a major development that has been subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

### 3.0 PLANNING HISTORY

3.1

16/00045/SCOPE	SCOPING	OPINION	04.03.2016
	Proposed Glasshouses and CHP Plant		

### 4.0 THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

4.1 The site is located to the east of Ely Road (A10) as it passes through East Cambridgeshire between the villages of Stretham (approximately 2.7km to the north) and Chittering (approximately 1.2km to the south). The southern boundary of the site is adjacent to the district boundary with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

4.2 The site is adjacent to Chear Fen Farms and The Produce Connection. To the east of The Produce Connection buildings is an anaerobic digester with a number of gas storage tanks. To the east of the site there are three solar farms and a reservoir that is used for a range of leisure pursuits. Further to the southwest is a large landfill and waste treatment facility at Waterbeach landfill.

4.3 The land consists of flat agricultural fields divided by a network of linear cut drains. Access to the site is off an unnamed road off the A10, which provides access to the Lazy Otter complex and The Produce Connection. An existing access track leading off this road then provides access to the site.

4.4 The nearest residential dwellings to the site are Chittering Farm (approx. 240m to the north east), Chear Fen Farms (approx. 350m to the west), School Farm (approx. 370m to the south west), Willow Grange Farm and Cottages (approx. 470m to the west, beyond the A10), Field View (approx. 600m to the south), Radical Farm (approx 630m to the south east) and Hill Farm (approx. 750m to the south). The Lazy Otter residential and holiday complex is located approximately 650m to the north west of the site.

4.5 The River Great Ouse County Wildlife Site lies at 350 to the west at its closest point and a second County Wildlife Site, Beach Ditch and Engine Drain lies 350m to the west at its closest point.

### 5.0 RESPONSES FROM CONSULTEES

5.1 Responses were received from the following consultees and these are summarised below. The full responses are available on the Council's web site.

**Stretham Parish Council** – The Council voted unanimously to support this application and would like to seek a routing agreement as a condition to ensure the vehicles involved with this are not using the A1123 through Stretham village. The reasons for this decision:

- The development is on farmland on the edge of the village.
- The light from the glasshouses will be blanked out at night so there will be no visual disturbance.
- The development brings employment opportunities to the village.
- Will be growing UK produce.

**Waterbeach Parish Council** – Waterbeach Parish Council have reviewed the application and raise concerns relating to additional traffic this site will generate on an already heavily congested A10. The plans state that there are parking spaces for 50 cars plus an additional 12 spaces for offices along with possible heavy duty contractor vehicles all trying to access and egress a 60 mph road which already has severe traffic issues. The Council feels that the only safe option for joining the A10 would be the installation of a roundabout.

The Council also raised concerns on light pollution from what appear to be 4 extremely large glasshouses.

**South Cambs District Council** - No comments received.

**Ward Councillors** - No comments received

**National Planning Casework Unit** – Acknowledge receipt of details of application. No further comments to make.

**Local Highways Authority/Transport Planning Team (CCC)** First response (23 June 2016) – Requested further information and clarification on the following parts of the Transport Assessment:

- Highway network conditions
- Observed background network traffic
- Review of personal injury accident data
- Available local sustainable transport connections
- Development proposals
- Site access & car parking
- Proposed site operation
- Construction phase
- Assessment time periods
- Future year traffic growth assumptions
- Committed development traffic
- Baseline traffic flows
- Core development trip generation assumptions
- Predicted staff traffic
- Predicted operational HGV traffic
- Predicted total traffic
- Assignment of development traffic

- Opening year network traffic flows
- Construction traffic
- Assessment of anticipated development traffic impact

**Local Highways Authority/Transport Planning Team (CCC)** Second response (25 July 2016) –

The document reviewed is the Highways Technical Note dated July 2016 prepared by Axis in support of proposals for the development of four glasshouses, a combined heat and power (CHP) Plant, a packing plant, water storage lagoon and other ancillary development on land off Cambridge Road, Chittering.

The remainder of this note sets out the comments of the Transport Assessment Team on the Note.

### **Chapter 3: Description of the Development Proposals**

#### **Section 3.2 Site Access & Car Parking**

##### *Car Parking*

Comment: Based on the evidence presented in the car parking accumulation assessment, the proposal to reduce the number of car parking spaces to 40 is agreed, this should be secured by condition should the development gain planning permission.

#### **Section 3.3 Proposed Site Operation**

##### *Operational HGV Routing and Enforcement*

Comment: The proposal to introduce a HGV routing strategy is agreed, this should be secured by condition in the event of planning permission.

#### **Section 3.4: Construction Phase**

Comment: The proposal to introduce a construction environment management plan is agreed, this should be secured by condition in the event of planning permission being granted. This plan will need to include the following:

- The proposed days and operating hours within which construction traffic can travel to / from the site.
- The number and type of vehicles which will access the development during the construction phase.
- Measures to encourage staff to investigate and utilise opportunities for alternative travel modes to single occupancy vehicle trips.

#### **Other comment**

The proposal to produce a travel plan to seek to encourage staff to travel using modes other than single occupancy vehicles is agreed, this should be secured by condition prior to commencement of development should the development gain planning permission.

**Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)** – The submitted documents have been reviewed and the LLFA authority can confirm that it has no objections in principle to

the proposed development. A condition requiring a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site is recommended.

**Minerals and Waste (CCC)** – The eastern part of the proposed development site falls within The Mineral Safeguarding Area for Sand and Gravel which is designated by the adopted Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Core Strategy 2011 (Policy CS26 Mineral Safeguarding Areas & Proposals Map C).

Policy CS26 and the associated designation seek to ensure that the needless sterilization of mineral resource will not occur. The policy states that development will only be permitted when the applicant has demonstrated that the mineral is no longer of any economic value; or can be extracted prior to development; or it will not inhibit extraction; or the development is not incompatible.

However, in this instance the development is located in the proximity of existing development (Chear Farm) which would act as a constraint to mineral extraction, and the mineral itself is a narrow band of resource. In these circumstances it is unlikely that the mineral would be worked as an economic resource. However, in the event that mineral is extracted during the course of the proposed development the County Council would expect to see the mineral put to a sustainable use i.e. either used in the development itself or potentially taken off site to be processed and used for aggregate purposes (in the event of the latter advice should be sought from the County Council as Mineral Panning Authority). Ensuring the sustainable use of mineral extracted during the course of a development is consistent with the principles of the adopted Minerals and Waste Core Strategy (Policy CS42) which addresses incidental mineral extraction.

**Environment Agency (EA)** – If the Sequential Test is passed the site must also be subject to the MPPF Exception Test.

The EA has reviewed the FRA as submitted and has the following comments to make:

The proposed development site is situated within flood zone 2 and 3 but within an area benefiting from defence on the EA's Flood Map.

Due to the location and nature of the development and the mitigation measures proposed within the FRA, the EA has no objections on flood risk grounds.

The Authority must be satisfied with regards to the safety of people (including those with restricted mobility), the ability of such people to reach places of safety including safe refuges within buildings and the ability of the emergency services to access such buildings and evacuate those people.

It is recommended that a condition is imposed on any planning permission requiring the provision of a Flood Plan for the development, which should include an appropriate method of flood warning and evacuation to ensure the safe use of the development in extreme circumstances.

**Historic England** – A number of designated assets are located in the vicinity of the proposal, notably the scheduled and listed complex at Stretham Old Engine

(Heritage list ref 1006893), a coherent and attractive group of buildings related to the drainage of Stretham mere in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Some 900m to the south of the proposal is also the Romano-British settlement at Orchard Farm (Heritage list ref 1012359), which is a scheduled monument, comprising low earthworks and buried archeological remains, a rare survival for the East of England.

Drawing on the visual impact assessment and desk based assessment, Historic England have visited the proposal to assess the likely impact of the proposal on these two designated assets and are broadly in agreement with the findings from Cotswold Archaeology. Whilst it is likely the proposed development will be visible as an additional industrial structure in mid-long views from the Romano-British settlement, this will be partially screened by existing vegetation, and is unlikely to adversely impact the significance of the scheduled monument. The setting of the Stretham Old Engine complex is largely focused towards and centred on the River Great Ouse, screened from and in the opposite direction of the proposed development. However, Historic England are concerned by the pink glow which will be emitted from the greenhouses, and whether this has been adequately addressed in the visual impact assessment. The Local Authority is advised to satisfy itself that this will not have an adverse impact in long views from the surrounding landscape.

Historic England is satisfied that the proposed development will not harm the significance of designated assets in its vicinity, and is therefore consistent with the approach set out in the NPPF. The landscape character to the south of the River Great Ouse in this location has already been greatly altered and industrialised by numerous large scale solar developments, and the proposed development will continue that trend.

**Cambridgeshire Archaeology** - Comments sent in March this year for 16/00045/SCOPE remain valid for this scheme. An archaeological condition will secure an appropriate programme of archaeological work to enable anticipated remains to be preserved by record, as outlined in the Cultural Heritage section of the Environmental Statement.

There is no objection to development proceeding in this location but it is considered that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured through the inclusion of a negative condition, such as the example condition approved by DCLG:

#### Archaeology

No development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives; and:

- The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works

- The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. *This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI.*

Developers will wish to ensure that in drawing up their development programme, the timetable for the investigation is included within the details of the agreed scheme.

**Conservation Officer** – This application site is located within the vicinity of several designated heritage assets, the closest of which is Stretham Old Engine.

The applicant has submitted a comprehensive visual impact assessment which has considered the likely impact of the proposal on nearby designated heritage assets. This assessment concludes that whilst the proposed development will be partially visible (mostly from Orchard Farm to the south), any impact will be minimal and will not be adverse. Similarly the setting of Stretham Old Engine will not be adversely affected by the proposed development.

No objections from a conservation viewpoint.

**Natural England** – Designated sites - Having applied Impact Risk Zones data and following a review of the application documents Natural England is satisfied that this proposal is unlikely to have an adverse effect on statutorily designated sites. Designated sites do not therefore represent a constraint in determining this application.

**Soils and agricultural land** – With reference to Chapter 8 of Volume 1 of the Environmental Statement (ES), Natural England believes it may be unrealistic to decommission the four glasshouses and return the land back to its original land quality. The proposal appears to be a more permanent development (and is not time limited like solar installations) and whilst the glass and above ground structures could be removable in the event of decommissioning, the construction involves a large amount of below surface concrete foundations. Paragraph 4.2.1 of the ES indicates the installation of 420 concrete piles (diameter 500mm) to 1m below ground level along the perimeter of each of the buildings and a further 1226 concrete foundations (diameter 700mm) to 80-92cm below ground level to support the internal structures. This would appear to equate to approximately 78 of these large concrete cores per ha. Natural England believes this to be very high density.

It is felt that it is unlikely that these sizeable concrete foundations could be installed without significant soil disturbance, nor is it likely to be practical to remove them in the event of decommissioning. This could potentially result in considerable soil damage with consequential loss of agricultural land quality.

More importantly, if these concrete foundations remained in the soil following decommissioning, they would be a considerable impediment to cultivations and other farming operations, crop growth etc. which would prevent the land being farmed to its potential, even if the other areas of soil were relatively undisturbed. This would adversely impact on ALC grade, for example by a 'pattern' limitation where soil and site conditions vary significantly and repeatedly over short distances, which imposes a practical constraint on cropping and land management. If arable



cropping was not practical post decommissioning then the land would almost certainly not be BMV land. Additionally, in contrast to solar and their potentially reversible developments, the soil is not vegetated or subject to normal soil processes and so could give rise to loss of land quality in the long term, for example a possible deterioration in structure. The underlying soil is not being used for the herb and salad production proposed hence it could be argued that this development could be more sustainably located on brownfield or lower quality land.

In terms of land quality, Natural England does not hold any detailed MAFF ALC surveys, although these exist for areas close by. The applicant appears to have relied on the published provisional ALC map at 1:250,000 scale which shows Grade 1 land. This map is not suitable for site specific assessments due to the minimum map unit size of 80ha. Consequently our advice to your authority is that the applicant has not undertaken a detailed ALC survey in accordance with the modern ALC criteria (MAFF, 1988), as advised at the scoping opinion stage. Natural England is therefore unable to confirm the applicant's Grade 1 classification or advise on the detailed distribution of the grades, though we believe that there is a high likelihood that this will be BMV agricultural land. Should your authority require a more definitive assessment of agricultural land quality then the applicant should be requested to undertake a detailed ALC survey.

For the above reasons, Natural England's view is that this development will be likely to result in the irreversible loss of up to 35 ha of BMV land.

Other advice - The Local Planning Authority (LPA) is expected to assess and consider the other possible impacts resulting from this proposal on the following when determining this application:

- local sites (biodiversity and geodiversity)
- local landscape character
- local or national biodiversity priority habitats and species.

Natural England does not hold locally specific information relating to the above. These remain material considerations in the determination of this planning application and we recommend that you seek further information from the appropriate bodies such as the Wildlife Trust, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre and a local landscape characterisation document in order to ensure the LPA has sufficient information to fully understand the impact of the proposal before it determines the application.

Protected Species – Natural England has not assessed this application and associated documents for impacts on protected species.

Biodiversity enhancements - This application may provide opportunities to incorporate features into the design which are beneficial to wildlife, such as the incorporation of roosting opportunities for bats or the installation of bird nest boxes. The authority should consider securing measures to enhance the biodiversity of the site from the applicant, if it is minded to grant permission for this application. This is in accordance with Paragraph 118 of the NPPF.

**Natural England** – additional comments following receipt of additional information from the applicant -

In response to our letter of 17 June 2016 (ref: 187792), we note that the applicant is confident that for the glasshouse footprint (21 ha out of the total 35 ha development) the concrete piling can be removed in the event of decommissioning and the land restored back to its current condition. This presumably also applies to the concrete access paths referred to in the Planning Statement (paragraph 1.4.9), but little further information is provided about these.

Whilst it may be possible to remove the sub-surface concrete piling using the techniques described, there is still a risk that future agricultural land quality will be adversely affected. To minimise this impact we recommend that the applicant be required to prepare a decommissioning plan through a suitably worded planning condition.

The proposed development will be for growing crops in a growing medium (Planning Statement paragraph 1.4.8) rather than being dependent on the indigenous soil on the site, Natural England therefore wishes to re-iterate that this development could be located on other land such as brownfield or lower quality (non BMV) agricultural land. We therefore advise your authority to consider whether this development is an effective use of land in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The authority is reminded that local planning authorities are responsible for ensuring that they have sufficient ALC information to apply the requirements of the NPPF. The weighting attached to a particular consideration is a matter of judgement for the local authority as decision maker. This is the case regardless of whether the proposed development is sufficiently large to consult Natural England.

Should the development proceed we recommend that the relevant parts of Defra's Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites are followed, e.g. in relation to handling or trafficking on soils in wet weather.

In order to safeguard the long term capability of the land, a suitably worded planning condition should require a return to agricultural use if the current use ceases, and the submission of a decommissioning plan for your authority's approval. This plan should include a detailed soil resources and ALC survey to provide baseline data prior to development commencing, and describe the methodology for the removal of concrete piling and other concrete structures within the glasshouse footprint based on its findings, and to describe the subsequent replacement of soil so that soil of the correct type and sequence (topsoil, upper subsoil, lower subsoil etc. as appropriate) is replaced to maintain the preconstruction ALC grade. The development and any subsequent decommissioning and return to productive agricultural use would then need to be implemented in accordance with that plan.

**Cambs Wildlife Trust** – This Trust is pleased to see this application is accompanied by an appropriate preliminary ecological assessment, which follows best practice guidelines, and biodiversity statement. Should permission be granted, the proposed ecological mitigation and enhancement measures in these two documents should be required by way of a suitably worded planning condition.

**Network Rail** - No comments received.

**Anglian Water Services Ltd** - No comments received.

**The National Trust** – The National Trust is a significant land owner in the area and in particular, has concerns about the cumulative impacts on wildlife at the hydrologically sensitive Wicken Fen Reserve.

Light Pollution:

The proposals include a substantial area of glasshouses. The information submitted by the applicant has been reviewed and although it is noted that blinds are proposed within the glasshouses the information as to the amount of light spill when these are in use seems vague. Also, the documentation appears to focus on the amount of light that would be shielded, rather than the residual light escaping. It is accepted that in comparison to an unshielded greenhouse, the blinds do significantly reduce the light spill. However, it is the Trust's view that the assessment should be based on the light spill and pollution in relation to the existing dark night sky. The submitted photographs clearly show a significant orange 'glow' being emitted from the greenhouses even with the blinds in use.

There is a further concern that whilst the blinds are proposed to be included, there would be little the LPA could do to ensure their use. Again, it is accepted that a condition could be imposed to require this but there are concerns relating to the enforceability of this in practical terms and the harm to nature conservation should this condition be breached, even once could be significant.

Protection is given to dark skies via paragraph 125 of the NPPF, which states that:

*By encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.*

East Cambridge Local Plan (2015) contains more detailed Policies in relation to pollution and at paragraph 6.10.4 sets out that:

Lighting and noise pollution arising from new development can individually and cumulatively have a significantly damaging impact on the countryside, on peoples' living environments, and on wildlife. Whilst lighting is desirable for safety, recreation and the enhancement of some buildings, inappropriate lighting can cause sky glow, glare, light-spill and represents energy waste.

In addition to this, Policy ENV9: Pollution, sets out that applications should be refused where there are individual or cumulative impacts arising and also sets out that there should be sufficient information submitted with the application to allow the impacts to be understood.

The Trust do not consider that adequate technical information has been provided in relation to light spill and pollution and the potential impacts of this. There are also serious concerns that the imposition of a condition would be a significantly secure way to protect against significant light pollution should the blinds either not be used,

or fail. There is provision within Policy ENV9 to require S106 agreements and the Trust is not aware that any such an agreement has been sought in respect of this application.

Nature Conservation and Hydrology:

Paragraph 120 of the NPPF states that (emphasis added):

*To prevent unacceptable risks from pollution and land instability, planning policies and decisions should ensure that new development is appropriate for its location. The effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, the natural environment or general amenity, and the potential sensitivity of the area or proposed development to adverse effects from pollution, should be taken into account. Where a site is affected by contamination or land stability issues, responsibility for securing a safe development rests with the developer and/or landowner.*

This general protection to environments is echoed in more detail in the Council's Local Plan Policy ENV7.

The Trust are concerned that very small changes to water levels at the fen can have significant impacts. There is no mechanism for monitoring or mitigating against any adverse impacts. It is also considered that the light pollution and reflectiveness of the large-scale greenhouses has the potential to have a cumulative negative impact on nature conservation.

Landscape Impact:

Due to the open nature of the landscape in the vicinity of the proposed development this proposal could have a significant visual impact. Significant screening of the buildings should be required if the proposals are approved.

Conclusion

The Trust is of the view that the proposals would currently be contrary to paragraph 120 and 125 of the NPPF and Policies ENV9 and ENV7 of the East Cambridge Local Plan (2015).

**National Air Traffic Services Safeguarding** – The proposed development has been examined from a technical safeguarding aspect and does not conflict with our safeguarding criteria.

**Defence Infrastructure Organisation (MOD)** – The proposed application falls within the statutory birdstrike safeguarding consultation zone surrounding Cambridge aerodrome. On reviewing the planning application the MOD has no safeguarding concerns.

**Civil Aviation Authority** - No comments received.

**Senior Definitive Map Officer** - No comments received.

**Waterbeach Internal Drainage Board** – The Board has no objections in principle to this development. Surface water from the site will be store in ponds, to be used as part of the growing process. Any overflow system into the Board's drainage network will have to be at the Greenfield run-off rate. Any connection into the drainage system will require the prior consent of the Board.

The Board's Upper Mill Main Drain flows along the eastern boundary of the site. No structures can be erected or planting take place within nine metres of the edge of this channel without the prior consent of the Board.

**ECDC Environmental Health (Commercial Team)** – The layout, design and construction must comply with relevant food and health and safety legislative requirements.

**Environmental Health (Scientific Officer)** – The Environmental Statement prepared by Axis dated May 2016 has been considered and the findings are accepted. Agree with the applicant's proposal to carry out a Phase II site investigation prior to development. Conditions relating to land contamination and air quality are not required.

**Environmental Health (Technical Officer)** – The noise report completed by Noise and Vibration Consultants Ltd, dated 8<sup>th</sup> April 2015 (report number R16.0402/DRK), has been considered. There are no issues to raise but a number of conditions are recommended to control potential impact.

**Trees Officer** – The development site is flat agricultural land and this development is perceived to have a major impact upon the visual landscape. It is advised that a qualified landscape professional is consulted.

In relation to trees, there is an existing hedgerow adjacent to the proposed access route to the site. This hedgerow includes some large trees. The plans in relation to the access route have no information in relation to these trees therefore it is advised that further information is sought ensuring that the access track can be developed while retaining this landscape feature successfully.

5.2 **Neighbours** – Three site notices posted, advertisement placed in the Cambridge Evening News and 110 neighbouring properties were notified and the responses received are summarised below. A full copy of the responses is available on the Council's website.

8 responses received from 9, 5 (x2), 6 (x2), 8, 1 and 11 Lazy Otter Meadows objecting to the development and raising the following points:

- Main concern is the access road off the A10 as it passes the entrance of the Lazy Otter Meadows residential park. Noise could be an issue.
- Strongly object as already endure heavy traffic, tractors with filthy tyres leaving mud along the badly maintained by-road. Proposal adds seriously to this little road use which is not acceptable.
- Occupiers of Lazy Otter Meadows were not informed of public consultation carried out by the applicant.

- Difficulties encountered in viewing documents online and time-frame to respond was not reasonable.
- Impact on Lazy Otter Meadows complex has not been considered by the applicant.
- The development seems enormous.
- The consultants' documents states they expect 44 decibels of noise during the night time. This seems excessive especially where properties were bought to enable residents to have a quiet and peaceful environment.
- The proposal will mean 24 x 7 operation with resulting noise and traffic movement. Start time of 06.00 7 days a week is unreasonable.
- Vehicular access for number of movements seems woefully inadequate. Will have an impact on the already heavily congested A10. Amount of heavy construction traffic would exacerbate the situation with regards to safety of road users.
- Extent of this development and adjacent developments on Greenfield site.
- Is this area outside the current ECDC development plans?
- Interested to see where else was considered if anywhere.
- Number of workers is the equivalent of a call centre. There is no way this would be considered on this land.
- Where do workers reside that will walk to work?
- Object to proposal in terms of loss of outlook from the river footpaths and from the A10, impact on highway issues, noise and disturbance 24/7, potential smells and fumes and potential impact on nature conservation.
- Enquire why this was not planned near existing office accommodation or the existing development of buildings that have a direct route onto the A1123.
- If the development goes ahead it is essential to have traffic lights at the top of the Old A10 Lazy Otter Meadows side.

## 6.0 The Planning Policy Context

### 6.1 East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015

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
EMP 2	Extensions to existing businesses in the countryside
EMP 3	New employment development in the countryside
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 12	Listed Buildings
ENV 14	Sites of archaeological interest
COM 7	Transport impact
COM 8	Parking provision

### 6.2 Supplementary Planning Documents

Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations  
Contaminated Land - Guidance on submitted Planning Application on land that may be contaminated

6.3 National Planning Policy Framework 2012

- 3 Supporting a prosperous rural economy
- 4 Promoting sustainable transport
- 7 Requiring good design
- 11 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

7.0 PLANNING COMMENTS

7.1 Main issues

7.1.1 An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken by the applicant to consider the likely significant environmental effects of the proposal and an Environmental Statement (ES) has been submitted. The ES has been informed by a formal scoping opinion from the Council and is compliant with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011.

7.1.2 The ES addresses the likely environmental effects of the proposal in relation to its landscape and visual impact, traffic and transportation, cultural heritage and archaeology and sustainable use of land, flood risk and climate change adaption.

7.1.3 The planning application also addresses noise, ecology, air quality, ground conditions.

7.2 LANDSCAPE AND VISUAL IMPACT

7.2.1 The proposal involves the comprehensive development of agricultural fields measuring 35ha in total adjacent to an existing anaerobic digester and a number of agricultural buildings. The site forms part of the Stow Bridge Farm land holding. The landform is very flat and low-lying and the fields are rectilinear and typical of the wider Fens landscape.

7.2.2 Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 stress the desire to protect important views into and out of settlements, space between settlements and their wider landscape setting, visually sensitive natural and man-made skylines, hillsides and geological features and views of key landmark buildings. This reflects the Government's objectives in terms of protection of the countryside and landscapes more generally, set out in paragraph 109 of the NPPF, which states that the planning system "*should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...protecting and enhancing valued landscape*". The need to recognise "*the intrinsic beauty of the countryside*" is also enshrined as a core planning principle in paragraph 17 of the NPPF.

- 7.2.3 There is no published guidance establishing a threshold beyond which visual impacts should be deemed unacceptable, and it is for the decision maker in each case to determine how much weight landscape and visual effects should attract in the planning balance.
- 7.2.4 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) has been undertaken and submitted as part of the ES. The LVIA addresses the landscape effects of the proposal that are caused by physical changes to the landscape and the changes in visual amenity that would arise from, any change in the nature of views experienced.
- 7.2.5 A study area of approximately 2.5km radius from the site has been adopted. As stated above, the land cover within the site is predominantly arable farmland, although deciduous trees are present in a line along the site access road. This reflects the wider pattern of vegetation in the study area. Built development is scattered sparsely throughout the study area and three solar farms have recently become operational at Stow Bridge Farm to the east of the site. There are a number of functional agricultural buildings within the study area together with the distinctive domed structures that form part of the anaerobic digester. Residential properties are present throughout the study area. The public road network is sparse, other than the main A-roads. The railway line from Cambridge to Ely runs approximately 1.15m to the east of the site. The Waterbeach Waste Management Park is located approximately 2km to the south-west of the site. Public rights of way are concentrated along the corridor of the Great Ouse with footpaths running along both sides of the river.
- 7.2.6 The study area is located in the *Fens* regional character area, as defined within the Countryside Agency *Countryside Character Assessment* of England (1999). This is a broad assessment of the landscapes across the UK and within these character areas it is normally accepted that there are identifiable landscape sub-types, often defined by differences in geology, topography, land use and vegetation.
- 7.2.7 The Fens are characterised by their flat, open landscape with extensive vistas, big skies and typically large-scale field pattern generally dominated by intensive arable agricultural land use. The drainage hierarchy is influential in defining the landscape – with the regular geometry of large fields defined by ditches, which drain to larger channels.
- 7.2.8 The LVIA states that this landscape area is considered to have a medium sensitivity to the type of development proposed. The scale and openness suggest capacity to accommodate large scale development of the nature proposed, however, there is a vulnerability to visual change from the introduction of modern structures due to general lack of screening features in the wider landscape.
- 7.2.9 The proposal involves the addition of a number of large structures to the landscape. When viewed from the North the development will span the width of the site with the water storage tank, two heat storage tanks, energy centre, part of the irrigation room, the packing/distribution building, cold store and office all visible. The glasshouses will be located beyond these buildings, featuring more prominently in views from the east, south and west.



- 7.2.10 The tallest features on the site will be two emission stacks from the Energy Centre, which will have a maximum height of 15m. The two heat storage tanks will have a maximum height of 14m and the energy centre will have a maximum height of 10m, as will the office block and staff facilities building. The irrigation room, cold store and packing and distribution building will have a ridge height of 7.5m.

#### Construction effects

- 7.2.11 The effects of the proposal during the construction phase have been considered within the LVIA. Construction activity will take place wholly within the site with a temporary contractor's compound to be located on the site of the permanent car park. There would be no loss of vegetation and the influence of construction activity upon the landscape would be present for a limited time. Construction stage effects upon landscape character are assessed as not being significant.
- 7.2.12 The presence of construction plant and the constructors compound will be visible locally, especially in views from the north. Cranes will be present on site for a short period and some lighting, in place for security purposes, may be visible. Effects are again assessed as not being significant due to their short duration.
- 7.2.13 The construction phase can be managed through the use of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) that can be secured by condition and it is considered that the short-term nature of any construction effects means that they do not weigh against the proposal.

#### Operational effects

- 7.2.14 The LVIA acknowledges that the proposal represents a large scale and permanent change within the site itself. The change would be large in magnitude and there would be a moderate adverse level of effect upon the landscape fabric of the area. This is assessed as not being significant due to the low value of existing vegetation within the site, the retention of existing vegetation along the access route, retention of ditches and introduction of woodland blocks around built development.
- 7.2.15 The development will occur alongside a number of existing contemporary structures including the nearby solar farms and anaerobic digester, which contains a number of domed structures of comparable height. Nevertheless, this proposal will significantly increase the overall footprint of built infrastructure in the general area.
- 7.2.16 A number of consultees including The National Trust, have commented on the landscape impact of the proposal and requests have been made for significant screening to be put in place. The scale of the development is such that it would not be possible to screen the built-form in its entirety and by attempting to do so this would introduce further features that are not currently present and traditional in the Fen landscape. The large scale of the receiving landscape is such that the development would be in scale with the existing field pattern of the wider area.
- 7.2.17 The applicant proposes to carry out tree planting on screening bunds that will be created on the southern, north-eastern and north-western boundaries. The combination of the bunding and the tree planting will break up views towards the

development and the predominantly horizontal lines/forms of the landscape will be maintained.

- 7.2.18 In order to assess the visual effects of the operational stage a number of viewpoints have been identified within the LVIA. These viewpoints are used to demonstrate how people will experience the view of the development from a particular point. Viewpoints at Chittering, Stretham Ferry, Stretham Old Engine, the A10 (south-west of the site) and the road near Joist Farm (south-east of the site) were all assessed.
- 7.2.19 With the exception of the A10 viewpoint all viewpoints were considered to have a high sensitivity to change. Similarly, with the exception of the A10 viewpoint, all viewpoints were considered to experience either a small or very small magnitude of change once the development has been in place for a number of years. The significance of these visual effects once the development has been complete for 10 years is therefore considered to be minor or minor to moderate. It is accepted that prior to 10 years tree growth that the significance of effects will be higher and at Stretham Ferry it is assessed as being moderate to major in year 1, due to the introduction of built form.
- 7.2.20 At the Stretham Ferry and adjacent stretch of footpath there will be an increase in the influence of built form upon views southwards from the riverside. The ancillary buildings and tanks at the northern edge of the site will be clearly visible. Views of the glasshouses will be filtered through the existing tree cover and largely screened once new planting matures. The initial changes will be significant and will occur alongside the existing built form comprising the anaerobic digester and agricultural buildings associated with The Produce Connection. The significance of these effects will diminish over time and the pattern of distinctive historic and landscape features such as the boundary ditches and tree lines will be maintained. In this respect the proposal complies with Policies ENV1 and ENV2, however, the development will result in a permanent change in the natural environment in a visually sensitive area. These effects must therefore be weighed against the benefits of the proposal.

#### Night-time effects

- 7.2.21 In order to maximise output the applicant proposes to extend the growing period at certain times of the year with artificial LED lighting within the glasshouses during the hours of darkness. Typically between the months of October to March the lights will be switched on between the hours of 2.00am to 6.00pm, allowing the plants to rest from 6pm to midnight. It is proposed to contain the lighting within the glasshouses through the use of horizontal and vertical screens. The screening is designed to prevent the loss of artificial light, with an anticipated efficiency of around 95%. Photographs have been submitted illustrating the screening effects of similar blinds to an existing operational glasshouse. The applicant has stated that the glow in the centre of the image, which shows the blinds closed, is emanating from an open doorway in the glasshouse wall where the blinds were not in operation as the door was being used by the van in the foreground for access. A further image has been submitted showing a similar view but with the door and blind closed and the glow is significantly reduced.

- 7.2.22 The National Trust has raised concerns regarding the effectiveness of the screens and the fact that the information supplied by the applicant appears vague. Policy ENV9 states that all development proposals should minimise, and where possible, reduce all emissions and other forms of pollution, including light pollution. Proposals will be refused where, individually or cumulatively, there are unacceptable impacts arising from the development on the natural environment, general amenity and the tranquillity of the wider rural area, including noise and light pollution.
- 7.2.23 In response to the comments made on behalf of The National Trust the applicant has provided additional information in relation to the LED lighting. Recent technical advances in LED lighting and light pollution technology mean that there are only a few sites within the UK or Holland that are comparable to the proposed development. HOK installed the first commercial installation similar to that proposed at Wight Salads on the Isle of Wight, a very light pollution sensitive area. The lights were installed almost twelve months ago and this is where the example photographs submitted with the application were taken.
- 7.2.24 The glasshouses would be controlled by an environmental computer that is linked to a weather station for measuring all external influences, including light level. The computer is programmed to close the light pollution screens when the outside light level falls below a pre-set level. The light pollution screens will remain closed until either the lights are switched off or the external light level rises above the minimum level. There will be two sets of screens, the light pollution screen for the sides and roof, and a further roof screen to maximise energy saving.
- 7.2.25 A detailed specification for the blind as well as a physical sample have been submitted and the applicant has clarified that LED Interlights are installed within the crop rows so a large proportion of the light contribution is contained by the crops within the glasshouses even without the screens. LED Toplights have a directional beam angle of 120 degrees and are installed directly above the crop and focus all their light downwards to avoid vertical light spillage. The applicant has also pointed out that it is in the operator's best interest to ensure that the blinds are closed and effective as this reduces heat loss and increases the efficiency of the supplementary lights for plant growth.
- 7.2.26 It is considered that the applicant has now provided sufficient information to address the concerns raised by The National Trust and that the installation and use of the light pollution screens can be controlled by condition. Details of any external security lighting can be secured by condition and only the minimum amount necessary will be acceptable. It is acknowledged that there will be a small amount of light pollution created by the proposed development and that this will be heightened during the winter months. However, receptors travelling along the A10 will only catch glimpsed views of the development and it is unlikely that anyone will be using the footpaths adjacent to Stretham Old Ferry during the hours of darkness. The residents of the Lazy Otter complex will be largely protected due to the topography of the land between the complex and the site and the intervening vegetation, especially as the tree planting matures. On balance therefore it is considered that sufficient mitigation measures can be implemented in relation to light pollution and that the proposal complies with Policy ENV9 in this regard.

### 7.3 TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION

- 7.3.1 In order to assess the likely significant effects arising from the development in relation to highways and transport the ES contains a chapter on transport and access. Transport related environmental effects are typically associated with changes in traffic on the highway network, both in terms of the total number of vehicles and the type of vehicles generated. Detailed highways and transport operational analysis work, including the identification of development trip generation and assignments, review of network safety, network operational capacity and general site accessibility has been considered in a formal Transport Assessment (TA) document.
- 7.3.2 The site is currently accessed via tracks running from an existing unnamed road, which represents the former alignment of the A10. This local access route also serves The Produce Connection at its southern end and the Lazy Otter restaurant and boat sales and holiday/residential lodge park at its northern end. The route connects to the A10 at priority controlled junctions approximately 550m to the north of the existing access track, and 275m to the south. The A10 serves as a key highway link between Ely and Cambridge.
- 7.3.3 The information submitted with the ES includes a review of relevant accident data and details of traffic surveys carried out to record current traffic flows and from which baseline data can be compiled. The applicant has also taken into account the fact that approval has been given to extend the time to undertake extraction of clay and landfill restoration at Waterbeach Waste Management Park.
- 7.3.4 Predicted staffing levels have been used to calculate the number of trips likely to be generated by employees. It is anticipated that there will be 120 members of staff on site per day, 30 are expected to walk to work, 32 would travel by mini-bus and 58 would travel by car. An element of car-sharing has been factored into the number of trips generated and it is expected that the proposal will generate 66 two-way vehicle movements at the site per day. Staffing levels will reduce outside the May-September harvest period and the number of trips generated will reduce accordingly. In addition, 20 HGV movements would be experienced at the site daily, associated with the import of general supplies and export of produce. HGV deliveries are expected to be spread throughout the period of 07:00 to 16:00. Two-way traffic flows as a consequence of the proposed development would increase by 8-11% at the unnamed road and less than 1% at the A10. Such changes are not expected to create any discernible environmental effects and such the operational effects of the proposal on the highway network would be negligible. The site is located within a 5km catchment area of Stretham and Chittering and this is an accepted distance for employees to travel to work by cycle. There is however no off-highway cycle infrastructure in place and cyclists would have to use the A10.
- 7.3.5 In order to provide the most robust appraisal of traffic related effects, an additional assessment has been undertaken to specifically consider increases in HGV link flow across the core 12 hour daytime period (07:00 – 19:00). The number of HGV movements on the unnamed road is expected to increase from 29 to 39, which equates to an increase of 35.1%. Whilst such increases appear high the ES states that this is down to the fact that existing HGV flows on the unnamed road are relatively low, reflecting the rural nature of the locale. Nonetheless the effects of

development HGV traffic could be considered to be of potentially major adverse significance on the northern section of the unnamed road.

- 7.3.6 Given the above, the ES goes on to assess the impact of the additional HGV movements on pedestrian delay, pedestrian amenity, severance, driver delay, road safety, noise and vibration and air quality. Pedestrian movements along the stretch of road are likely to be limited and the road does not separate any local settlements. Driver delay is unlikely to occur and there is no evidence that the anticipated levels of HGV traffic (equating to 2 HGV movements per hour) would directly give rise to any highway safety concerns. Noise and vibration has been assessed in the Noise Impact Assessment and any impact on air quality from traffic movements is anticipated to be negligible. On this basis the environmental effects of the additional HGV traffic on the unnamed road is not considered to be significant.
- 7.3.7 In response to a request from the County Council Transport Planning Team for further information the applicant submitted a supplementary Highways Technical Note. This addresses current conditions and a review of up to date accident data and the availability of sustainable transport options. This Technical Note has been reviewed by the Transport Planning Team and no objection to the proposal from the Team or the Local Highway Engineer has been made. A reduction in the number of car parking spaces on site to 40 has been agreed by the Transport Planning Team and conditions are recommended in relation to HGV routing, the management of construction traffic and the submission of a travel plan to encourage staff to travel using modes other than single occupancy vehicles.
- 7.3.8 Whilst Officers note that an HGV routing condition has been recommended, such conditions are inherently difficult to enforce as the Local Planning Authority cannot control the use of the public highway. However, measures to encourage the use of particular routes and junctions can be put into place and the applicant has indicated that this would be acceptable. Subject to appropriate conditions it is considered that sufficient detail in relation to traffic movements has been provided and that the level of traffic anticipated can be accommodated on the local highway network. The applicant will provide sufficient parking on site and subject to works to upgrade the existing access track off the unnamed road, the access arrangements are satisfactory. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies COM7 and COM8 in relation to highway safety and parking provision.

#### 7.4 CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- 7.4.1 Cultural heritage encompasses a wide range of features, both visible and buried, including archaeological remains, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.
- 7.4.2 Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 7.4.3 Local Plan Policy ENV12 aims to prevent detrimental impacts on the visual, architectural or historic setting of listed buildings. Additionally, policy ENV14 specifically deals with development proposals affecting sites of known or potential

archaeological interest. These Development Plan policies reflect the aim to protect heritage assets as defined by the NPPF (paragraph 17).

- 7.4.4 The ES contains a chapter on cultural heritage and archaeology and assesses the potential effects upon the historic environment. A study area including a 1km buffer around the site was assessed and the applicant sought detailed advice from the Historic Environment Team at the County Council and Historic England prior to submitting the application.
- 7.4.5 There are no designated heritage assets within the site and only one designated asset within the study area – the Scheduled Monument of a Romano-British settlement at Orchard Farm, c.900m south-west of the site. Further afield another Romano-British settlement, also a Schedule Monument, is located at Tiled House Farm, c.1.8km north-east of the site. The footprint of Stretham Old Engine House, c.1.4km north-east of the site is scheduled, as is the site of Denny Abbey, c2.5km south-west of the site. There are a number of listed buildings within the vicinity of the site including Stretham Old Engine (Grade II\* Listed) and the adjacent Greenways (Grade II Listed). Also within the study area is the Grade II Listed Causeway Farmhouse. At Denny Abbey there are two Grade I Listed Buildings and one Grade II Listed Building.
- 7.4.6 The baseline study carried out has indicated that the site holds potential for buried archaeological evidence of later prehistoric and Romano-British activity; with more limited potential for medieval, post-medieval and modern remains.
- 7.4.7 The non-physical and physical effects of the development were assessed in accordance with Historic England's guidance. The construction of the development (specifically the pile-driven foundations of the glasshouses and creation of the lagoon) would involve excavation to depths previously untouched by the plough and could potentially result in a measure of harm to buried archaeological remains that may be present within the site.
- 7.4.8 Stretham Old Engine is typically and best experienced by walking along the Ouse Valley Way and by viewing the building from the track that directly passes the northern elevation of the engine house and stoker's cottage. Existing modern developments in the wider landscape do not detract from this view. The proposed development will introduce further modern buildings and structures into the landscape, however, it is considered that the setting of Stretham Old Engine would not be altered to such an extent that its heritage significance will be harmed. Historic England agrees that the setting of the Stretham Old Engine Complex is largely focussed towards and centred on the River Great Ouse, screened from and in the opposite direction of the proposed development.
- 7.4.9 At the request of Historic England the applicant carried out a detailed assessment of the likely effects on the scheduled monument of a Roman-British settlement at Orchard Farm. The site is composed of a series of earthworks representing the remains of part of a substantial farming settlement of the Roman Period. The ES states that the heritage significance of this schedule monument is seen to derive from its evidential value and the considerable potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains. Elements of setting are also considered to make some contribution to the heritage significance. Historic England has stated that whilst it is

likely that that the proposed development will be visible as an additional industrial structure in mid-long views from the scheduled monument site, this will be partially screened by existing vegetation and is unlikely to adversely impact the significance of the scheduled monument.

- 7.4.10 The Historic Environment Team at the County Council has confirmed that it does not object to the development but consider that the site should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation secured by condition. The Council's Conservation Officer has also reviewed the assessment carried out by the applicant and raises no objection to the development.
- 7.4.11 Historic England has raised concerns regarding the potential for light pollution and this has been addressed above.
- 7.4.12 It is considered that the applicant has adequately addressed the likely effects of the proposal on the historic environment and that subject to an appropriate archaeological condition, the proposal will not result in a significant effect on the historic environment. The proposal is therefore in accordance with Policies ENV12 and ENV14.

## 7.5 SUSTAINABLE USE OF LAND, FLOOD RISK AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTION

### *Agricultural land*

- 7.5.1 Paragraph 112 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.
- 7.5.2 The ES sets out the fact that the development will be located on Grade1 Agricultural Land. This would therefore be viewed as best and most versatile agricultural land. The proposal involves the intensive use of the site for agricultural purposes. The largest element of the development will be the glasshouses, which will occupy approximately 21ha of the Grade 1 agricultural land.
- 7.5.3 Natural England has raised concerns that the applicant has not carried out a detailed agricultural land classification survey and has relied upon a published provisional ALC map that is not to an accurate scale. This issue has been considered by Officers and in discussions with the applicant's agent it has been agreed that a detailed survey will be undertaken prior to development commencing in order to record baseline conditions. This detail will then be used to inform a decommissioning plan that will be put in place and will need to be followed should the site need to be returned to its existing agricultural use. The requirement to submit a decommissioning plan can be secured by condition.
- 7.5.4 Natural England remains concerned and has pointed out that the development could be located on other land such as brownfield or lower quality (non BMV) agricultural land. It is however a matter of judgement for the decision maker, in this

case the local planning authority, to determine how much weight should be given to this issue.

- 7.5.5 The ES states that the site is currently managed on a seven year drop rotation and that the yields per acre are currently 13.9 tonnes/acre per year. In contrast the anticipated yields per acre would be 80 tonnes/acre per year. The applicant states that this should be considered to be a sustainable use of the land as it would increase productivity of crops that are largely imported from the continent whilst preserving the natural soils in-situ for future generations. The growing of food is still an agricultural practice and therefore there is no change in the use of the land.
- 7.5.6 The proposal has been assessed on the basis that it will be a permanent fixture and that it will remain in operation for a significant period of time. In the event that the complex is no longer required for its intended purpose the applicant is confident that the glasshouses can be removed and the majority of the site restored to its former condition. The ancillary buildings can either be removed or put to another agricultural use, subject to planning permission. It is therefore considered that the benefits of the intensive use of the land justify its location on Grade 1 Agricultural Land and that the local planning authority has sufficient information to assess the proposal.

#### *Flood risk*

- 7.5.7 The proposed development site is situated within flood zones 2 and 3 but within an area benefitting from defence on the Environment Agency's Flood Map. Following consultation with the Environment Agency and the Internal Drainage Board the applicant has prepared a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and a theoretical breach of the flood defences has been considered.
- 7.5.8 The local planning authority is required to apply a sequential test to the proposed development as required by the NPPF. The aim of the sequential test is to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.
- 7.5.9 The applicant has stated that the proposed development should be viewed as an extension to FC Palmer and Sons' existing agricultural business. It is therefore agreed that the catchment area for the sequential test should be limited to available land within FC Palmer and Sons landholding. The vast majority of the land within the holding is located within Flood Zone 3 with the only segment of land at lower risk of flooding being located approximately 500m to the north of the application site, adjacent to the River Great Ouse and to the north-east of the Lazy Otter Meadows complex. It is considered that the likely effects of the development on these sites and on the historic environment would be increased if this segment of land were to be utilised and on this basis the proposed location does satisfy the sequential test.
- 7.5.10 The Environment Agency has examined the FRA and due to the location and nature of the development and the mitigation measures proposed, there is no objection to the development on flood risk grounds.



- 7.5.11 As there may be a number of staff on site at any one time a planning condition is suggested requiring a detailed flood evacuation and rescue plan to be submitted prior to the site coming into use.
- 7.5.12 The applicant has submitted information in respect of surface water drainage and measures such as the collection of roof water have been incorporated into the design. Rain water will be stored in the proposed water tanks and surface water lagoon and used for crop irrigation. Any overflow will be directed to the ditch system that runs adjacent to the site.
- 7.5.13 The Waterbeach Internal Drainage Board has commented on the application and has stated that any overflow into the Board's drainage network will have to be at the Greenfield run-off rate and any connection with require the consent of the Board. The applicant is aware of this requirement and already works closely with the Drainage Board in connection with the management of the existing ditch network.
- 7.5.14 The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has also commented on the application and has reviewed the submitted documentation. The LLFA has no objections in principle to the development subject to the imposition of a planning condition requiring a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site, based on the agreed FRA, being submitted.

*Sustainability and climate change adaption*

- 7.5.15 The ES contains a section on sustainability and climate change adaption. This states that over three quarters of current UK tomato consumption is of imported fruit, which requires lengthy transport by road or sea. Whilst energy is required to heat the glasshouses, the carbon dioxide from the combustion process is captured and used to enhance photosynthesis by enriching the glasshouse environment. This reduces the carbon footprint of the crop production and increases the energy efficiency of the electricity generation process.

7.6 NOISE

- 7.6.1 The nature of the proposal and the inclusion of a combined heat and power (CHP) plant together with a packaging and distribution building and a cold store is such that the applicant has carried out a noise assessment. Noise is likely to be generated during the construction period, from vehicle movements during the operational period and from the operation of the CHP plant. The operational hours for the glasshouses and associated offices, packing and distribution unit would be 0600-22.00. The CHP plant, heat storage tanks, water storage tanks, cold store, irrigation room and control centre could operated 24 hours and 7 days a week and assessment have been based on this.
- 7.6.2 The nearest residential properties are Chittering Farm to the north-east, the marina moorings, residential/holiday caravans and public house to the north-west, Chear Fen Farms located in a westerly direction, School Farm located to the south-west. Willow Grange Farm and Cottages to the west, beyond the A10, Field View and Hill Farm located to the south and Radical Farm located to the south-east.

- 7.6.3 The noise assessment details the baseline noise survey work that has been carried out with representative background sound levels varying between 49dB and 54dB LA90 during the daytime and 44dB and 45dB LA90 during the night-time. Data has been obtained by the manufacturers of the CHP plant in relation to noise levels and attenuation measures. The generators are expected to be located within an acoustic enclosure and the stack is expected to be fitted with an integrated silencer. These attenuation measures would limit the noise of both components to 75dB at 1 metre (free field condition).
- 7.6.4 Using recognised industry guidance and standards noise modelling has been carried out and with the proposed noise mitigation measures noise levels from site are expected to range between 27dB and 33dB during maximum site operations. Noise levels at the nearest receptors are shown to produce a low impact. The predicted highest noise contributions are more than 10dB below the baseline residual sound levels and therefore in context the perceptible noise would not be significant.
- 7.6.5 The Council's Environmental Health Team has considered the noise assessment and raises no objections to the proposal. The mitigation measures proposed to mitigate against and minimise noise during construction are supported and can be secured by condition.
- 7.6.6 Based on the information submitted with the application it is considered that the applicant has adequately addressed the issue of noise and that, subject to appropriate conditions, the amenity of residents living in the vicinity of the site will not be adversely affected.
- 7.7 ECOLOGY
- 7.7.1 A preliminary ecology appraisal has been submitted with the application and includes a Phase 1 habitat survey. The site was considered to have potential to support foraging and nesting bird species, small mammals including hedgehog and foraging habitat for badger and brown hare. The ditches were considered suitable for water vole and their presence was assumed.
- 7.7.2 No further detailed surveys are recommended following the preliminary appraisal and subject to the implementation of recommended mitigation measures, there is expected to be a neutral impact on water vole. The site is assessed as Lower value at Parish/Neighbourhood scale with the impact of the development assessed as Minor Adverse due to loss of nesting and foraging habitat. The loss of open arable field cannot be mitigated but replacement skylark plots on adjacent land can be accommodated.
- 7.7.3 A biodiversity statement submitted with the application details how biodiversity enhancements can be incorporated into the scheme. This includes landscape planting and a species rich meadow mix sown over the remainder of the site and a condition is recommended to secure these measures in live with policy ENV7.
- 7.7.4 The Council's Trees Officer requested further information in relation to the widening of the access track and any impact upon the existing trees along the route. The applicant has submitted an updated plan following a detailed topographical survey

of the access route. The access track as it passes the existing trees is c.4m wide and does not need to be widened to accommodate articulated vehicles. As such, the existing track would not be widened along this section to ensure there was no impact on the existing trees. The Trees Officer has confirmed that this is acceptable.

## 7.8 AIR QUALITY

7.8.1 The carbon dioxide produced by the gas engines will be utilised by the plants within the glasshouses. There will however be other emissions to air such as oxides of nitrogen, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds. Particulate matter emissions include trace amounts of metals, non-combustible organic material or from products of incomplete combustion.

7.8.2 The applicant has stated that emissions from the gas engines will be regulated by an Environmental Permit and that this will ensure that there is no risk to air quality or human health. On this basis it is considered that the proposal would not give rise to any significant effects upon air quality.

## 7.9 GROUND CONDITIONS

7.9.1 A Phase 1 Site Investigation Report has been carried out and was assessed by the Council's Scientific Officer as part of the Scoping Opinion stage. It is agreed that although the risk from land contamination appears to be low, a Phase II investigation including ground gas monitoring should be carried out prior to development commencing.

7.9.2 The applicant has looked at the site's history and has reviewed historical maps. It appears that the site has always been in agricultural use. A condition requiring the Phase II investigation to be carried out can be imposed. The National Trust has raised concerns that very small changes to water levels can have significant impacts and that the light pollution and reflectiveness of the large-scale greenhouses has the potential to have a cumulative negative impact on nature conservation. The issue of light pollution has been addressed above, as has the issue of flood risk and drainage. The applicant has also sought to include biodiversity enhancements wherever possible and a planning condition can be imposed requiring details of the final engineering designs for the foundations on site to be submitted. It is therefore considered that the applicant has adequately addressed the concerns of the various consultees in relation to ground conditions.

## 7.10 NEED AND BENEFITS

7.10.1 Paragraph 28 of the NPPF refers to the need for planning policies to support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. Planning policy should also promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses.

7.10.2 The proposed development would increase the agricultural productivity of the site significantly through extension of the growing season and careful management of the glasshouse microclimate to maximise the yield from individual plants. As

detailed above yields are expected to increase from 13.9 tonnes/acre per year to 80 tonnes/acre per year. This is a significant increase in production, reducing reliance on imported crops and reducing the 'food miles' associated with foreign produce.

- 7.10.3 The proposal does not sit neatly within Local Plan Policies EMP2 or EMP3, which relate to extensions to existing businesses in the countryside or new employment development in the countryside. It does however represent a modern way of farming and builds upon a successful landholding that has also diversified in other ways, for example the nearby solar farms.
- 7.10.4 At present the site currently generates employment opportunities to the equivalent of 0.128 full-time employees per acre. This is expected to rise to 3.6 full-time equivalent employees per acre, nearly 28 times the current level. At peak times there is expected to be a maximum of 120 employees on site each day. In addition to the permanent job opportunities created there are also the associated economic benefits from the construction phase.

*n.b – have asked Axis for existing and future employee numbers*

- 7.10.5 The gas-fired CHP plant will primarily supply electrical power, heat and carbon dioxide to the proposed glasshouses. In addition, at peak times, it will be able to export surplus power to the National Grid. The applicant points towards the Government's desire to develop new forms of low-carbon energy generation and the fact that this is an added benefit of the proposal.

## 7.11 OTHER MATTERS

- 7.11.1 Clarification has been sought from the applicant in relation to waste crops. The applicant has stated that waste crops would not be significant due to the nature of the closely controlled cultivation technique. As with existing waste crops for the existing agricultural operations, vegetative material would be stored within a sealed shredding/spreading unit that would be emptied once a week or more frequently as required. Spreading would be at appropriate rates for the land. The spreader would be cleaned after each load so there would be no odour or flies. As the waste is stored in sealed units there would be no run off from waste storage areas to surface water lagoons.
- 7.11.2 Concerns have been raised by one local resident that they were not aware of the public consultation exercise. The applicant has stated that letters were delivered to residents of the Lazy Otter Meadows complex and details of the consultation exercise have been submitted with the application. The Local Planning Authority has notified 110 addresses, including those at the Lazy Otters Meadows complex and three site notices were posted, one close to the Lazy Otter Pub. The Council did experience some technical difficulties with the public access website and a note to this effect was placed on the Council's website. All comments received up until the point the application is determined will be taken into account and have been addressed in this report.

## 7.12 PLANNING BALANCE

- 7.12.1 The matter of assessing the benefits of a proposal against the harm caused is one for the decision maker and there are no set limits or thresholds, which must be met or passed in order for a decision to be made either in favour of or against a proposal. Where a proposal comes into conflict with the Development Plan and government policy, in the form of the NPPF, this must weigh significantly against the development when reaching a planning judgement.
- 7.12.2 Policy ENV1 requires landscape and settlement character to be protected, conserved and where possible enhanced. The proposed development is significant and will have an impact on the character and appearance of the area. The LVIA refers to the Fen landscape as having capacity to accommodate large-scale development and the built form on the site will be primarily horizontal. It will not be possible to entirely screen the development within the landscape but the additional planting proposed and use of perimeter bunding will go some way to soften long range views of the development. The development will occur alongside a number of existing contemporary structures and once boundary planting has matured the development is considered to have a minor to moderate effect on the landscape.
- 7.12.3 The applicant has provided additional information in respect of the screening that will be used to prevent light pollution from occurring and to maximise growing conditions. Any light spillage will therefore be minimised and on balance it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy ENV9 in this regard. However, any adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area must weigh against the proposal.
- 7.12.4 The proposal has been thoroughly assessed in relation to its traffic and transportation effects. The Local Highway Authority and Transport Planning Team raise no objection to the proposal, subject to appropriate conditions being imposed. The Local Planning Authority cannot control the use of the public highway and it would not be possible to enforce the use of a particular junction or turning point. However, the applicant has demonstrated that the additional traffic movements created by the proposal would not create any discernible environmental effects and the operational effects of the proposal on the highway network would be negligible. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with Policies COM7 and COM8 in relation to traffic and transportation (including parking provision) and any negligible effects attract very limited weight against the proposal.
- 7.12.5 Policies ENV12 and ENV14 seek to protect listed buildings and their setting and sites of archaeological interest. The applicant has demonstrated that no significant harm will be caused to the setting of any heritage assets and a suitably worded planning condition can be imposed requiring an archaeological investigation to be carried out. As detailed above, the applicant has satisfied the local planning authority that the proposal will not result in any significant light pollution. It is considered that the historic environment will be adequately preserved and that any minor adverse effect attracts limited weight against the proposal.
- 7.12.6 There are limited opportunities to locate the proposed development at areas at low risk of flooding and it is considered that the sequential test has been passed. The applicant has demonstrated that flood risk can be minimised and that the

development will operate alongside the existing flood defences. Subject to a condition requiring a detailed surface water drainage strategy to be imposed it is considered that the proposal complies with Policy ENV8 in relation to flood risk. Similarly, subject to the biodiversity enhancements put forward, the proposal adequately addresses ecology and biodiversity and is in accordance with Policy ENV7. A Phase II land investigation will be carried out prior to development commencing, in accordance with Policy ENV9. The noise assessment submitted demonstrates that any perceptible noise will not be significant and the necessary attenuation measures can be secured by condition. As these matters can be adequately addressed by condition it is considered that they carry very limited weight against the proposal.

- 7.12.7 The applicant has demonstrated the tangible benefits of the proposal including a significant increase in production, employment opportunities and the ability for the CHP plant to export any surplus power to the National Grid. The exporting of power will mean the positive benefits of the development will extend beyond the site limits. There are also short term benefits from the construction phase to the local economy. Combined together these benefits attract significant weight in favour of the proposal. In addition, the biodiversity enhancements proposed attract limited weight in favour. The developer has also demonstrated that there are very few brownfield sites that this proposal could reasonably go on and the proposed development will still allow for food to be grown on site.
- 7.12.8 In the absence of any material considerations weighing significant against the proposal it is considered that the benefits outweigh any minor adverse effects and on this basis the application is recommended for approval.

## 8.0 COSTS

- 8.1 An appeal can be lodged against a refusal of planning permission or a condition imposed upon a planning permission. If a local planning authority is found to have acted unreasonably and this has incurred costs for the applicant (referred to as appellant through the appeal process) then a cost award can be made against the Council.
- 8.2 Unreasonable behaviour can be either procedural ie relating to the way a matter has been dealt with or substantive ie relating to the issues at appeal and whether a local planning authority has been able to provide evidence to justify a refusal reason or a condition.
- 8.3 Members do not have to follow an officer recommendation indeed they can legitimately decide to give a different weight to a material consideration than officers. However, it is often these cases where an appellant submits a claim for costs. The Committee therefore needs to consider and document its reasons for going against an officer recommendation very carefully.
- 8.4 In this case Members' attention is particularly drawn to the following points:
- No impact on heritage assets
  - No objection from the Local Highways Authority
  - No impact on flooding

- Applicant has addressed concerns in relation to light pollution

## 9.0 APPENDICES

### 9.1 Appendix 1 - Conditions

<b><u>Background Documents</u></b>	<b><u>Location</u></b>	<b><u>Contact Officer(s)</u></b>
16/00660/ESF	Julie Barrow Room No. 011 The Grange	Julie Barrow Senior Planning Officer
16/00045/SCOPE	Ely	01353 665555 julie.barrow@eastca mbs.gov.uk

National Planning Policy Framework -

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf)

East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015 -

<http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Local%20Plan%20April%202015%20-%20front%20cover%20and%20inside%20front%20cover.pdf>

## APPENDIX 1 - 16/00660/ESF Conditions

- 1 Development shall be carried out in accordance with the drawings and documents listed below

Plan Reference	Version No	Date Received
BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT		19th May 2016
NOISE IMPACT ASSESSMENT		19th May 2016
PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL		19th May 2016
PHASE 1 SITE INVESTIGATION REPORT		
1801-01-06		19th May 2016
1801-01-SK102		19th May 2016
VE-20-6144-04		19th May 2016
VE-20-6144-02	D	19th May 2016
VE-20-6144-03	D	19th May 2016
VE-20-6144-01	D	19th May 2016
CHP-0316		19th May 2016
CHP-0316	1 of 4	19th May 2016
CHP-0316	2 of 4	19th May 2016
CHP-0316	3 of 4	19th May 2016
CHP-0316	4 of 4	19th May 2016
1801-01-05		19th May 2016
1801-01-04		19th May 2016
1801-01-01	D	25th July 2016
1801-01-02	D	25th July 2016
1801-01-03	A	25th July 2016
1801-01-ATR101	A	17th August 2016
1801-01-ATR102	A	17th August 2016
1801-01-SK101	A	17th August 2016
HIGHWAYS TECHNICAL NOTE 1	A	17th August 2016
ADDITIONAL LIGHTING INFORMATION		17th August 2016
LIGHT SCREENS ADD INFO		17th August 2016
ADDITIONAL INFO LIGHTING PHOTOS		17th August 2016
TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT		19th May 2016
FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT		19th May 2016

- 1 Reason: To define the scope and extent of this permission.
- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be commenced within 3 years of the date of this permission.
- 2 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended.
- 3 Notwithstanding the details shown on Drawing No. 1801-01-04 Indicative glasshouse plans and elevations, prior to commencement of development final engineering details for the glasshouses and their foundations shall be submitted to and approved in writing



by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 3 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. This condition is pre-commencement as it relates to below ground workings, the detail of which is required prior to any work starting on site.
- 4 Prior to commencement of development details of all soft and hard landscaping works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the earth bunds and planting together with the landscape planting and species mix meadow mix as recommended within the Biodiversity Statement dated May 2016 prepared by The Landscape Partnership. The details shall also include all other boundary treatments and any other means of enclosure, car parking layouts and hard surfacing materials. The soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the end of the first planting season following commencement of use of the development and the hard landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the commencement of use of any part of the development. If within a period of five years from the date of the planting, or replacement planting, any tree or plant is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, another tree or plant of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place, unless the Local Planning Authority gives its written consent to any variation.
- 4 Reason: To assimilate the development into its surroundings, in accordance with policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted.
- 5 No development shall take place until a Phase II Site 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 in accordance with the Recommendations for Further Works contained within the Phase I Site Investigation Report dated 7 January 2016 prepared by TerraConsult Ltd. 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.

- 5 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 ENV9 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted.
- 6 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.
- 6 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 ENV9 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 7 No development shall take place until a written scheme of investigation (WSI) has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. For land that is included within the WSI, no development shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed WSI, which shall include the statement of significance and research objectives; and:
  - (i) The programme and methodology of site investigation and recording and the nomination of a competent person(s) or organisation to undertake the agreed works
  - (ii) The programme for post-investigation assessment and subsequent analysis, publication & dissemination and deposition of resulting material. This part of the condition shall not be discharged until these elements have been fulfilled in accordance with the programme set out in the WSI.
- 7 Reason: To ensure that any archaeological remains are suitably recorded in accordance with policy ENV14 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted.
- 8 Prior to commencement of development a Decommissioning Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall include a detailed soil resources and ALC Survey to provide baseline data prior to development commencing, and describe the methodology for the removal of concrete piling and other concrete structures within the glasshouse footprint based on its findings, and to describe the subsequent replacement of soil so that soil of the correct type and sequence (topsoil, upper subsoil, lower subsoil etc. as appropriate) is replaced to maintain the

preconstruction ALC grade. The development and any subsequent decommissioning and return to agricultural use shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

- 8 Reason: To ensure that the land can be restored back to its original condition in the event that the development is no longer required in accordance with the spirit of the National Planning Policy Framework. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted.
- 9 In the event that the development is no longer required and remains unused for a continuous period of twelve months, the land shall be restored back to its original condition in accordance with the Decommissioning Plan referred to at Condition 8 above.
- 9 Reason: To ensure that the land can be restored back to its original condition in the event that the development is no longer required in accordance with the spirit of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 10 Prior to commencement of use of any part of the development the car parking spaces shown on Drawing No. 1801-01-02 Rev.D shall be laid out, levelled, surfaced and drained and thereafter retained for that specific use.
- 10 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies COM7 and COM8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 11 Prior to commencement of use a HGV Routing Strategy shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Strategy shall detail the measures to be taken to inform and instruct contractors, employees, servants, agents and all other persons within the operator's control of the preferred routes. The Strategy shall also include details of all signage to be erected in relation to prohibited routes and details of a log to be kept detailing the measures taken as part of the Strategy that shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority for inspection upon giving 24 hours notice.
- 11 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies COM7 and COM8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 12 Prior to any work commencing on the site a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority regarding mitigation measures for noise, dust and lighting during the construction phase. These shall include, but not be limited to, other 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.
- 12 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. The condition is pre-commencement as it would be unreasonable to require applicants to undertake this work prior to consent being granted.

- 13 Prior to commencement of use a Travel Plan designed to encourage staff to travel using modes other than single occupancy vehicles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan will be implemented within 28 days of the use commencing and all new staff will be made aware of the document by the developer.
- 13 Reason: In order to encourage sustainable forms of travel in accordance with policy COM7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 14 Prior to the commencement of use of the glasshouses details of the lighting and light pollution screens shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The lighting and screens shall be based upon the manufacturers details submitted on 17 August 2016 and the details shall include the operating hours and control mechanisms. The approved lighting and light pollution screens shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
- 14 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 15 No above ground construction shall take place on site until details of the materials to be used on the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 15 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 16 Mitigation measures for the construction phase as specified in Section 6.9 on page 38 of the noise report entitled 'Noise Impact Assessment Glasshouses with combined Heat and Power (CHP) Plant, dated 8th April 2016, reference number R16.0402/DRK, and reproduced below for completeness, shall be adhered to at all times during the construction phase.

\_Community Relations - this is one of the most important aspects of mitigation as providing the local residents with clear information about the activities that would be taking place and the length of time that any peak noise levels may occur will assist in allaying people's fears. BS 5228 states "It is suggested that good relations can be developed by keeping people informed of progress and by treating complaints fairly and expeditiously. The person, company or organisation carrying out the work on site should appoint a responsible person to liaise with the public."

\_Use of broadband type reverse alarms for mobile plant (i.e. avoiding tonal 'beeper' type alarms)

\_Consider using a one-way system/turning circles and/or use of a banksman to avoid/reduce the need for reverse alarms.

\_Sensible routing of the construction plant to minimise noise relative to the nearest residential properties.

\_Careful choice of plant to minimise noise generation (e.g. hire of fixed plant with acoustic enclosures).

\_Ensure all plant is regularly maintained and correctly fitted with effective silencers / any relevant acoustic hoods etc.

\_Maximise distance between any significant noise source and residential receptor locations.

\_Plant switched off when not in use.

- 16 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 17 All lighting to be used during the construction phase to be limited to use within the hours of 07:00 - 20:00 each day. Prior to commencement of development a plan shall be submitted and agreed in writing with the LPA identifying the location and specification of any security lighting which will be exempt from the above hours restriction during the construction phase. Any agreed plan shall be adhered to at all times.
- 17 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 18 Construction times and deliveries, shall be limited to the following hours: 07:00-20:00 each day Monday-Friday, 07:00-20:00 Saturdays and none on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 18 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 19 The specific rated noise level from the site shall not exceed the rating site noise limit criteria specified in table 4.3 on page 31 of the noise report prepared by Noise and Vibration Consultants Ltd, dated 8th April 2015 (report number R16.0402/DRK).
- 19 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 20 Operational hours (including general maintenance of plant) to be limited to 06:00 - 22:00 as requested and assessed within the noise report prepared by Noise and Vibration Consultants Ltd, dated 8th April 2015 (report number R16.0402/DRK).
- 20 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 21 All doors to the CHP generators shall remain closed at all times, except to allow ingress and egress.
- 21 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 22 Any site based mobile plant (excluding HGV's) shall have broadband reversing alar
- 22 Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of neighbouring occupiers, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 23 Prior to commencement of use of any part of the development a lighting plan shall be submitted with the specification and location of any external lighting and proposed times

of use. The lighting plan shall be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and adhered to thereafter.

- 23 Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 24 Prior to commencement of use of any part of the development a Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The Plan shall include emergency planning and rescue implications for the whole site.
- 24 Reason: To reduce the impacts/risk of flooding in extreme circumstances on future occupants, in accordance with policies ENV2 and ENV8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 25 Prior to commencement of development a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site based on the agreed Flood Risk Assessment (ref: AMA521 Rev 0) dated 20 May 2016 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.
- 25 Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding, to improve and protect water quality, and improve habitat and amenity in accordance with policies ENV2 and ENV8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015. It would be unreasonable to require these details prior to granting planning permission, but the information is required prior to ground works taking place.
- 26 The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the Recommendations contained within Chapter 6 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated October 2015 prepared by The Landscape Partnership.
- 26 Reason: To protect species and sites of nature conservation, in accordance with policies ENV2 and ENV7 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.
- 27 Prior to commencement of use of any part of the development visibility splays shall be provided each side of the vehicular access in accordance with the details shown on Drawing No. 1801-01-SK102. The splays shall thereafter be maintained free from any obstruction exceeding 0.6m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.
- 27 Reason: In the interests of highway safety, in accordance with policies COM7 and COM8 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2015.