

**HOLT – PF/17/1803 – Residential development of 52 dwellings (including the removal of No.67 Hempstead Road), provision of new vehicular access to Hempstead Road; associated landscaping, open space, pumping station and electricity substation; Land to the rear of 67 Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6DQ, for Hopkins Homes Limited.**

**Major Development**

**- Target Date: 08 March 2018**

Case Officer: Mr R Parkinson

Full Planning Permission

**BACKGROUND AND SITE CONTEXT**

This application was validated in December 2017, and as new information has been received or amended it has undergone successive public consultations. These occurred in December 2017, February 2019, February 2020, and most recently October 2020. The application is presented to Development Committee having taken on board all these comments.

**RELEVANT SITE CONSTRAINTS**

Within the defined Residential Area

Within the defined LDF Settlement Boundary

Part of a Mixed Use Allocation (site allocation policy HO9)

The application proposes development within a defined County Wildlife Site

Within a Mineral Safeguard Area

Contaminated Land Buffer

Contaminated Land

Controlled Water Risk - Medium (Ground Water Pollution)

Development is within 60m of Class A road and is adjacent to a defined LDF Principal Route (A148)

Access from a C Road

In the vicinity of an Unclassified Road

**RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

Land rear of, 67 Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6DQ (Application site)

PLA/19881586 PO

67 & LAND TO REAR, HEMPSTEAD ROAD, HOLT

DEMOLITION OF BUNGALOW AND ERECTION OF SEVEN DWELLINGS

Refused 27/10/1988

PLA/19870177 PO

LAND OFF HEMPSTEAD ROAD, HOLT

DEVELOPMENT OF SITE TO CREATE 70 DWELLINGS.

Refused 06/03/1987

Adjacent land to east

PLA/19810678 HR

SITE AT HEMPSTEAD ROAD, HOLT

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING

Approved 11/05/1981

PLA/20011103 PF

Land at The Firs, Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6DQ  
USE OF SITE FOR AGRICULTURAL ENGINEERING AND STORAGE OF BUILDING  
MATERIALS AND ERECTION OF STORAGE BUILDING  
Approved 11/12/2001

Adjacent land to north east (Heath Farm / Lovell Homes)

*Outline planning permissions:*

PO/13/1306 PO  
Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6JU  
Residential and employment (A3, A4, B1, B2, B8, C1, C2, D1 and D2 Class Uses)  
development including provision of public open space, roundabout and vehicular link road  
Approved 11/09/2014

PO/16/0253 PO  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU  
Erection of up to 215 dwellings, employment land (A3, A4, B1, B2, B8, C1, C2, D1 and D2  
class uses), public open space and provision of roundabout and vehicular link road from  
Cromer Road (A148) to Heath Drive with associated landscaping and infrastructure (Outline  
application)  
Approved 16/08/2016

CDA/16/0253 CD  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Holt  
Discharge of conditions 6, 7, 8,10,11,14,16 (highways),19 (landscaping),20 (ecological  
surveys), 21 (CEMP), 22 (LEMP), 23 (surface water drainage), 24 (foul drainage), 26  
(ground gas) & 27 (renewables) of planning permission PO/16/0253  
Condition Discharge Reply 11/04/2018

CDB/16/0253 CD  
Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt  
Discharge of condition 18 (Residential Travel Plan) of planning permission PO/16/0253 -  
submission relating to residential development only  
Condition Discharge Reply 04/04/2018

CDC/16/0253 CD  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU  
Discharge of Conditions 7 (Off-site highway improvement), Condition 8 (Highway junction  
and traffic calming), Condition 10 (Highways surface water drainage), Condition 11  
(Highways maintenance of streets), Condition 18 (Travel Plan), Condition 23 (Designs of a  
surface water drainage scheme), Condition 25 (External lighting) of Planning Permission  
PO/16/0253  
Pending consideration

CDD/16/0253 CD  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU  
Discharge of Condition 9 (On-site and off-site highway infrastructure works) for Planning  
Permission PO/16/0253  
Pending consideration

*Reserved Matters applications:*

PM/16/1204 PM  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU

Reserved matters submission of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale; for erection of 213 dwellings, public open space, highway and other infrastructure, in respect of outline planning application PO/16/0253  
Approved 16/03/2017

NMA1/16/1204 NMA  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU  
Non-material amendment to change dwelling materials, structure & features  
Approved 24/05/2017

NMA2/16/1204 NMA  
Heath Farm, Hempstead Road, Holt  
Non-Material Amendment for planning permission PM/16/1204 for design revisions  
Approved 29/06/2018

NMA3/16/1204 NMA  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU  
Non-material amendment to reserved matters approval PM/16/1204 to allow for design changes to Plot 47, 49, 50, 56, 57, 58 and 61.  
Approved 21/12/2018

NMA4/16/1204 NMA  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Holt  
Non-Material Amendment to Planning Permission PM/16/1204 to substitution of house type on Plot 65, amended from house type 1887 to 1655. Plot 64 move slightly south  
Approved 14/06/2019

CDB/16/1204 CD  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Heath Farm, Holt NR25 6JU  
Discharge of Condition 2 (External Lighting) for Planning Permission PM/16/1204  
Pending consideration

PF/19/1066 PM  
Reserved Matters submission of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for the erection of 212 dwellings with public open space, highways and other infrastructure pursuant to outline planning permission PO/16/0253 (variance from previous reserved matters permission PM/16/1204, including retrospective changes to plots 2 and 3 in respect of appearance and scale)  
Approved 01/04/2020

NMA1/19/1066 NMA  
Land to the North of, Hempstead Road, Holt  
Non-Material Amendment to planning permission PF/19/1066 to change the roofing tiles to be used on Plots 82, 101, 102, 103, 104a and 104b and their garages, from the approved Old Hollow Red Clay Pantiles to proposed Fenland Farmhouse Red Concrete pantiles, and to change the boundary walls designs around PLots 99-106 and 93 by removing flint cobbles and replacing with infill buff brick (Leicester Multi Cream stock), and amending the approved plan numbers accordingly  
Pending consideration

Adjacent land to west of 65 Hempstead Road and rear of 61 Hempstead Road

PO/16/0626 PO  
Land to rear of Seven Acres, 61 Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6DQ

Site for the erection of up to 9 detached dwellings with access from Hempstead Road (Outline application).  
Approved 21/12/2016

PF/17/1190 PF  
Rear of, Seven Acres, 61 Hempstead Road, Holt, NR25 6DQ  
Erection of 9 single-storey dwellings  
Approved 13/04/2018

PF/19/0213 PO  
Variation of condition 2 (plans) of planning permission PF/17/1190 (erection of 9 single storey dwellings) to allow for a plot substitution on plots 1, 2 & 8 and for repositioning of plot 9 and changes to access at 61 Hempstead Road  
Approved 22/10/2020

## **THE SITE**

The application site comprises an irregular shaped piece of rough grassland / scrub of approximately 2.8 hectares in area behind (north) of 67 Hempstead Road. The proposed residential area is a triangular shaped area within the southern half of the wider application site. Access to the site is to be taken off Hempstead Road which is proposed to be taken through the site of the existing bungalow at no. 67 Hempstead Road. The site is flat but rises slightly from the south up to the higher area towards the A148.

The application's Location Plan demonstrates that the bungalow at no. 67 Hempstead Road is in the application site, in control of the applicant, Hopkins Homes. In addition, the bungalow at 65 Hempstead Road to the west is also within the ownership of the applicant, by virtue of being shown in a 'blue line', which is not affected by this application.

To the north of the application site is the A148 Holt bypass and its wooded boundary which is highway land. To the immediate west of the proposed application site is the County Wildlife Site (CWS) at the northern end of Gravel Pit Lane (ref CWS 2076) and the new bungalows within the recent Olby Close development.

South and west of the site along Hempstead Road is a mixture of house styles, including two-storey terraces, detached chalet bungalows, conventional bungalows and larger detached two storey dwellings fronting the site access to the south. To the south-east of the site access is the footpath south to Holt Country Park, and the tree belt screening the warehousing and industry located on the south side of Hempstead Road. To the east of the southern / residential part of this application site is a small industrial area behind no. 69 Hempstead Road, at the furthest end of which is a telecommunications mast. East of that is an area of undeveloped land behind a tree belt on the north side of Hempstead Road, which the outline permissions for the Heath Farm development have defined as being anticipated as employment land.

To the east of the northern part of the application site is the Heath Farm residential development which is currently under construction by Lovell Homes; here, the permissions for that site expect, in a south-north arrangement, an area of allotments, then public open space connecting to the new Heath Drive to the east, and, to the north of that, new dwellings around Barn Owl Drive and Woodpecker Avenue within the estate, which will extend to the A148 bypass. These are all sited behind an existing thick hedge on this application site's east boundary. The new homes at Heath Farm are noticeably higher in their land levels than the current application site, and are prominent in views when stood at the northern half of the application site.

Further east, beyond 69 Hempstead Road and the small industrial area, is a cycle and pedestrian route heading north into the Heath Farm development. Beyond that is the busy Hempstead Road industrial estate.

Vehicular access into the Heath Farm residential site is now available from Hempstead Road via the newly-opened Heath Drive at the northern end of the industrial estate. Heath Drive now provides continuous connection between Hempstead Road and the A148 bypass at the recent A148 roundabout, meaning that vehicles needing to head east towards Sheringham can avoid driving along Hempstead Road into the town centre, and likewise industrial estate traffic can avoid needing to head towards the town centre to head south. The Highway Authority is now preventing HGVs from using Hempstead Road, except for the immediate access to intervening sites located between Heath Farm and the bypass, so requiring Heath Drive to become the main route for HGVs to and from the A148 rather than needing to come through the north end of Hempstead Road.

There is currently no formal public access to or across the northern end of the application site, which is currently scrub and grasses, but the development intends to create a new 'informal footpath' across the northern end of the site link to allow access parallel to the A148 and towards the underpass from Hempstead Road to Holt town centre.

#### Current Hempstead Road works

Continuous pedestrian access from the application site into Holt town centre is only possible along the south-east side of Hempstead Road, although there are some footpath improvements being made on the north-west side (related to the permission for 9 bungalows – ref. PF/19/0213).

Important to this application's consideration are the improvement works required along Hempstead Road as part of the approval for 212 dwellings at Heath Farm. Following the recent opening of the Heath Drive link road, various works have since been approved for Hempstead Road and are now being undertaken in agreement with the Highway Authority.

These include:

- Providing a tapered single-lane 'pinch-point' road narrowing and pedestrian crossing points opposite the new pedestrian and cycle link adjacent to 69 Hempstead Road. This will narrow the carriageway to a 3m wide single lane and, in combination with 'no access' signs, will prevent HGV access through to the west side of Hempstead Road.
- Widening the footpath and improving crossing points along the most of the south side of Hempstead Road, between Heath Drive and Old Station Way.
- New 30mph speed limit sign and 'gateway feature' east of Heath Drive.
- Providing new flashing speed-awareness signs to emphasise 30mph area.

The development of 9 bungalows at Olby Close has also included a requirement to provide an extended footpath westward from that site up to 57 Hempstead Road on the north side of Hempstead Road where a new crossing point will be provided to allow access to a section of existing footway to the south of Hempstead Road on the west side of Charles Road.

## **THIS APPLICATION**

This is an application for full planning permission for residential development of 52 dwellings on the vacant scrub land behind 67 Hempstead Road. The proposal involves the demolition and removal of No.67 Hempstead Road, so creating net increase of 51 additional dwellings.

The application includes provision of new vehicular access to Hempstead Road through the site of the existing bungalow at 67 Hempstead Road. It proposes public open space at the north of the site, in the form of an east-west area of parkland parallel to the A148 (including the new footpath). In addition, an area of open space is proposed as a landscape buffer in the north-west corner running north-south alongside the Gravel Pit Lane County Wildlife Site. The development also includes a pumping station in the north-east corner of the residential area, and an electricity substation and associated landscaping amongst the dwellings.

The application was received and validated in December 2017 but there have been few changes in material circumstance since the evidence was first prepared.

The application is now supported by the following plans and documents:

- Amended Location and Layout plans, floor plans and elevations.
- External Works layout, Materials layout, and Boundary Treatment plans

Reports received upon validation in December 2017:

- Geo-Environmental Assessment – Supplementary Phase II report (dated October 2017)
- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Statement of [Community] Involvement
- External Lighting Statement
- Sustainability Statement
- Open Space Assessment and Strategy
- Section 106 Agreement – Draft Heads of Terms (dated October 2017)
- Ecological Scoping Survey (dated October 2017)
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (dated March 2016)
- Phase 2 Ecological Surveys and Assessment (dated March 2016)
- Reptile Mitigation Strategy (dated March 2016)
- Archaeological Statement (dated October 2017)
- Air quality Assessment (dated November 2017)
- Landscape Strategy – drawing 001 (dated Dec. '17, received December 2017)

Reports received November & December 2018:

- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy (dated October 2017)
- Noise Assessment (dated October 2018)
- Transport Statement (dated November 2018)
- Ecological Impact Assessment Report (dated December 2018)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (dated November 2018)

Reports received January 2019:

- Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Preliminary Arboricultural Method Statement, and Tree Protection Plan ref 6151-D-AIA (dated January 2019)
- Landscape Planting Plans 002-B and 003-B

## **REASONS FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**

At the request of local ward member Cllr G. Perry-Warnes, given highway safety concerns raised by local residents.

## **TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE**

### **Holt Town Council: OBJECTION**

- Objection due to highways safety concerns.
- The Town Council has concern over the safety of the access off Hempstead Road.
- The Town Council regularly receive complaints regarding parking and traffic issues in this area, and the proposal for 52 dwellings will compound the issue.

The Town Council previously objected on the grounds that they consider this will be a significant increase of additional traffic and that it is far more practicable and safer to keep the access from Heath Road. They were also concerned that in addition to one existing access onto Hempstead Road there are three extra proposed, making this potentially a dangerous road.

They reiterated further, when Lodge Close was developed, it was stated that no more cars would be allowed access onto Norwich Road. This Development should be required to be accessed from the new Heath Drive link road between A148 and Hempstead Road.

Suggest that if this proposal is allowed the Town Council would want to be included in the negotiations for S106 payments, and would want to see contributions for the hopper bus.

## **PUBLIC REPRESENTATIONS**

12 letters of objection were received raising the matters as outlined below.

### **Highways safety and access:**

- Increased traffic flows, congestion, pollution, traffic noise and public safety.
  - Issues with more parked cars and HGV traffic using Hempstead Road.
  - Concerns over the number of accesses and other sites with lots of traffic.
- Access will be on to an unsuitable road with too many accesses in close proximity:
  - two road access points will be on the same side of Hempstead Road within 60 metres of each other, compromising traffic using the Charles Road junction and vehicles needing access to the commercial sites.
  - the cycle and pedestrian link will be endangered.
  - the Matthews Transport depot exit will be compromised.
  - and there will be more traffic using this area as a rat run to the A148.
- Access should be gained via the Heath Farm development:
  - this was expected by the Development Brief for policy HO9;
  - the suggestion that a 3m change in levels between Heath Farm and this site is too significant for a link road is not justified, given the existing 1.5m drop in levels to the south is being overcome;
  - Any potential benefits of restricting HGV access to Hempstead Road by providing Heath Drive will be cancelled out by the traffic from these proposals.
- The access will conflict with the safe use of the new specific shared cycle/pedestrian route from Heath Farm into Holt via Hempstead Road.
- Traffic calming measures proposed to Hempstead Road are continually delayed.

### **Local infrastructure:**

- Local services cannot cope with the additional housing.

#### **Ecology and wildlife sites:**

- The County Wildlife Site and wildlife using it will become isolated and its quality deteriorated due to higher footfall, litter, noise and light spill from the houses.

#### **Design and amenity**

- This site is too close to the Olby Close development – both its hedge and access.
- The site appears to over-dominate Olby Close and its design is unsympathetic.
- Construction working hours should be restricted.

### **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

#### **Local Highway Authority (Norfolk County Council) – No objection.**

- The County Council would not require street lighting within the development as there is no highway safety reason for doing so.
- There is no quantified assessment of the links available to local services.
- The proposed crossing point over the north end of Hempstead Road is supported.
- It would have been preferable to provide vehicle access from the eastern site, especially as that site is thought to have safeguarded land for such a link, but safe access has been proved to be possible from Hempstead Road and that is acceptable, and no objection is proposed in this respect.

In terms of the design:

- All 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings should have 2 car parking spaces notwithstanding whether any garages are proposed at a dwelling.
- 1-bedroom dwellings should have the ability to provide more than just one parking space, to cater for higher rates of car ownership.
- All informal footpaths through public open space should have designed-in overlooking from the closest dwellings.
- The junction of non-adopted shared drives and adopted estate road should be brought into the adopted road area to ensure visibility splays can be maintained.
- The estate should be subject to a 20mph speed limit, with signage at the entrance.

#### **Landscape and Ecology Officer – No Objection, subject to conditions and mitigation being secured**

See copy of Ecology comments in full at **Appendix A**.

#### **Conservation and Design Officer – No objections subject to designs being revised.**

The site must not be allowed to be overdeveloped, and must ensure the design is appropriate to the context adjacent to the County Wildlife Site. There is no impact on either the Holt or Glaven Valley Conservation Areas conservation areas, or listed buildings, given the distance and intervening development.

- The dwellings do appear rather tightly / densely positioned, indicating a cramped design.
- Parking appears detached from dwellings, causing security and access parking concern.
- The pumping station is too dominant in the open space area.
- There is little coherency to the streetscenes, and individual buildings dominate.



- Scale and form of buildings is acceptable, but the 3 storey block of flats needs softening.
- In general, the dwellings do little to reinforce local distinctiveness and offer little by way of genuine innovation or design interest, but, on the other hand, the homes display perfectly well-mannered proportions and detailing. With build quality levels also likely to be comparatively high, the end product will no doubt be pleasing to many.

If the designs can be improved incrementally (a little can go a long way on this scheme) there is no objection in principle, given the form and character of the immediate area is not particularly strong and is to a certain extent undermined by the industrial uses nearby.

## **Environmental Protection Services (NNDC) – No Objection**

### Residential amenity:

There are neighbouring uses which may impact on residential amenity due to noise, including a scrap yard, warehouse and storage unit with outdoor areas and road traffic, and an industrial estate at a further distance. A noise assessment has addressed the adjoining site's noise impact and suggested appropriate control measures, including an acoustic fence along the eastern boundary.

The pumping station and electricity substation could create noise concerns, but could be addressed by planning condition to establish the specifications and noise protection.

The proposed Air Source Heat Pumps have potential to create a noise impact, but could be addressed by planning condition to establish the specifications and noise protection.

### Contaminated land:

The contamination investigations report is comprehensive and will inform investigation of the site and remediation strategy by conditions is necessary. Remediation of the site as set out in the report, and submission of verification details thereafter, should be secured by condition. Ground gas will need investigating and mitigating accordingly.

### Air Quality

The air quality report has been examined and satisfactorily proves there are no concerns.

### Refuse and waste

The proposed storage and collection arrangements are acceptable in principle.

## **Natural England - No objection, subject to appropriate mitigation being secured.**

### Recreational impacts:

The application site is in the vicinity of many nationally and internationally designated wildlife sites, as below:

- Norfolk Valley Fen Special Area of Conservation
- North Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation
- North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area
- North Norfolk Coast Ramsar
- North Norfolk Coast Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Holt Lowes Site of Special Scientific Interest

Without appropriate mitigation the application would have an adverse impact on the integrity of these designated sites, and as such would not be acceptable.

In order to mitigate these adverse effects and make the development acceptable, the following mitigation measures are required by planning condition or planning obligations:

- A financial contribution to appropriately manage the nearby designated sites at Holt Lowes and the North Norfolk Coast, to mitigate the impacts of predicted increased recreational use and potential disturbance impacts, as recommended in the Habitats Regulations Assessment behind Policy HO9.
- Prior approval of a scheme of mitigation to minimise potential impacts on the North Norfolk Coast SPA, SAC and Ramsar arising as a result of increased visitor pressure, and on-going monitoring of such measures, as stated in Policy HO9.
- Securing contributions towards management of the adjacent County Wildlife Site, as advised in Policy HO9.
- Adherence to the precautionary methods during construction suggested in section 5.4 of the Ecological Survey Report

Water management:

It is important to ensure that surface water is managed and treated within the development to reduce the potential impacts of runoff and nutrient enrichment to the Norfolk Valley Fens Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

Local sites, priority habitats and species:

The impact on local sites and priority habitats and species should be considered against the NPPF and local development plan policy, as well as the NERC Act 2006.

### **Norfolk Wildlife Trust (NWT) - Objection**

The NWT has been consulted on the basis of this site being adjacent to the defined County Wildlife Site at Gravel Pit Lane, although their comments suggest they believe the County Wildlife Site extends across the northern half of the site.

The NWT objects to the proposals because they believe the whole of the housing application site should be left undeveloped or actively managed as an effective buffer to the County Wildlife Site, in the face of the pressure experienced from the development of the 200+ homes at Heath Farm.

This is a position the NWT have held since the Local Development Framework first proposed development of this site in 2009, and is based on knowledge of the ecological value of the area (in their opinion the site's grassland and scrub is of equal value in itself to that of the designated County Wildlife Site), and the evidence base used by the District Council itself to support allocations proposed through the LDF process.

Furthermore, the NWT considers the findings and recommendations of the submitted Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) support this view, as it identifies most of the site to be covered by "unimproved neutral grassland... formerly a lowland meadow and therefore qualifies as a habitat of principal importance under the NERC Act (2006).

The NWT disagrees with the findings of the Phase II Ecological Survey which has assessed that 80% of the habitat will be lost but which states the impact can be neutralised through effective mitigation.

The NWT believe the CWS to extend across the northern areas of the site, which would be damaged by the use of new planting and hard footpaths across the area, and considers the proposed 'buffer strip' to be too thin and ineffective. The proposed mitigation through some

hedge retention and management of retained grassland will not be sufficient to compensate for, or address the loss of, habitats of 'principal importance', nor prevent an unacceptable impact on the adjoining County Wildlife Site.

The NWT consider the CWS should be extended to include this site as a whole, and the areas proposed as a buffer, if not extended, should be managed sensitively in perpetuity to maintain its valuable wildlife interest, with identified measures needing to be put in place, which should be secured by conditions or other appropriate mechanisms.

The NWT has latterly reinforced their opinion that the area shown within the Open Space on site must be used for habitat creation and restoration as a compensation for the loss of grassland to the construction and the impacts caused by more use and access of the County Wildlife Site. In particular, the Open Space should not be seen as an area for general recreation and 'standard' forms of public open space must not be proposed in that area.

### **NHS England (Midlands and East) – No objection subject to funding by S106.**

**The scheme will be unsustainable unless the impact on health care provision is addressed through developer contributions.**

The local GP, Holt medical Practice (and its branch surgeries operating in the area) does not have capacity to accommodate the additional growth resulting from the proposed development, which could have an impact on the funding programme for the delivery of healthcare provision in this GP catchment, and this should be addressed.

A Health Impact Assessment (HIA) should be provided in the application, but the NHS has prepared its own model HIA to provide the basis of developer contributions being sought to address the impacts. It is recommended that the development provides a sum of £17,664 towards capital funding to increase capacity at the Holt Medical Practice.

The development could generate approximately 112 residents and existing services are constrained with more patients per floorspace requirements than the expected standards. If growth is not mitigated the shortage will be exacerbated and the service become unsustainable. A proportionate developer contribution has been calculated and would be used towards refurbishment, reconfiguration, extension or potentially even relocation, at Holt Medical Practice.

### **Strategic Housing – Support.**

#### Affordable housing

The scheme will provide 23 affordable dwellings of which 17 will be for Affordable Rent and the remaining six for sale on a Shared Ownership basis. However, although the proposed mix and type of affordable housing meets the identified housing need and is supported, any Section 106 legal agreement will need to ensure that the Shared Ownership homes are not allowed to be sold for anything more than 50% of the open market value if it is to be affordable to purchase on average North Norfolk incomes.

The intended phased delivery of affordable housing linked to open market housing provision is acceptable, but certain elements of the proposed section 106 terms will need revision if they are to be found acceptable.

#### Housing mix

The proportion of dwellings with 2 bedrooms or fewer is acceptable and exceeds the Policy HO 1 requirement of 40%.

Clarification is sought as to how the proposed scheme will meet the requirement of Policy HO 1 in that at least 20% of all dwellings must be suitable for or easily adaptable to meet the needs of the elderly, infirm or disabled. Currently the proposal is only 8%.

The 4 x 1-bedroom bungalows will greatly assist in this regard, especially as these are proposed as affordable housing.

Subject to this confirmation and the provision of the affordable housing being secured through a Section 106 Agreement containing the Council's standard provisions, the Housing Strategy and Community Development Team support the approval of this application.

**Norfolk County Council - Planning Obligations Co-Ordinator – No objection subject to infrastructure funding being secured.**

Response received 30 November 2020 and is considered to reflect the most up-to-date situation relating to education provision/contributions, library and fire service contributions, and it is reasonable to expect that the response is made in light of recent discussions regarding school capacity and provision within Holt and submissions made in respect of the Lodge Farm appeal under consideration by the Planning Inspectorate.

Taking into account the other permitted site developments in Holt, and current capacity at local schools, the development will need to address the needs of children requiring Primary School access, and this is most likely to require expansion of the Holt Community Primary School.

The contribution is calculated as:

- Holt Community Primary School: 11 spaces needed x £14,022 per space = £154,242.

There is currently spare capacity at High School levels and at Early Education levels for children from this proposed development should it be approved, so no contributions are needed to address those needs.

In addition, payments are required for library provision (£75 per dwelling for 51 dwellings net) to be spent on IT infrastructure and equipment at Holt Library and 1 fire hydrant (£818.50 per hydrant per 50 dwellings).

The Green Infrastructure / Environment Team states that:

- The underpass to the town centre is a vital link to the new residents offering a safe means of crossing the busy road. Consideration should be given to ways of achieving an all-weather surface to facilitate this important link.
- Ideally the scheme would also provide connectivity between this development and adjacent developments.
- Holt Country Park public footpaths and local public rights of way would need to be enhanced to benefit from some surface improvements as they will experience increased footfall from this development. A contribution of £16,961.13 (£326.18 per dwelling) is required for Green Infrastructure enhancements and improvements to the local Public Rights of Way network to account for the impacts and increased demands.
- Justification for the loss of 25% of the County Wildlife Site would need to be very strong and require compensation, not mitigation, and alternative provision of POS off-site.

### **Anglian Water – No objection**

Confirm that there will be available capacity for foul drainage flows at Holt Water Recycling Centre. The initial concerns that development will lead to an unacceptable risk of flooding downstream has since been resolved and the risk of flooding is no longer likely. Conditions are needed requiring submission of a foul water and surface water drainage strategy.

### **Historic Environment Service (Norfolk County Council) – No objection.**

Initially a programme of archaeological work was requested by condition, but this advice was rescinded as the HES confirmed there is no need for investigatory works or mitigation.

### **Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) (Norfolk County Council) – No comments.**

- The development falls below the current 100 dwellings threshold for commenting.
- Standing Advice is provided; the development should accord with NPPF para 130.

### **Minerals and Waste Planning Authority (Norfolk County Council) – No objection.**

It would appear that the sand and gravel deposits at the site were subject to historic mineral extraction and subsequent infilling, and the geophysical surveys show widespread made ground within the site. These suggest the minerals have been extracted and the voids filled, and it is unlikely that any viable mineral still exists close to the surface and would be unsuitable for reuse within the development.

### **NNDC Parks and Countryside (24.01.18)**

Using the Council's 2008 – Sept. 2020 standard formula for calculating public open space needs for the mix of homes proposed in the development, the 52 homes would need to provide:

In the first instance, on site:

- Parks / Informal open space – 1,498 sq.m.
- Play equipment area – 392 sq.m.
- Natural Greenspace – 1,152 sq.m.
- Allotments – 737 sq.m.  
(Total: 3,779 sq.m.)

If not provided within the scheme, a financial contribution for off-site facilities is needed:

- Parks / Informal open space – £52,416.
- Play equipment area – £19,600.
- Natural Greenspace – £19,584.
- Allotments – £25,805.  
(Total: £117,405)

The applicant's proposal to provide a habitat restoration scheme for the designated County Wildlife Site and the land surrounding / adjoining the grassland is welcomed, and if a suitable scheme is proposed for ecology enhancement, restoration and landscaping, Officers consider

the Council should look favourably towards adoption of those spaces and management in line with a County Wildlife Site Management Plan.

### **Local Members:**

**District Cllr Perry-Warnes:** Raises concerns regarding the highways implications.

**District Cllr Baker MP:** Raises concerns over the highways impacts.

### **Norfolk County Council Councillor (Cllr S. Butikofer) – comments:**

- Concerned about highways impacts of this proposal, in particular any increase in vehicular traffic along Hempstead Road, which already suffers congestion and rat-running.
- Access could be provided from the development at Heath Road.
- The roundabout at the A148 should be given low-level lighting to reduce accidents.
- Pedestrian access from Hempstead Road should be a priority for school children.

## **RELEVANT POLICIES**

### **North Norfolk Core Strategy (Adopted September 2008):**

- Policy SS 1: Spatial Strategy for North Norfolk (*specifies the settlement hierarchy and distribution of development in the District*).
- Policy SS 3: Housing (*strategic approach to housing issues*).
- Policy SS 4: Environment (*strategic approach to environmental issues*).
- Policy SS 6: Access and Infrastructure (*strategic approach to access and infrastructure issues*).
- Policy SS 9: Holt (*identifies strategic development requirements*).
- Policy HO 1: Dwelling mix and type (*specifies type and mix of dwellings for new housing developments*).
- Policy HO 2: Provision of affordable housing (*specifies the requirements for provision of affordable housing and/or contributions towards provision*).
- Policy HO 7: Making the most efficient use of land (*Housing density*) (*Proposals should optimise housing density in a manner which protects or enhances the character of the area*).
- Policy EN 2: Protection and enhancement of landscape and settlement character (*specifies criteria that proposals should have regard to, including the Landscape Character Assessment*).
- Policy EN 4: Design (*specifies criteria that proposals should have regard to, including the North Norfolk Design Guide and sustainable construction*).
- Policy EN 6: Sustainable construction and energy efficiency (*specifies sustainability and energy efficiency requirements for new developments*).
- Policy EN 8: Protecting and enhancing the historic environment (*prevents insensitive development and specifies requirements relating to designated assets and other valuable buildings*).
- Policy EN 9: Biodiversity and geology (requires no adverse impact on designated nature conservation sites).
- Policy EN 10: Flood risk (*prevents inappropriate development in flood risk areas*).
- Policy EN 13: Pollution and hazard prevention and minimisation (*minimises pollution and provides guidance on contaminated land and Major Hazard Zones*).
- Policy CT 2: Development contributions (*specifies criteria for requiring developer contributions*).

- Policy CT 3: Provision and Retention of Local Facilities and Services (*specifies criteria for new facilities and prevents loss of existing other than in exceptional circumstances*).
- Policy CT 5: The transport impact on new development (*specifies criteria to ensure reduction of need to travel and promotion of sustainable forms of transport*).
- Policy CT 6: Parking provision (*requires compliance with the Council's car parking standards other than in exceptional circumstances*).

**North Norfolk Site Specific Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) (Adopted February 2011):**

- Policy HO9 - Land at Heath Farm / Hempstead Road:

**Material Considerations**

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

This document sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards achieving sustainable development. It also reinforces the position that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As national policy the NPPF is an important material planning consideration which should be read as a whole, but the following sections are particularly relevant to the determination of this application.

Chapter 2: Achieving sustainable development: Paragraphs 11 & 12

Chapter 4: Decision-making: Paragraph 47

Chapter 5: Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Chapter 6: Building a strong, competitive economy: Paragraphs 83 & 84

Chapter 8: Promoting healthy and safe communities: Paragraphs 91, 92, 96, 97 & 98.

Chapter 9: Promoting sustainable transport: Paragraphs 108 & 110.

Chapter 11: Making effective use of land: Paragraph 118

Chapter 12: Achieving well-designed places: Paragraphs 127, 130 & 131

Chapter 14: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change: Paragraph 163

Chapter 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment: Paragraphs 170, 175(d), 178 & 180, including CWS designations.

Chapter 16: Conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment

Chapter 17: Facilitating the sustainable use of minerals: Paragraph 207

Other Material Considerations:

Heath Farm Development Brief – July 2013

North Norfolk Design Guide (Adopted 2008)

National Design Guide MHCLG (October 2019)

Other matters:

**HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

It is considered that the proposed development may raise issues relevant to

Article 8: The Right to respect for private and family life.

Article 1 of the First Protocol: The right to peaceful enjoyment of possessions.

Having considered the likely impact on an individual's Human Rights, and the general interest of the public, approval of this application as recommended is considered to be justified, proportionate and in accordance with planning law.

#### **CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 - SECTION 17**

The application raises no significant crime and disorder issues.

#### **PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY**

In making its recommendation, the Local Planning Authority have given due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

#### **STANDING DUTIES:**

Due regard has been given to the following additional duties:

Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 (S17)

Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (S40)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (R9)

Planning Act 2008 (S183)

Human Rights Act 1998 – this incorporates the rights of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK Law - *Article 8 – Right to Respect for Private and Family Life*

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (S66(1) and S72)

#### **Local Finance Considerations:**

Under Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the council is required when determining planning applications to have regard to any local finance considerations, so far as material to the application. Local finance considerations are not considered to be material to this case.

#### **MAIN ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- 1. Principle of Development**
- 2. Site Allocation Policy HO 9 and Development Brief**
- 3. Housing Mix and Type**
- 4. Affordable Housing**
- 5. Highway Safety (Application Site)**
- 6. Highway links to the wider HO 9 Allocation Site**
- 7. Accessibility (Pedestrian and cycle links and public transport)**
- 8. Ecology and Biodiversity**
- 9. Public Open Space**
- 10. Future Residential Amenity**
- 11. Design**
- 12. Trees and Hedges**
- 13. Other Environmental Considerations**
- 14. Planning Obligations**
- 15. Planning Balance / Conclusions**



## 1. Principle of Development

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out a statutory requirement that, applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF at paragraphs 2 and 12 restates this requirement.

The development plan for North Norfolk comprises:

- The North Norfolk Core Strategy (adopted 2008),
- The North Norfolk Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted 2011),
- Norfolk Minerals and Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2010-2026 DPD (adopted September 2011).

Paragraph 12 of the NPPF states that ‘the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Where a planning application conflicts with an up-to-date development plan (including any neighbourhood plans that form part of the development plan), permission should not usually be granted. Local planning authorities may take decisions that depart from an up-to-date development plan, but only if material considerations in a particular case indicate that the plan should not be followed.’

Core Strategy Policy SS 1 sets out the spatial strategy for North Norfolk and Policy SS 2 relates specifically to the countryside area, limiting development to that specified in the policy which is recognised to require a rural location. These are strategic policies that set out the overarching approach for distributing development across the district, promoting sustainable patterns of development and protecting the countryside. These policies are fundamental to the effective operation of the Development Plan.

The NPPF actively expects strategic policies to set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and quality of development. Broad locations for development should be indicated and land use designations and allocations identified. The site falls within the development boundary of Holt on land allocated for development under Policy HO 9 of the North Norfolk Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2011).

Policies SS 1 (and by extension, Site Allocations Policy HO 9) together with Policies, HO 1, HO 2, EN 2, EN 4, EN 9 and EN 13 are Development Plan policies which are most important for determining the application and they are up-to-date, because they are consistent with the NPPF. Therefore, subject to the development being considered to be in general conformity with Policy HO 9 and in accordance with other relevant policies in the Core Strategy, the principle of development would be considered acceptable.

The development plan is considered to be operating effectively and the Council is delivering the necessary level of homes as part of its overall approach as evidenced by the latest available information relating to the supply of housing land in the district which demonstrates 5.16 years of deliverable housing land.

If the Council were not able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the ‘tilted balance’ in paragraph 11 of the NPPF known as the ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’ would be engaged and planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

## 2. Site Allocation Policy HO 9 and Development Brief

The application site forms part of the mixed use Site Allocation for Holt, referred to as Policy HO 9, which was adopted by the Council in 2011. This site is the last remaining area of land anticipated for residential development as part of the wider allocation.

Policy HO 9 states:

‘Land amounting to approximately 15 hectares is allocated for a mixed use development including approximately 200 dwellings, not less than 5 hectares of land in employment generating uses of which not less than 3.5 hectares shall comprise serviced industrial land, public open space, and community facilities. Development will be subject to compliance with adopted Core Strategy policies including on-site provision of the required proportion of affordable housing (currently 45%) and contributions towards infrastructure, services, and other community needs as required and:

- a) The prior approval of a Development Brief to address access (to be from the A148) and sustainable transport, layout, phasing, including the phased provision of serviced employment land, and conceptual appearance;
- b) retention and enhancement of perimeter hedgerows and trees;
- c) provision of significant internal open spaces, hedgerow and tree planting within the site and a landscape buffer to the A148 and the adjacent County Wildlife Site;
- d) prior approval of an agreement to secure contributions towards management of the adjacent County Wildlife Site;
- e) investigation and remediation of any land contamination;
- f) provision of a direct pedestrian / cycleway connection to Hempstead Road underpass;
- g) prior approval of a scheme of mitigation to minimise potential impacts on the North Norfolk Coast SPA / SAC and Ramsar site arising as a result of increased visitor pressure, and on-going monitoring of such measures; and,
- h) demonstration that there is adequate capacity in sewage treatment works and the foul sewerage network and that proposals have regard to Water Framework Directive objectives.

Retail development, other than that serving the needs of the proposed development, will not be permitted.’

Whilst sites within the HO 9 policy area are under different ownership, at the time of the allocation policy being adopted, all of the interested parties were involved in creating and supporting a Development Brief for the whole HO 9 allocation site, in partnership with the Council, which was adopted by NNDC on 15 July 2013.

The adopted Development Brief sets out an overall vision that: ‘The development of land at Heath Farm will create a sustainable extension to the town, strengthening the role and positive image of Holt by creating high quality, housing, employment opportunities and supporting green infrastructure’. It then goes on to set out a range of development framework principles to be used as a guide for the delivery of new development and sets out options including total numbers, access points, connectivity through the site and open space.

An important point to note within the Development Brief is that Allocation Policy HO 9 refers to the site being 15 hectares in size and is allocated for 200 dwellings. The Development Brief noted that the allocated site was actually 18.5 hectares and this led to the proposed/expected housing numbers increase to 290 dwellings with 215 of those dwellings across three phases

for the larger part of the site and up to a further 75 dwellings in the 'un-phased' areas of the allocation site.

The planning application covers the area of the allocation site identified as being 'un-phased'.

As the planning history demonstrates, separate planning permissions have been granted for residential development on land to the east and west of the application site and construction is underway on both of those sites. The only other areas of land within the allocation which have not been developed thus far are those where employment development is expected, as has been set out in the approved masterplan of the Heath Farm outline permission (PO/16/0253).

The various elements of residential development which have been approved so far were all considered to confirm to the broad principles set out within the Development Brief. The independent development of those sites was only approved on those sites because it was considered unlikely that doing so would prejudice development taking place on any of the other parcels of land which formed part of the allocation.

For the purpose of clarity, some 212 homes are being provided at Heath Farm (Lovell Homes (permission PF/19/1066) and 9 have been built at Olby Close (permission PF/17/1190 / PF/19/0213), amounting to 221 already. When the 52 of this proposal are considered in addition, the allocation would be providing 273 dwellings, before the whole allocation site is developed. This is still within the 290 upper limit outlined in the Development Brief.

Whilst technically, any proposals which take the amount of dwellings within the Policy HO 9 allocation above 200 would amount to a departure from the adopted Development Plan, the adoption of the Development Brief in 2013 with higher residential numbers has, in effect, provided the material circumstances that may justify a departure subject to proposals being considered in general accordance with other relevant Core Strategy policies.

### **3. Housing Mix and Type**

The application proposes 52 dwellings of a mixture of sizes and styles, including bungalows and two-storey dwellings, flats above garages, and flats within a block of 6 over three storeys.

The housing mix proposed on is a mixture of 10x 1-bed, 14x 2-bed, 19x 3-bed, and 9x 4-bed properties.

Policy HO 1 requires no less than 40% of the total to be 2 bedrooms or fewer, and no more than 70sq.m. in floorspace, in order to maintain a necessary provision of smaller dwellings for which there is an identifiable need. Policy HO 1 also requires at least 20% of dwellings to be 'accessible and adaptable' for the lifetime of the dwelling.

The 24no. 2- or 1-bed properties proposed equates to 46% of the scheme, and these are all within acceptable tolerances of the 70sq.m. floorspace requirements.

The housing mix includes 10 homes which are proposed to all comply with the Building Regulations M4(2): Category 2 Accessible & Adaptable Dwellings, including 4 single-bedroom bungalows which are particularly suitable for disabled / lower mobility occupants. It is noted that all these 'accessible' dwellings are also affordable housing dwellings for which there is a particular need. The details of how the homes are to be made 'accessible' will be secured by condition.

The proposal therefore satisfies Policy HO 1.

#### **4. Affordable Housing**

Policy HO 2 expects 45% Affordable Housing and of those, 80% should be affordable rent and 20% should be shared ownership.

The development proposes 23 of the 53 dwellings as affordable housing (44%), comprising 17 (74% of the affordable dwellings) as Affordable Rental tenure and 6 (26% of affordable dwellings) as Shared Ownership tenure.

It is not considered to be proportionate to require another affordable dwelling to achieve 45% provision, but the less compliant tenure split is unfortunate. On the other hand, the development has ensured that the affordable rent provision includes all the single-bedroom accessible bungalows which are of particular need, and this is able to attract weight to overcome the slight discrepancy in tenure split.

In terms of the distribution of affordable housing around the site, the development has created a cluster of 20 affordable dwellings within the central area of the site, in excess of the limit of groups of 8 required by Policy HO 2, and as a result the affordable dwellings are not as 'pepper-potted' around the development as might be preferred so it reduces the opportunity of creating a socially integrated community. This is a little unfortunate but the elongated nature of the site means that any sense of a dominant group of homes being provided under one tenure is diffused, and the higher density of housing in the more constrained area of the site is needed to achieve the level of provision required by policy whilst also remaining viable.

On balance, whilst not in full accordance with the requirements of Policy HO 2, Officers consider this element of the scheme to be broadly acceptable and will contribute positively towards the delivery of affordable housing.

#### **5. Highway Safety (application site)**

Vehicular access to the site is proposed directly from Hempstead Road. The formation of a safe 5.5 metre wide access with 1.5 metre wide footways either side requires the demolition of the property at No.67 Hempstead Road and outbuildings behind. The road is then positioned on the easternmost side of the 28m-wide frontage to Hempstead Road, which allows enough room to provide an acceptable separation distance from the new access into Olby Close as well as the necessary visibility splays without the need to affect the front garden to 65 Hempstead Road (although this is in the applicant's control). This still leaves an approximate 12m wide area for a new 4 bedroom dwelling to be built in the place of 67 Hempstead Road along the same building line with no. 65 Hempstead Road whilst also providing a compatible amenity relationship.

The access is proposed with a 1.5m wide footpath either side of the junction, so residents will be able to cross on a desire line to the south side of Hempstead Road where the continuous footpath leads north-west towards the town centre, or stay on the north side to walk to the Hempstead Road industrial park, for instance.

The existing field access to the east which currently serves No. 65 Hempstead Road and which lies alongside the new road access into Olby Close is to be retained to allow access to no. 65 Hempstead Road, but the new footpath will be extended across the frontage to that point.

As a result, adequate visibility is able to be provided from this site's access within the confines of the highway and therefore visibility splays do not require third party land. The Olby Close development is also cutting back the verge either side of the Charles Road junction opposite, in order to accommodate the footpath on the north side of the road. Further minor modification of the Charles Road junction will allow improved turning into Charles Road, and improved visibility of vehicles overall.

Within the site, the layout has been amended to ensure that the site is accessible for refuse and recycling collections which required modifications to the surfacing of the private drive and the dimensions of the turning head to accommodate a 44 tonne refuse collection vehicle which pivots on its rear axle. This has been accepted by NNDC's Environmental Services team.

The package of measures based around a slight narrowing of Hempstead Road and introducing a sense of greater activity closer to the carriageway will together improve driver awareness caution around the access into this site. Highway Authority Officers have carefully assessed the proposal and confirmed they would not be able to substantiate an objection on highway safety ground, whether that be either to the volume of traffic or the principle of taking the site's access onto Hempstead Road.

In summary, it is considered that the proposal offers an adequate and safe vehicular access into this site, and is an accessible location to the town centre to reduce the need to travel by car in the first instance. The access has been designed to be compatible with the other works being undertaken and approved on Hempstead Road, and is able to accommodate the increased traffic volumes from the dwellings at Heath Farm, and Olby Close, as well as the activity at existing industrial estates and proposed employment land either side of Hempstead Road.

Notwithstanding the concerns raised locally, the Highway Authority consider the proposal to be acceptable. The Highway Authority does not consider that the scheme will create an unacceptable impact nor be likely to cause a "severe" highway impact in combination with the other developments along Hempstead Road. The Highway Authority therefore consider there are no substantive highway safety grounds to refuse the proposal, the criteria for which is clearly set out at NPPF paragraph 109: "Development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe."

Officers consider that, subject to the imposition of conditions to secure the works proposed in the submitted highway improvements plan, the development will satisfy the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CT 5.

## **6. Highway links to the wider HO 9 Allocation Site**

A number of works to Hempstead Road have been undertaken or approved and are required to be provided pursuant to the two permissions either side of this site. These are discussed within the introductory 'Site Description' section of this report above.

A number of representations have been received which oppose the development on the basis that this application should have its access provided by the new Heath Drive road, through the Heath Farm development itself.

It must be noted that the Development Brief for this site shows a clear intention to serve the access to this site from Hempstead Road, as shown within the indicative proposals for this 'un-phased land' in the Development Brief.

Despite this, the Heath Farm outline permission masterplan and phasing plan showed a vehicle route to be provided from Heath Drive to the west boundary of this application site. This was shown on the Masterplan to be intended to be provided only “on the completion of Phase 5” of the Heath Farm development.

Phase 5 as approved, however, includes both of:

- The site anticipated for a restaurant / pub / care home / medical surgery / hotel, located on the central-east side of Heath Drive, which remains behind construction hoarding and for which no detailed proposals have come forward to date; and,
- The site anticipated for office and/or industrial buildings along the southern boundary adjoining the existing Hempstead Road industrial estate, for which no detailed proposals have come forward to date.

Furthermore, the residential development at Heath Farm is not subject to any obligation requiring the employment land to be provided, or serviced, let alone requiring any speculative units to be built to kick-start any employment development in either of these two areas, so there is no built-in trigger requirement for provision of the once-proposed internal link road to this site.

Therefore, in the current economic market especially, there is little prospect of these sites being developed pursuant to “Phase 5”, and if it were, the timescales for Phase 5 to be “completed” would be extremely protracted. It is therefore not realistic to expect any vehicular access link to be provided through Heath Farm ‘voluntarily’.

Whatever the best intentions were of providing the east-west vehicle route under the Heath Farm permission, Officers have to recognise that it is extremely unlikely to be realised, and there are no means to enforce the route’s provision earlier than ‘completion of Phase 5’. As such, with no requirement in the Site Allocation Policy HO9 to rely on access from the Heath Drive link, and no feasible prospect of market forces delivering this, and with a Development Brief which indicates access to be acceptable from Hempstead Road, Officers consider that the proposed layout and access design has to be considered acceptable.

This is especially so now that the Highway Authority have approved the Hempstead Road works with sufficient capacity to accommodate the dwellings in all three of the residential schemes being proposed / built along Hempstead Road (i.e. this, Heath Farm and Olby Close).

## **7. Accessibility (Pedestrian and cycle links and public transport)**

The application is considered to be in a sustainable location which will reduce the need to rely on the private car for daily needs and employment opportunities, and so minimise the potential impacts on more traffic using Hempstead Road.

The highway works improvements to Hempstead Road will greatly improve pedestrian accessibility and safety, and provide an enhanced cycle route into the town centre along Hempstead Road. Cycle links will therefore be possible from the site to many areas including neighbouring developments, the town centre, employment areas, and primary schools in the vicinity.

There is an existing walking route along the north of the site and parallel to the A148 which is clearly a desire line for dog walking and recreation at the moment, linking to the Hempstead Road / A148 junction. The applicant has recognised this and has proposed a pedestrian crossing across Hempstead Road to the underpass to improve safety of access under the A148.

The application Transport Assessment (November 2018) has included a detailed proposal for these works and it has been agreed with Highway Authority officers. Any approval of this application will include a condition to require installing the pedestrian crossing point either side of Hempstead Road at the western end of the footpath desire lane, to be installed adjacent to the terraced houses on the north side of Hempstead Road. This crossing point would connect to a short section of new footpath to be provided in the verge north of Old Station Yard, and from there connect to the underpass link.

Part of this desire line route requires land currently in the ownership of Norfolk County Council across which informal access is not prevented, but it is also not encouraged, and there have been recent proposals for the County Council to dispose of areas of that site which could break the link in the route. Officers have sought to discuss this with the County Council as it could provide a valued formal recreation route; it is proposed to continue to do so under delegated authority if the application is resolved to be approved.

As such, a proposed pedestrian access route all the way to the subway under the A148 has not been detailed along the north of the site and neighbouring areas because the route either side of the north of the site is not all in the applicant's control. Nevertheless, links are shown to these areas are shown from within the application site, and these routes are indicated as 'informal footpaths' running through the proposed open space land to the north. Details need to be agreed relating to the materials, construction or management of this path, to be secured by planning condition.

A formal footpath across the north of the application site, and ideally beyond, will be very desirable to the success of the community and its recreation, but it is considered acceptable for the scheme to only have to rely on Hempstead Road as a safe and accessible route into the town centre if needs be, given the relative short distance and the now-continuous safe footpaths able to be used between this site and the underpass at the north end of Hempstead Road.

The application does also propose to assist cycle links with Heath Farm, by proposing:

- a 3m wide foot and cycle path link from the centre of this site to link into the new 3m cycle route from Hempstead Road into Heath Farm (via that site's allotments area); and,
- a new 3m cycle link from the north of this application's housing area to the Heath Road public open space.

In principle these links will provide valuable connections to the public allotments and play areas on the Heath Farm site, adjacent to this site. Currently these cycle path connections are only proposed to the boundary of this application site; as planning obligations will secure a range of public open space contributions for improving access to off-site facilities or green infrastructure areas, it is considered acceptable to use some of those funds to join these links to the open space locations, to allow an unfettered public connection to the adjoining land.

In continuing the intension to create a sustainable residential destination across the Site Allocation policy HO9 site, it is proposed to secure a financial contribution to the Holt / Coastal Hopper bus service. The same contribution was required as a planning obligation from the Heath Farm development, the travel plan for which identified the bus service as a valuable means to improve sits sustainability improve access and the feasibility of the extended bus route being brought to this area of Holt. The same pro-rata contribution from this development would amount to £17,500, and would ensure the development provides sustainable travel benefit in accordance with Core Strategy policies SS 6, CT 2 and CT 5 and Site Allocation policy HO 9.

If conditions and planning obligations are used to ensure these facilities are provided, the development will provide the necessary access to local services and facilities for its residents and will enhance the pedestrian environment by providing safe crossings over Hempstead Road, as required by policies SS 6, CT 2 and CT 5, and will be in general accordance with the ambitions of the policy and Development Brief for site allocation HO9.

## **8. Ecology and Biodiversity**

Consideration needs to be given to the impact of the development on biodiversity and protected species found within the site, the impacts from the site being adjacent to parts of the County Wildlife Site (CWS), the fact that the development includes works within the actual County Wildlife Site, the loss of grassland habitat equivalent quality to the County Wildlife Site, and the requirements of Site Allocation policy HO9.

### Ecology and Biodiversity - Protected and Priority Species and Priority Habitats on site

A protected species survey has found that demolition of no. 67 Hempstead Road will not be likely to have an impact on bats, but removal of trees with bat roosting qualities is proposed, the impact of which will need to be addressed by planning condition.

Investigative surveys have however found the presence of badger setts on site, which are largely protected by the revised layout of the site, though they will need to avoid being disturbed during construction. This will require a planning condition to ensure there is no development at the site whatsoever until the setts are appropriately investigated for levels of current use, and closed / relocated as necessary. The recently modified layout which provides a bat foraging corridor by introducing a buffer space to the east boundary hedge will also improve badger foraging potential.

Until recently the proposed layout had included the existing eastern hedge as the boundary of residential gardens.. The amended layout has now provided a stand-off distance to new rear garden boundaries and in doing so maintains the foraging and roosting corridor for bats and badgers and other species.

The hedge would fall into the longer term management of communal areas by a Residents Management Group, so planning conditions will need to ensure it is included in the Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for the site, to be agreed and managed by condition and planning obligation. Annual communal maintenance of the hedging would be minimal, whilst the hedge's value as a wildlife movement and amenity and landscape feature would all be retained.

Although some reptiles were translocated from the site before the application was submitted in 2017, the perimeter reptile exclusion fencing has been damaged and the site has most likely been re-colonised in the years since. Additional reptile surveys need to be undertaken before any development commences. This will be required by way of planning condition to include a reptile relocation site survey, as necessary, and the programme of receptor site enhancement, maintenance and management, and subsequent reptile relocation to be entirely completed.

A reptile investigation and relocation Method Statement which deals with the mitigation and relocation and enhancement of reptile habitat off-site is also required by planning condition.

It is considered necessary for the scheme to also include various ecology enhancement features, including swift boxes, sparrow terraces and other bird boxes, as well as bat boxes and roost installations. These will be required by conditions.



## Ecology and Biodiversity - Loss of Habitat and Impacts on County Wildlife Site

The development site will cause the direct loss of a significant area of natural unimproved grasslands, a rare habitat within Norfolk, and which is considered to be of a quality equivalent to the designated County Wildlife Site in the north-west corner of the site / at Gravel Pit Lane. The grassland is essential for a rare and endangered species of butterfly and other invertebrates, and so plans and proposals for provision and management of the open space to be provided for the specific benefit of invertebrate habitat is considered essential to address and compensate for the significant losses incurred. This can be secured by the LEMP by condition.

Not only is the proposal to develop on an area of important habitat, the site is also adjacent to and partially overlaps the designated area of Gravel Pit Lane County Wildlife Site (CWS), a site designated for its unimproved damp and dry grassland and scrub. The site's open space area includes the CWS itself (the proposed open space on the northern end of the development overlaps with approximately a quarter of the CWS), and the proposed housing area would be immediately adjacent to the CWS on its western edge.

The direct loss of high quality undesignated important grassland habitat, and the use of the County Wildlife Site as a link to the town centre for this and the adjoining developments, and the more intensive use of the space as an informal recreation area, are considered to need direct compensation.

It is therefore proposed that the open space areas of the County Wildlife Site in the applicant's ownership, and the land along the north of the application site, and land alongside the wooded part of the Country Wildlife Site, should all be provided as replacement compensatory habitat to replace those lost directly and to mitigate the direct impacts expected on the rest of the County Wildlife Site.

If appropriately established, protected and managed, through a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan, these three areas can provide an essential and valuable wildlife haven, especially for the Priority Species and invertebrate Priority Habitat which is in some areas already present in this location.

The Open Space being proposed on site is intended to be landscaped, restored and improved for creation of a specific ecology habitat (including enhanced County Wildlife Site), to compensate for the loss of the rest of the site's grassland habitat and to provide an ecological buffer for protecting the CWS and improving ecological networks.

Without adequate compensation, the application would be considered contrary to policies SS 4, EN 2 and EN 9, allocation HO 9, and the NPPF paras 174, 175a, 177, and the Council's Ecology Officer and Natural England, and Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the County Council's Green Infrastructure Team have all made clear the open space is needed to compensate for the ecological losses and provide a buffer to the CWS. Although a habitat, it will still be attractive as an area for recreation, so the use of informal footpaths and possible benches or information boards (to be agreed as part of the landscaping schemes) can be included to manage this inevitable use by residents and contain the impact in the interest of protecting the wider habitat. It can also inform the public about the CWS and habitat importance during informal recreation.

The on-site Open Space area therefore needs providing, enhancing and managing as per the Ecology Impact Assessment document submitted with the application and a future LEMP strategy. The Council's countryside and parks team already have responsibility for managing the Gravel Pit Lane County Wildlife Site and have indicated an ability to adopt the open space area in principle (and buffer space around the CWS) subject to agreement of separate

maintenance contributions to be agreed at that time of proposed adoption, pursuant to the requirements of a Section 106 agreement (relating to works required by the LEMP, once approved).

#### Ecology and Biodiversity - Protection of new habitat area

The on-site open space will need to primarily function as an ecological resource. However, there will still be a desire for future residents to enjoy recreation within a natural setting and so the inevitable attraction of nearby natural areas will create an impact which must be carefully managed. In so doing, every effort must be made to provide alternatives to the need for recreation being sought at higher-order internationally-Designated sites. This is considered below.

In addition, residents must be able to access other formal areas of public open space of the types which are described within the Council's Open Space Needs Assessment and Open Space Standards (e.g. parks, play and allotments).

However, if the development were to provide alternative natural greenspace within the site to offset the likely recreation pressures on international sites, or were to provide the land or facilities needed for providing public open space, both would conflict with the overriding need to provide the habitat areas for mitigation of the ecological impacts by direct replacement.

Therefore, not only is the impact of development already detrimental to the ecology and habitat of the site, the negative effect would be exacerbated if the direct mitigation for habitat loss were to be further compromised by the need to provide for other recreational needs.

As such, the development is required to make alternative off-site provision for addressing the public open space demands and impacts of the development. These are discussed in Section 9 of this report.

#### Ecology and Biodiversity - County Wildlife Site protection measures

The layout proposes to install 0.8m tall post-and-rail fencing around the edge of the residential development, to prevent ad-hoc access into the open space areas and direct people to use just the 'informal footpaths' through the compensatory replacement habitat and CWS areas. In addition, the same post-and-rail fencing is proposed around the edge of the wooded area of the CWS, with a mesh provided at the bottom to prevent domestic cats and dogs from having general access, but allowing hedgehogs etc to transfer between grassland and woods. However, this leaves the 25% of CWS area in the application site open to general impacts, in the same way that the rest of the northern and western boundary open space would be.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust have made it clear in their objection that the whole site has a similar high quality and character of grassland habitat across the site, and should be considered of equal quality as the CWS designation. The applicants Ecological Impact Appraisal (EclA) report and proposed use of a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) will provide a suitable means of protection.

The submitted Ecological Impact Appraisal recommends that the development should make some financial contribution to the management of the CWS (on a proportional scale) and requires a minimum 15m land buffer to the CWS. Norfolk Wildlife Trust has also commented that a Section 106 contribution towards management of Gravel Pit Lane County Wildlife Site would be required, which is also expected by Allocation Policy HO9. A Section 106 planning obligation is proposed to secure these requirements.

The provision of land to act as a buffer to the County Wildlife Site and a means of securing management of this area and 20 years monitoring, in accordance with a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) to be submitted, will be secured via a combination of planning conditions and legal agreement. This is consistent with the approach taken to the recent development of the adjoining land at Olby Close, to the west.

The Site Allocation policy HO9 requires financial contributions to be secured from this development towards the protection and management of the Gravel Pit Lane County Wildlife Site, given the attraction of that site for informal recreation and the direct impacts it will create. This is proposed to be reasonably resourced from the pro-rata public open space requirement to provide "Natural Greenspace" amenity enhancement (a figure derived from the Open Space Standards). This equates to a sum of £19,584 and will be used for enhancing and managing the County Wildlife Site adjoining this planning application site (the costs of maintaining the CWS area within the site will need to be met by the body eventually responsible for its management/adoption).

Subject to securing this, the application accords with Core Strategy policies SS 4, EN 9 and CT 2, and Site Allocation policy HO9.

#### Ecology and Biodiversity - Impacts on Designated Sites

The development is also likely to create an impact on nearby nationally- and internationally-designated sites. The North Norfolk Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites, and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), and the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC are the closest designated sites likely to be directly impacted.

The HO9 Site Allocation policy recognises the indirect impacts of increased visitor pressure on the North Norfolk Coast as a result of development in Holt and requires a scheme of mitigation and monitoring to be implemented.

Since the publication of the Site Allocations DPD and the Appropriate Assessment of those policy allocations, the assessment and approval of additional development in and around Holt has highlighted potential impacts on the nearby Holt Lowes SSSI (part of the Norfolk Valley Fens SAC). As a result of this, the planning application for 212 dwellings (PO/16/0253 and PF/19/1066) on the majority part of the HO9 allocation, required a contribution towards Green Infrastructure and the maintenance of Holt Country Park to ensure the continued provision of local countryside parks, access to the Public Rights of Way network, and ensure there are alternative areas for recreation which will help avoid and mitigate the potential recreational impacts on Holt Lowes.

A contribution of £16,961.13 (£326.18 per dwelling) is required for Green Infrastructure and improvements to the local Public Rights of Way network, to be consistent with the approach taken at the adjoining site, to continue to offset the impact by recreation by improving the local public rights of way network, and improving facilities at Holt Country Park and Mackey's Hill, and reducing the need to use the Holt Lowes SSSI and Norfolk Valley Fens SAC network for recreation.

This application should not be considered in isolation from the other HO9 schemes and similarly a financial contribution should be secured to mitigate the impact of the development on the North Norfolk Coast and Holt Lowes (Natura 2000 sites). The HO9 policy requires a financial contribution for monitoring and managing the impacts at the international sites, which is £205.02p per dwelling (£10,661.04 total), so this will be secured by planning obligation to monitor impacts of increased visitor pressure on North Norfolk Coast SPA/SAC and Ramsar, and the Norfolk Small Valley Fens SAC network.

The sensitivity of the Norfolk Valley Fens to the impacts of groundwater changes in levels and quality has also been considered. Whilst there were some concerns initially, Anglian Water has since confirmed that the foul water discharges can be managed within their existing Water Treatment Centre without causing downstream flooding, and surface water will be managed and treated for contamination through a sustainable drainage scheme (to be agreed in detail by condition), so reducing potential impact of runoff and nutrient enrichment to Norfolk Valley Fen SAC. Further, the drinking water supply will be provided through the regional mains system and not require further abstraction of groundwater resources.

## **9. Public Open Space**

Due to the need to provide on-site specific ecological habitat to compensate for the losses and impact caused by the development, the application has been unable to include formal public open space within the development.

All larger scale developments are expected to provide for Natural Greenspace, Allotments, Play Equipment and Parks for their residents. In this instance, residents will need to be able to access these elsewhere off-site, but it is considered suitable for these to be found at the Heath Farm site, and at Holt Country Park, subject to those areas being able to be expanded, enhanced and maintained to accommodate the impacts of this development as well as others including Heath Farm.

Had the development been able to provide for the day-to-day public open space needs on site, the application would have to accommodate the following quota:

- Parks / Informal open space – 1,498 sq.m.
  - Play equipment area – 392 sq.m.
  - Natural Greenspace – 1,152 sq.m.
  - Allotments – 737 sq.m.
- (Total: 3,779 sq.m.)

However, as this is not being provided within the scheme, a financial contribution is needed in lieu, for alternative off-site facilities and enhancements, comprising:

- Parks / Informal open space – £52,416.
  - Play equipment area – £19,600.
  - Natural Greenspace – £19,584.
  - Allotments – £25,805.
- (Total: £117,405)

The contributions are to be secured in lieu of the necessary facilities for this development not being provided on the site itself, to satisfy policies SS 6, EN 4 and CT 2, and by extension Site Allocation policy HO9.

The £19,584 for Natural Greenspace is to be used for enhancing and managing the CWS area adjoining the site (discussed in Section 8 of this report).

The figures calculated in 2018, are in response to the housing mix proposed and are taken from the guidance of the 2008 POS and Sport standards document. It is reasonable and necessary to use the 2008 contribution figures rather than the Open Space Needs Assessment (February 2020) given that the Site Allocation policy and the Development Brief were informed by those standards, and as the application was submitted in 2017 the layout has responded to those standards.

## **10. Future Residential Amenity**

### Noise

The adjacent industrial units to the east comprise some self-storage containers, an aggregate and spoil collection hire company, plant and farming equipment haulage, and crane assisted haulage. These appear to operate to fairly extended hours for an industrial park, namely 6:30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 7am – 5pm Saturday and 9am – 3pm Sundays.

Within the adjoining industrial area, storage containers are positioned on the other side of the boundary hedge, closest to the block of flats, helping to direct vehicles away from the boundary. Storage container use is not without noise generation, but the frequency and magnitude of noise is less than more conventional employment or industrial activity. Whilst neither the applicant nor Planning have control over the current activity on that site, it is likely that the storage units have been in place for more than 10 years and so there is an element of established use of the storage units; this means any future alternative use of the land or erection of buildings along that boundary would need planning permission and could be controlled. In the meantime, the storage units do at least help to push the vehicle movements and space for continuous activity approximately 12-15m away from the flats.

The eastern boundary of the site is defined by a substantial hedge and proposed acoustic fencing. The proposed dwellings at Plots 6, 16-20 and 24-26 are separated from the hedge by the site's estate access road and shared parking courtyards, creating a stand-off distance of 16-22m to the adjoining industrial area, which is acceptable given the acoustic fence and the changes in topography and screening offered by the hedging.

However, the dwelling at Plot 4, and 3 of the flats within the 3-storey block of 6 1-bedroom flats at Plots 7-12, are all only 6-7m away from the industrial site at their closest points.

The acoustic fence will also only have benefit for its 3m height; if there is a direct line of sight over the acoustic fence it is to be expected that the noise will also travel beyond the fence. However the internal arrangement has provided mitigation defence by design, by pulling living spaces away from the exposed façade and using the sides of the recessed balcony as a shield.

The set-back from the A148 to the north means the future residents are not affected by road traffic noise.

### Outlook and amenity space

The flats' rear elevation faces south, so outlook from living rooms and the balconies is dominated by the shared car park courtyard and the industrial area on the other side of the east boundary hedge, which is not ideal, but it offers a view with more distance than the outlook facing north as originally proposed, which was opposite other two-storey dwellings.

There is now the provision of balconies on the southern elevation; these could be exposed to occasional industrial noise, but the activity of the adjoining site is not such that the hours of use or intensity would be unacceptable, and it is considered to be better to enjoy south-facing balconies with some noise exposure than north facing balconies which are overshadowed.

The recessed balconies on the southern elevation also create some design interest and improved surveillance of the communal parking areas, whilst being just far enough away from the gardens to the plots 4 and 5 dwellings to the south.

The amended layout and design has provided a degree of amenity garden space or balcony for every dwelling which is generally to an acceptable level; even if the 'flats over garages' have very small and compromised garden spaces they will prove useful.

On balance, whilst the level of amenity space, outlook and quality of amenity space may occasionally be less than ideal, it is nevertheless considered acceptable on balance; the challenges represent a product of the circumstances of the site and its constraints.

## **11. Design**

This part of Holt is very mixed in terms of its form and layout, with older cottages found along Hempstead Road and Gravel Pit Lane (to the west) and more modern properties directly adjacent to the south, with mixed relatively modern development further to the south, including small cul-de sacs of development as part of the Charles Road area. To the north east new development is underway as part of the Lovell Homes development which in parts is quite high density. To the west are industrial areas to both the north and south side of Hempstead Road.

### Layout

The site is an awkward shape and with undulating levels, with land on adjacent sites also located at different levels, with the site directly adjacent to the east being located as much as 3 metres higher than the application site.

Gaining access to the site from Hempstead Road has resulted in a long section of estate access road which influences the layout of the development to a large extent. This together with external site constraints such as the location of industrial uses on the site to the south east, a telecommunications mast also to the east, the county wildlife site to the west and major road to the north have all influenced the layout and resulted in quite significant layout changes being made throughout the application process.

The layout has been determined by the limitations of the site's awkward shape, which will make the access road more dominant. The open space proposed to north, between homes and the A148, makes an important buffer. It is unfortunate that the pumping station will detract from this open space area and the defined building line built edge, but there have been investigations to try and find a better site for the pumping station and that hasn't proven possible. Instead, new landscape and tree planting will need to reduce this intrusion as much as possible (by condition). The layout has included important cycle and pedestrian links north-south and east-west, which reduced the isolation of this being a cul-de-sac cut off from Heath Farm and the town centre.

However, these do combine to make the development appear tightly grouped and overly dense, especially within the central portion. Initial concerns over the arrangement of rear parking courtyards and inconvenient separation between dwellings and their spaces has been reduced somewhat which will help reduce the need for on-street parking and therefore minimise the sense of increased parking overspill and an overly dense development. The application has improved the layout to ensure that almost all properties have their parking spaces almost always in the most convenient location possible, given the site road geometry constraints. This includes the 4no. affordable housing disabled bungalows which now have an additional space for visitors / care staff, even though it causes two spaces to be positioned into the 15m CWS buffer area.

### Appearance

As the Design Officer has noted, it has been difficult to design-in a sense of identity within the scheme, due to the lack of coherent street-scene proposals but where there are some more prominent buildings attempts have been made to improve their appearance and offer a sense of orientation and distinction, and key elevations and roofscapes have been improved in a few areas. The key focal points in the site are now of an interesting and high quality design that reinforces character within the development.

The Design Officer has concerns that the scheme will not create a particular sense of identity or a higher standard of design that would be recognised outside of the site. However, it should be remembered how this particular site is actually both well concealed and relatively isolated from 'general' public use, and this particular site will not necessarily be 'read' as being part of the vernacular of Holt.

The Design Officer has noted concerns with the three-storey block flats but this has since been greatly improved. Furthermore, it should to be noted that the site's lower land levels in comparison to the two sites either side are such that the 3 storey scale will not be so dominant in the limited views available from the south, and will be well screened from the north, whilst adding some beneficial roof-level interest.

The proposals as modified are now considered to be broadly compatible with Core Strategy Policy EN 4 and Site Allocation policy HO9 and the broad aim of the Development Brief.

## **12. Trees and Hedges**

The amended application has gradually evolved to take account of landscape and ecology concerns. Of note are the provision of the buffer to the eastern hedge, which allows the hedge to be retained in better health, and general retention of many areas of hedging within site perimeter. The application has provided an updated arboricultural impact assessment to protect trees, and the provision of replacement trees for those specimens of value which are to be lost to the development pressure. Subject to conditions on protection during development and considerate construction methods, the scheme complies with policies EN 2 and EN 9.

## **13. Other Environmental Considerations**

### Ground water and contamination

The site is above a Groundwater Source Protection and a Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, but the development is not likely to create a risk to these resources if the development is subject to conditions, including contamination investigations and drainage schemes with mitigation incorporated. The final details of contamination remediation strategies and ground gas investigation and mitigation will need agreeing. This will satisfy Core Strategy policy EN 13.

### Drainage

Anglian Water has confirmed the site can be served with a foul water drainage strategy and there is capacity in the mains system, so the development will avoid an impact on the local water sources and sensitive groundwater-fed habitats. Conditions can be used to finalise the details of the foul water drainage scheme.

A sustainable surface water scheme can be finalised by conditions.

## Archaeology

The Norfolk Historic Environment Service originally identified that the site has potential to contain archaeological remains, as it lies in an area of archaeological interest, and geophysical surveys in 2013 at the Heath Farm site revealed there was value in further explorations. However, they have since withdrawn their request for further investigations and no conditions are required.

## Lighting

Street lighting would not be required by the County Council and is not considered desirable given the significant local ecological interest at the site, and therefore it is not proposed to be included. A planning condition will be used to prevent the installation of lighting without prior details being agreed first, in order to prevent the development eroding the local character and dark skies which are protected to a degree by surrounding woodland, in the interests of policies EN 9 and EN 13.

## **14. Planning obligations**

The following matters are to be secured by planning obligations through a s106 agreement:

- 45% affordable housing provision on site (23 dwellings) comprising 17 affordable rent and 6 shared ownership tenure
- A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for the areas of compensatory habitat open space within the site.

And financial contributions of circa **£346,500** for:

- Parks / Informal open space off site – **£52,416**.
- Play equipment area off site – **£19,600**.
- Natural Greenspace – **£19,584** towards management of adjacent County Wildlife Site.
- Allotments off site – **£25,805**.
- SPA/SAC designated sites visitor impact contribution – **£10,661.04**.
- Green Infrastructure enhancements and improvements to the local Public Rights of Way network - **£16,961.13**.
- Holt / Coastal Hopper bus service access enhancements - **£17,500**.
- Education contributions - **£154,242**.
- Libraries - **£3,825**.
- Health care – capital funding for Holt Medical Practice to increase capacity - **£17,664**.
- £500/obligation for the County Council's section 106 monitoring fees.

## **15. Planning Balance / Conclusions**

The proposal seeks residential development on land allocated for development under Policy HO 9 of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document for which a Development Brief was subsequently adopted in 2013 and which indicated a larger amount of development than was originally envisaged at site allocation stage.

Nonetheless, whilst technically a departure from the Development Plan, subject to proposals being considered in general accordance with other relevant Core Strategy policies the Development Committee would be perfectly entitled to make a positive recommendation.



As set out in the report the development proposed is broadly considered acceptable by Officers or can be made acceptable through use of planning conditions or planning obligations.

The scheme is acceptable in terms of:

- Housing Mix - in accordance with Policy HO 1.
- Affordable Housing (44%) - broadly acceptable and will contribute positively towards the delivery of affordable housing.
- Highway Safety - will satisfy the requirements of Policy CT 5.
- Accessibility - will provide the necessary access to local services and facilities for its residents and will enhance the pedestrian environment in accordance with Policies SS 6, CT 2 and CT 5, and will be in general accordance with the ambitions of the policy and Development Brief for site allocation HO9.
- Residential Amenity – broadly compatible with policy objectives.
- Design – will accord with Policy EN 4.
- Trees and Hedges – will comply with policies EN 2 and EN 9.
- Other matters including ground water and contamination, drainage, archaeology and lighting – proposal compatible with policy objectives.
- S106 Obligations – provides a significant level of contributions to help make the development acceptable in planning terms.

Whilst officers recognise there are challenges in respect of Ecology and Biodiversity matters and provision of Public Open Space linked to the adjacent County Wildlife Site, a way forward has been proposed which seeks to protect, mitigate, manage and compensate for habitat affected by the proposal. Therefore, on balance, subject to the suggested conditions and S106 obligations being secured the proposal is considered to be acceptable.

Overall, in weighing up the development, Officers consider that the proposed development can be recommended for approval.

On the matter of housing, whilst the Council considers it is able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, the Committee, as decision maker, would be entitled to apportion positive weight towards the delivery of additional housing. This is a view often taken by Inspectors at Appeal in terms of recognising the governments objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The Committee could decide to apportion significant weight to this issue.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

(1) **APPROVAL**, subject to:

- a. Completion of Section 106 Agreement in line with the requirements at Section 14 of this Report; and,
- b. Conditions in line with the list below; and,
- c. Any other conditions that may be considered necessary at the discretion of the Head of Planning.

(2) Referral back to Development Committee if there is no substantial progress towards completing the Section 106 Agreement within three months of Committee's decision.

#### Proposed Planning Conditions

1. Commencement within 3 years.
2. Development to accord with the approved plans and details.
3. Reptile protection and relocation scheme pre-commencement.
4. Protection measures for ecology species on site during construction.
5. Tree protection measures to be installed and retained.
6. Construction to accord with AMS.
7. Ecology enhancement proposals.
8. Final details of the Hempstead Road crossing point.
9. Final details of the highways access designs into site, including gateway feature and splays.
10. Details of links to the adjoining sites' cycle/pedestrian paths and public open space.
11. Open Space habitat creation and protection scheme (LEMP), inc details of informal paths.
12. Buffer Area to County Wildlife Site protection measures.
13. Landscaping scheme (hard and soft) for non-'Open Space' areas within the site.
14. Boundary treatments (to inc small mammal access).
15. Maintenance and management plans for the hedges around / within the site.
16. Materials, fenestration etc.
17. Acoustic fence details.
18. Noise mitigation measures for the closest dwellings to the eastern industrial site.
19. Contamination investigations and remediation, verification and validation.
20. Ground gas measures.
21. Surface water drainage scheme.
22. Foul water drainage scheme.
23. Pumping station details and noise and odour mitigation.
24. Renewable energy scheme - 10% of energy demand (after Part L) to be provided on site.
25. Accessible Housing statement – detailed demonstration of compliance.
26. Fire hydrants scheme.
27. Construction hours (Mon-Fri 8am – 6pm; Sat 8am – 1pm, No Sunday / PH/BH).
28. Provision of parking, refuse areas, amenity spaces etc prior to occupation.
29. No lighting unless approved.