DECISION DELEGATED TO HEAD OF PLANNING

Application No:	**H09-0325-26**	**Applicant:**	**Country Court Care Ltd**
Proposal:	Proposed Two Storey Extension, Rear Extensions, Associated Car Parking & Amenity Space, PV Solar Panels to Roof and General Alterations		
Location:	Beech Lodge Nursing Home Frogs Abbey Gate Holbeach		
Terminal Date:	30th September 2026		

Planning Policies

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan - Adopted: March 2019

01	Spatial Strategy
02	Development Management
03	Design of New Development
04	Approach to Flood Risk
07	Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio
10	Meeting Assessed Housing Requirements
11	Distribution of New Housing
17	Providing a Mix of Housing
28	The Natural Environment
30	Pollution
33	Delivering a More Sustainable Transport Network
36	Vehicle and Cycle Parking
APPENDIX 6	Parking Standards

National Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework August 2026

Section 2 - Plan-making policies (PM1 - 17)
Section 3 - Decision-making policies (DM1 - 10)
Section 4 - Achieving sustainable development (S1 - S6)
Section 6 - Delivering a sufficient supply of homes (HO1 - 13)
Section 7 - Building a strong, effective economy (E1 - 4)
Section 12 - Making effective use of land (L1 - 3)
Section 14 - Achieving well-designed places (DP1 - 4)
Section 15 - Promoting sustainable transport (TR1 - 8)
Section 17 - Pollution, public protection and security (P1 - 6)
Section 18 - Managing flood risk and coastal change (F1 - 9)
Section 19 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment (N1 - 9)

Representations:

	Object	Support	No Obj.	Comments

PARISH COUNCIL	1	0	0	0
WARD MEMBER	0	0	0	0
PLANNING LIAISON OFFICER - FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT	0	0	0	1
HIGHWAYS & SUDS SUPPORT	0	0	0	1
SOUTH HOLLAND INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD	1	0	0	0
SHDC INTERNAL	0	0	1	1
OTHER STATUTORY BODIES	0	0	1	5
RESIDENTS	3	0	0	1

CASE OFFICER ASSESSMENT

Proposal

The proposal seeks full planning permission for a two-storey side extension and rear extensions to Beech Lodge care home. Consent is also sought for an additional car parking area, an expanded outdoor amenity space and solar panels on the roof of the building.

Site Description

The site is located in a predominantly rural area, approximately 1.7km to the south of Holbeach. The site includes the existing two storey care home building and its associated outdoor amenity space which is located to the east of the building. There is a car parking area at the front of the site, between the care home building and Frog's Abbey Gate.

The site is outside any defined settlement boundary, as identified by the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019) and the accompanying policies map.

The site is within Flood Zone 3, as identified by the Environment Agency's flood risk maps.

Planning History

H09-0269-85: (Full Application) Extension and alterations to home - approved 13 May 1985

H09-0924-90: (Full Application) Extension to residential home - approved 23 October 1990

H09-1001-03: (Full Application) Extension to form additional bedrooms and garden room - approved 08 December 2003

H09-1656-06: (Discharge of Conditions) Details of external materials (Condition 2 of H09/1001/03) - approved 29 December 2006

H09-1700-06: (Discharge of Conditions) Details of landscaping (Condition 4 of H09/1001/03) - approved 05 January 2007

H09-1626-06: (Full Application) Two-storey extension to provide staff accommodation - approved 11 January 2007

H09-0285-12: (Full Application) Two-storey extension to Care Home and consolidation of existing parking area - approved 19 June 2012

Consultation Responses

The responses received from consultees during the consultation period are summarised below. The responses can be viewed in their entirety on South Holland District Council's website.

Environment Agency:

No objections.

Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust:

No comments.

Environmental Protection:

No comments.

National Grid:

No observations.

Natural England:

Automated response received (no specific comments on the current application).

Conservation Officer:

No objections. Separation distance to nearest heritage asset is great enough to suggest there shall be no material harm presented to the character of that asset by this proposal.

Lincolnshire County Council - Historic Environment:

The proposal is unlikely to have an impact on significant archaeological remains. Consequently, no further archaeological input is necessary for this application.

Anglian Water:

Having reviewed the Drainage Strategy drawing no. 101959-DCE-XX-XX-DR-C-5000 REV P03January 2025, there is no connection proposed to Anglian Water's network and there are no Anglian Water owned sewers within the vicinity of the development. Therefore, we have no comments to make.

Holbeach Parish Council:

Object on the grounds of a lack of outdoor space.

Ecology Officer:

We believe that the habitats on site have the potential to support nesting birds. It is an offence under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981(WCA 1981) to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is use or being built. Therefore, we request a condition requiring that: Works should not be carried out in the main nesting season (March 1st -

August 31st). If not possible then a suitably qualified ecologist must perform a breeding bird survey of the site prior to any works beginning onsite. Any active nests discovered during inspections will be protected with a suitable exclusion buffer (of appropriate size to the species) to prevent disturbance and monitored until the nest is no longer active / all chicks have fledged, when the ecologist will provide a sign off for clearance work to continue.

We request that a total of 6 integrated universal nest bricks (e.g., S Brick, Swift Nesting Brick, Manthorpe, Swift Bricks: The 'Universal' Nest Brick - by Dick Newell | CIEEM) are incorporated into the external fabric of the proposed building. These should be located at a height of 4+ m metres, grouped colonially, on the north or east elevations to avoid overheating, in accordance with best-practice guidance such as British Standard BS 42021:2022.

We also request that 2 integrated bat boxes (e.g., Integrated / Built-In Bat Boxes, Integrated Eco Bat Box | The Nestbox Company) are added to the dwelling.

In both cases, the authority requires the applicant to submit sufficiently detailed maps that indicate the proposed location of bird/bat boxes on-site and the bricks must be installed during the construction phase and retained thereafter for the lifetime of the development. These are required to enhance biodiversity and to be in line with Local Plan Policy 7.2.14.

Overall, the biodiversity assessment and metric calculations appear rigorous, and we can have confidence in their conclusions. In this case the metric indicates that 10% mandatory net gain can be achieved on-site with a predicted overall gain of 82.73% in Hedgerow units. The metric also indicates that 10% mandatory net gain cannot be achieved on-site for area and watercourse units, and therefore the proposals require 0.25 area-habitat units and 0.16 watercourse units off-site. These will need to be secured pre-commencement.

Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service:

I refer to the planning application reference H09-0325-26 . The Fire Authority object to the application on the grounds of inadequate water supply It is the opinion of the Fire Authority that in order to remove the objection the following measures are required. Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue requires the installation of one fire hydrant conforming to BS750-2012 within 90m of the premises entrance in respect of this planning application to be provided at the developer's expense. Fire hydrant acceptance testing will be carried out by a Hydrant Inspector on completion and a standard hydrant marker "H" plate will be fitted nearby. Following adoption, the Fire Service will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and repairs for the lifetime of the fire hydrant.

South Holland Internal Drainage Board:

First Response (03rd June 2026):

The Board currently objects to this planning application. The reason for the Board's objection is to avoid likely conflict between the planning process and the Board's regulatory regime (as outlined below) and to prevent increased flood risk in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework.

Byelaw 3 (Surface Water): The applicant proposes to discharge surface water to a watercourse at a rate of 8.9 l/s. No calculations have been provided to evidence the existing greenfield rates, the proposed discharge rates or the proposed water storage capacity. Regardless of the proposed discharge rate, this proposal will require consent under Byelaw 3, and I recommend that the applicant look into the possibility of reducing the proposed discharge rate prior to applying for consent. The Board recommend that any discharge is in line with the National standards for sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) published in June 2025. Further to the National Standards for SuDS, the Board's policy is to restrict discharges to 2/l/s/ha or annual average flood flow rate (QBar or QMed), whichever is higher. Please note that any consent granted for the discharge of surface water is likely to be subject to a Surface Water Development Contribution fee (SWDC) as outlined within our Development Control Charges and Fees.

Byelaw 3 (Treated Foul Water): The applicant has indicated that they wish to discharge treated foul water to a watercourse following treatment via a Klargester BioDisc Treatment Plant. This proposal will require consent under Byelaw 3. Please note that any consent granted for the discharge of treated foul water is likely to be subject to a Treated Foul Water Development Contribution fee (TFWDC) as outlined within our Development Control Charges and Fees. Both surface water and the treated foul water is proposed to discharge to an existing surface water pipe with an assumed

outfall into an open ditch south of the development site. It appears that a partial CCTV survey has been undertaken, however, evidence is required that this existing surface water pipe is connected to the wider watercourse network.

Section 23, Land Drainage Act 1991: I note the presence of a watercourse which is not maintained by the Board (a riparian watercourse) within the development site boundary and that works are proposed to alter this watercourse including infilling of a section of watercourse and extension to the existing watercourse. To enable this proposal consent is required under Section 23 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (and byelaw 4) and I recommend that the applicant contacts this office to make an application for this consent at their earliest convenience.

Byelaw 10: Whilst not currently proposed, should the applicant's proposals change to include works within 9 metres of the Board arterial watercourse, or if works within 9 metres of the watercourse are proposed at any time in the future, consent would be required under Byelaw 10.

Second Response (16th September 2026):

Both surface water and the treated foul water is proposed to discharge to an existing surface water pipe with an assumed outfall into an open ditch south of the development site. It appears that a partial CCTV survey has been undertaken, and no further information has been submitted. Evidence is still required that this existing surface water pipe is connected to the wider watercourse network.

The applicant has submitted drainage calculations and justification for the discharge rate of 8.9 l/s. Although this rate is in excess of greenfield rate for the new development it does include the brownfield rate for the existing development and provides a betterment on the combined discharge rate. This is acceptable; however, I still recommend that the applicant look into the possibility of reducing the proposed discharge rate prior to applying for consent. Regardless of the proposed discharge rate, this proposal will require consent under Byelaw 3.

The submitted drainage calculations of the existing network show flooding from the 1:30 + CC event and 1:100 + CC event from nodes S24 and S22. Please can you ensure this flooding does not affect any part of the buildings or infrastructure.

The Board's comments on Section 23, Land Drainage Act 1991 and Byelaw 10, remain the same as in our response on 03/06/2026.

Lincolnshire County Council - Highways and SUDS:

Additional information is required. Whilst the proposed provision of 25 spaces is noted, the primary concern relates to the functionality and safety of the layout rather than the overall quantum. The proposed southern parking appears overly constrained and there is no clear provision for emergency vehicle pull-in, passing, or short stay servicing. Given the nature of the use, regular ambulance access must be safely accommodated without conflict with parked vehicles.

In addition, there is no clearly defined or protected pedestrian route from the southern extent of the car park to the main entrance. This is of particular concern given the rural location of the site and lack of external footway provision, resulting in pedestrians being required to walk through active vehicle manoeuvring areas.

It is considered that the layout has been over-optimised to achieve the stated number of spaces, to the detriment of safe circulation and usability. A revised layout should therefore be explored which:

-Provides a dedicated area for emergency vehicle pull-in and passing;
-Incorporates a pedestrian route connecting all parking areas to the building entrance; and
-Ensures adequate turning and manoeuvring without reliance on excessive reversing. This may necessitate a modest reduction in parking numbers; however, a slightly reduced but well-functioning layout would be preferable to the current arrangement.

Drainage comments: In drainage terms, the submitted strategy is broadly acceptable in principle, demonstrating use of SuDS features and a restricted discharge rate which represents a betterment over the existing situation. However, the proposals remain at an indicative stage and are reliant on further detailed design, including confirmation of levels, storage arrangements, maintenance responsibilities and agreement to discharge to the receiving watercourse. As such, the development

would need to be secured by an appropriately worded drainage condition to ensure a fully compliant surface water management scheme is delivered.

The highways team were re-consulted from 26th August to 17th September; however, no further responses were received.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor (Police): No response received.

Inward Investment Officer: No response received.

Cllr A C Beal: No response received.

Cllr P A Redgate: No response received.

Whaplode Parish Council: No response received.

Public Representations

This application has been advertised in accordance with the Development Procedure Order and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. In this instance, 6 representations have been received from members of the public; however, 3 of these are from the same household. The key matters raised are summarised below:

-The care home has reached its full potential.
-There is not enough parking, and this causes problems for working vehicles as Frog's Gate Abbey is too narrow to accommodate more vehicles.
-There is no provision in place for delivery lorries or refuse services to pull off. Delivery vehicles block the road.
-What provision is being made with regard to construction traffic? There is no parking available for this at the current site.
-Concerns with the drainage arrangements for the site as water has to drain through a 6" pipe underground to a dyke 150m away.
-There is no provision for additional rubbish bins/skips or an enclosure for these. The current bins are too close to the road and often encroach onto the road causing obstructions and are sometimes caught by farm machinery which is struggling to get through.
-There is no access to empty the digester from Beech Lodge site.
-The piece of land was purchased on the understanding that this was to create additional garden space for the residents and the much needed additional parking spaces.
-Some properties were not notified of the application.

Key Planning Considerations

Development Plan

Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019 (SELLP), is the development plan for the district, and is the basis for decision making in South Holland. The relevant development plan policies are detailed within the report above.

The policies and provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, August 2026 (NPPF) are also a material consideration in the determination of planning applications, alongside adopted Supplementary Planning Documents.

There are no adopted Neighbourhood Plans for the area within which the site is located.

The main issues and considerations in this case include the following:

-Principle of Development;
oSettlement Hierarchy
oNeed for Additional Nursing Home Places
oEmployment Provision

-Design, Layout and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area;
-Impact on Residential Amenity;
-Highway Safety and Parking;
-Flood Risk and Drainage;
-Biodiversity Net Gain; and
-Fire Safety.

These matters are assessed in turn below.

Principle of Development

Settlement Hierarchy

Policy 1 of the Local Plan sets out the settlement hierarchy in respect of delivering sustainable development, which meets the social and economic needs of the area whilst protecting and enhancing the environment; in order to provide enough choice of land for housing to satisfy local need, whilst making more sustainable use of land, and to minimise the loss of high-quality agricultural plots by developing in sustainable locations and at appropriate densities.

Policy 1 expresses this sustainable hierarchy of settlements, ranking the settlements deemed to be most sustainable in descending order. The most sustainable locations for development are situated within the 'Sub-Regional Centres', followed by 'Main Service Centres'. Lower down the hierarchy are areas of limited development opportunity including Minor Service Centres, with areas of development constraint comprising 'Other Service Centres and Settlements'. The countryside is at the bottom of the settlement hierarchy and represents the least sustainable location.

In this case, the site comprises land within the countryside, outside of any settlement boundary.

Section D of Policy 1 sets out that development within the countryside will be permitted that is necessary to such a location and / or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable development needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits.

Policy S5 (Principle of development outside settlements) of the NPPF allows for certain forms of development outside settlements. As the proposal is for the extension of an existing building outside a settlement, Policy S5(c) is considered to be relevant as this sets out the following:

"c. The reuse, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the existing building. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not disproportionately larger than the one it replaces;"

For reference, footnote 25 sets out "The existing building is to be assessed as the property as existing on the date of the publication of this Framework".

Policy S5(c) supports the extension of the building in principle provided that the extension would not result in a "disproportionate increase". In this case, the proposal seeks to increase the size of the building to a significant extent. Currently, the care home includes 36 bedrooms whereas the proposals seek to provide 9 new bedrooms. One of the proposed extensions comprises a significant two-storey structure. Therefore, it is considered that the proposal does not strictly accord with Policy S5 as the extensions are considered to be significant compared to the existing building.

Need for Additional Nursing Home Places

The proposal seeks to add an additional 9 bedrooms to Beech Lodge and to provide additional space within the building for both employees and residents to manage more effectively.

The Local Plan does not contain specific policies as to how proposals for new or expanded nursing homes should be assessed. Paragraph 18.3.1 of the Local Plan only sets out that "Applications for the development of residential care homes and nursing homes (Use Class C2) will be assessed on a case by case basis".

Policy 17 of the Local Plan recognises the following:

"A growing ageing population with the increasing likelihood of mobility and disability needs to be met also make up over 10% of housing needs over the Plan period and these should be met through provision of homes capable of adaption and also through specialist care home provision. With a decreasing ability to access everyday facilities independently and an increasing need for healthcare, specialist care home provision should be located in the most sustainable settlements e.g. Sub-Regional Centres and Main Service Centres."

Therefore, Policy 17 encourages care homes to be located in the most sustainable settlements and one of the reasons for this is to allow occupants to use local services and facilities. In this case, the application site is within the countryside which is considered to be the least sustainable area for new development. Notwithstanding this, the proposal is for the expansion of an existing nursing home as opposed to a care home. There is an important distinction between the two types of facilities as nursing homes provide more specialist forms of healthcare. For example, nursing homes must have qualified nurses on-site at all times. It is likely that occupants of a nursing home would have higher care needs and more restricted mobility than care home occupants. Residents are unlikely to be able to leave the home without assistance, if at all. As such, it is unlikely that residents would be able to access local services and facilities and as such, it is not considered that the proposal would undermine Policy 17 in this case given that the proposal is for the expansion of a nursing home rather than a care home.

The NPPF includes the following definition of 'Public service infrastructure" in Annex B: "Education and healthcare facilities of all types, and facilities for blue light, social care, library and criminal justice uses". As the proposal seeks to expand an existing nursing home which functions as a healthcare facility, it is considered that the proposal falls under the definition of public service infrastructure.

Policy HC4 (Proposals for new and improved community facilities, public service infrastructure and development providing public health benefits) of the NPPF sets out the following:

"1. Substantial weight should be given to the benefits where:
a. New or improved public service infrastructure or community facilities would be provided; and
b. Development proposals would make a demonstrable contribution towards promoting good health, preventing ill-health, reducing health inequalities or supporting social interaction in the local community (such as, but not limited to, the provision of new recreation facilities, meeting places and opportunities to grow or purchase healthier food)."

Within the submitted Design and Access Statement, Paragraph 6.8 sets out a 'Statement of Need' that has been provided by the applicant:

"Leaving Holbeach Hospital aside, Beech Lodge is the only home that provides dedicated nursing care in Holbeach. There are no other nursing homes in 10- miles radius of Beech Lodge and hence the people in Holbeach heavily rely on Beech Lodge for nursing care within this care home.

The home always had huge demand for beds. The home started off with around 10 beds and it has since been extended several times to meet the demand of the public. The last extension was completed in 2015, increasing the bed numbers from 29 to 36 along with creating additional facilities and refurbing the existing part of the building. The home remained 100% occupied most of the time with a waiting list of people who required care. The national average for care home occupancy is currently 87% so we are operating at a higher level than this."

An 'Additional Statement of Need' which has subsequently been submitted as further information was requested to support the LPA's assessment of the proposals. Based on this information, it is considered that there is a need to provide additional nursing home places within the district.

It is recognised that in this case, the proposal is for an expansion to an existing nursing home rather than for the provision of a new nursing home. Furthermore, Beech Lodge provides nursing care which represents a specialist form of care that differs from a typical care home. For example, nursing homes need to have registered nurses on site whereas a care home does not necessarily require this. Therefore, the site currently offers an extra level of care that is not widely available.

It is relevant to consider if there is a need for additional care home places. The applicant sets out that there are no nursing homes within 10 miles of the site other than Holbeach Hospital; however, it is considered that there are some nursing homes in Spalding which are within 10 miles of the site, including Cedar Falls Care Home and Ashwood Care and Nursing Home. Notwithstanding this, it is

recognised there is a general shortage of nursing home places and as such, it is considered that the development can be deemed necessary despite its location within the countryside, in accordance with Policy 1 of the Local Plan.

The potential economic benefits of the proposal include shot term employment for construction workers and employment for 6 full-time employees once operational. The proposal would also provide community benefits by providing specialist nursing homes places. A net gain in biodiversity is also proposed which would provide some environmental benefits. As such, these benefits weigh in favour of the development in accordance with Policy 1 of the Local Plan.

Employment Provision

As the proposal is for an employment site, Policy 7 of the Local Plan is also considered to be relevant. Policy 7 allocates various sites across the district an Main Employment Areas, which are reserved for main employment in Use Classes B1, B2 and B8. Although care homes provide employment, the policy does not make provision for Use Class C2 (care homes).

Policy 7 sets out the following:

"New employment development/businesses or the extension of an existing business outside the above allocated employment sites will be supported provided that the proposal involves the re-use of previously-developed land or the conversion/re-use of redundant buildings. Where it can be demonstrated that no suitable building capable of conversion/re-use is available or the re-use of previously-developed land is not available or is unsuitable, proposals on non allocated sites may be acceptable provided:

a. the development does not conflict with neighbouring land uses;
b. there is no significant adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area;
c. the design is responsive to the local context;
d. there will be no significant adverse impact on the local highway network;
e. there will be no significant adverse impact upon the viability of delivering any allocated employment site;
f. proposals maximising opportunities for modal shift away from the private car are demonstrated; and
g. there is an identified need for the business location outside of identified employment areas on the Policies Map."

The proposal would not re-use previously developed land or an existing building. Therefore, the policy requires the LPA to consider if an alternative building or previously developed land could accommodate the proposals instead. Whilst the submission does not contain evidence of a search of alternative sites, it is not considered reasonable or practical for the entire nursing home to relocate to another site.

The underlying aim of Policy 7 is to ensure that alternative options have been considered first before developing or expanding into the countryside. In this case, even if an alternative site was found, then the existing building within the site would become vacant and need to be re-used either as a care home or for an alternative use.

Furthermore, as set out previously, the proposal is for a specialist form of accommodation as a nursing home and Policy 7 does not make specific provision for this. Furthermore, there are no allocated sites within the Local Plan specifically for nursing homes.

Therefore, as it is considered that there are not suitable alternative sites for the proposal, an assessment against criteria a to g is required.

a. The development would not conflict with neighbouring land uses as there are no dwellings next to the site.
b. The visual impact of the proposals is assessed in the following section of this assessment; however, there would be no significant adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area.
c. Although the extension would be large compared to the existing building, the design of the proposals is considered to be responsive to the local context.
d. There would be no significant adverse impact on the local highway network. For example, the submitted transport statement sets out that it is predicted that the proposals could generate a

maximum increase of only 3 peak hour movements, or 28 daily movements, within the surrounding highway network which would be negligible.
e. There would be no significant adverse impact upon the viability of delivering any allocated employment site.
f. Part f requires proposals to maximise opportunities for modal shift away from the use of private cars; however, in this case the site is within a rural location and it is likely that visitors and employees would only be able to access the site vis private cars as there are no public transport links to the site. As such, the proposal conflicts with part f.
g. As set out previously, there is an identified need for the business location outside of identified employment areas on the Policies Map.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposal largely accords with Policy 7 except for part f as the site is within the countryside and there are limited opportunities for public transport use.

Overall, it is considered that the proposed expansion of Beech Lodge care home can be deemed necessary in accordance with Policy 1 of the Local Plan as there is a shortage of nursing home places that need to be provided within the district. Weight can also be given to the economic, community and environmental benefits of the development to accord with Policy 1, including the provision of 6 full-time employees once operational.

Policy HC4 of the NPPF requires substantial weight to be given to the provision of development such as nursing homes. Although the site is located within the countryside rather than a settlement, it is considered that the principle of development is acceptable in this instance due to the need to provide additional nursing home places within the district and the significant weight that needs to be given to the provision of facilities such as this, in accordance with Policy HC4 of the NPPF.

Design, Layout and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Policy DP3 (Key principles for well-designed places) of the NPPF states that development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan similarly outlines sustainable development considerations for development proposals, providing a framework for an operational policy to be used in assessing the sustainable development attributes of all development proposals.

Policy 3 accords with the provisions of Section 12 of the NPPF as it requires development to comprise good design; identifying issues that should be considered when preparing schemes so that development sits comfortably with, and adds positively to, its historically-designated or undesignated townscape or landscape surroundings.

The proposal comprises three extensions, the smallest of which is proposed at the rear of the building on the eastern edge of the building. This extension measures 3m by 13m and features a flat roof that would measure 3m in height. Although the flat roofed form nature of the extension would contrast with the hipped roof form of the existing building, the extension is of a relatively small scale and there would be some screening of the extension is the form of an existing hedgerow around the site.

The second extension comprises a two-storey Dayspace area which is also proposed on the eastern side of the building. This extension is proposed to measure 7m by 6.7m. A hipped roof form is proposed that would measure 7m in height up to its ridgeline and the height of the eaves of the extension would match the existing building.

The southern extension is the largest extension, measuring 27m from the north to south. Initially, the extension measures 15m in width and this then widens to 23m in width. The ridgeline height of the extension would be the same height as tallest part of the existing building; however, the eaves height would be slightly taller.

The proposed Dayspace and southern extensions would feature hipped roof forms. The external materials including render which could match the existing building and some stonework is proposed between ground and first floor windows and on the lower part of the Dayspace extension. There is some stonework on the existing building and as such, the proposed materials are considered to be

acceptable in principle. A condition could be included to require the materials to match the existing materials as closely as possible.

As set out previously within the planning history section of this assessment, the building has been extended several times since the 1980s and as such, the building has changed and evolved over time. In this case, the proposed southern extension is of a significant scale compared to the existing building and the extension would nearly double the size of the care home. Notwithstanding this, the site already features a relatively large care home building, and the proposal would result in a larger building being positioned within the site. The building is positioned within a relatively open and flat landscape and whilst the development would result in the loss of some open countryside, it is not considered that this would result in a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area.

Therefore, it is considered that the development would have an acceptable impact on the character and appearance of the area in accordance with Policies 2 and 3 of the Local Plan and Section 14 of the NPPF.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy P3 (Living conditions and pollution) of the NPPF sets out that development should provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and users in terms of adequate access to light and avoiding exposure to levels of air, noise, artificial light or other sources of pollution. The policy also sets out that proposals should not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site.

Policies 2 and 3 of Local Plan sets out that residential amenity and the relationship to existing development and land uses is a main consideration when making planning decisions.

As set out previously, there are no dwellings next to the site and the nearest dwellings are located approximately 160m to the north of the site, on Hurdletree Bank. Due to the separation distances involved, the proposal is unlikely to adversely impact the amenity of the nearest dwellings.

Therefore, in amenity terms the proposed development accords with the provisions of the Section 17 of the NPPF and Policies 2 and 3 of the Local Plan.

Highway Safety and Parking

Policy TR6 (Assessing transport impacts) of the NPPF sets out that development proposals should only be refused on highways grounds if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan sets out that proposals requiring planning permission for development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, specifically in relation to access and vehicle generation.

Policy 3 of the Local Plan details that development proposals will demonstrate how accessibility by a choice of travel modes including the provision of public transport, public rights of way and cycle ways will be secured, where they are relevant to the proposal.

Policy 33 of the Local Plan further reinforces the need for developments to be accessible via sustainable modes of transport.

Policy 36 of the Local Plan, in conjunction with Appendix 6, sets out minimum vehicle parking standards.

The submitted transport statement It is predicted that the proposals could generate a maximum increase of only 3 peak hour movements, or 28 daily movements, within the surrounding highway network which would be negligible.

Appendix 6 of the Local Plan recommends that for care homes, 1 parking space is provided per 3 residents. The proposal seeks to provide a 45-bedroom care home and as such, it is presumed

there could be 45 residents, resulting in a requirement of 15 parking spaces. The site plan labels 25 parking spaces; however, one of these spaces is proposed as an area for ambulances to park if required and as such, this space would need to be kept clear most of the time. Notwithstanding this, it is considered that a sufficient number of parking spaces is proposed.

It is predicted that the proposals could generate a maximum increase of only 3 peak hour movements, or 28 daily movements, within the surrounding highway network which would be negligible.

Lincolnshire County Council's highways team asked for the access arrangements to be re-considered. The site layout was subsequently updated, and the highways team were re-consulted from 26th August to 17th September; however, no further responses were received.

The highways team sets out that whilst the proposed number of parking spaces is acceptable, the team raised some concerns with the layout of the car parking and suggested amendments.

The site layout was updated to include a dedicated emergency vehicle space near the site entrance. It is considered that this addresses one of the concerns raised by the highways team. The site layout was also updated to include a hard surfaced footway along the site frontage to allow pedestrians to walk to their vehicles without having to walk through active vehicle manoeuvring areas.

Therefore, the proposal would have an acceptable impact in terms of highway safety in accordance with Policies 2, 3 and 36 of the Local Plan, as well as Section 15 of the NPPF.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Section 18 of the NPPF sets out guidance relating to how local authorities should assess and determine applications which are subject to flood risk concerns.

Policy 2 of the Local Plan requires proposals to meet sustainable development considerations including in relation to sustainable drainage and flood risk (part 7).

Policy 4 of the Local Plan requires proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3 to be supported by sufficient information relating to flood risks associated with the development.

The site lies within Flood Zone 3, as identified within the Environment Agency's Flood Maps. Policy 4 of the Local Plan sets out that development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 will be permitted in instances where specific criteria is met.

The proposed development is classed as a 'more vulnerable' use, according to Annex F of the NPPF. Therefore, the proposal needs to pass the sequential and exception tests in accordance with Section 18 of the NPPF as the proposal does not fall under any of the relevant exemptions.

The NPPF requires the application of a sequential test to ensure that new development is in areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source.

The South East Lincolnshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) provides an overview of how flood risk has been considered in shaping the proposals of the Local Plan; including the spatial strategy and the assessment of housing and employment sites. Paragraph 8.3.6 of the SFRA sets out that the search area for the sequential test should be the whole of the council area unless the functional requirements of the development justify a reduced search area.

National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) sets out that the sequential test should be applied proportionately, and the search area should always be appropriate to the nature and scale of the proposal (Paragraph 027a Reference ID:7-027a-20220825).

In this case, the entire site and vast areas of South Holland are located within Flood Zone 3 and it is also recognised that the proposal seeks to expand an existing nursing home. As such, it would not be practical or feasible to re-locate the entire existing nursing home to an alternative location. As set out within the 'Principle of Development' section of this assessment, it is considered that there is an identified need for the proposal and substantial weight needs to be given to the expansion and improvement of a healthcare facility.

Within the SFRA, areas across South Holland have been identified according to the level of hazard that is posed in terms of flood risk. Appendix C of the SFRA sets out guidance in terms of the minimum measures that are required according to what hazard category areas fall under. The site is not within a hazard area, making the site sequentially preferable to other areas of South Holland which are within higher risk hazard areas.

Therefore, based on these combined factors and relevant guidance, it is considered that the sequential test is passed in this case.

In terms of the exceptions test, Policy F6 (Development in areas at risk from flooding from rivers or the sea) of the NPPF sets out that the exception test involves demonstrating that the development would meet all the following criteria:

"i. Provide wider sustainability benefits to the community that outweigh the flood risk;
ii. Be safe for its anticipated lifetime in accordance with policy F7; and
iii. Not increase flood risk elsewhere and, where possible, reduce flood risk overall.

In terms of part i, the NPPF does not specify what is considered to comprise a wider sustainability benefit; however, the NPPG provides some additional guidance including examples of such benefits. The examples include the re-use of previously developed land, an overall reduction in flood risk to the wider community through the provision of flood risk management infrastructure, and the provision of sustainable drainage systems (Paragraph 036 Reference ID: 7-036-20220825). The guidance also states the following:

"Identified sustainability benefits need to be balanced against any associated flood risks, informed by the site-specific flood risk assessment. The impacts of flood risk on social, economic and environmental factors should be considered. Where wider sustainability benefits are absent or where they are outweighed by flood risk, the Exception Test has not been satisfied and the site allocation in the plan should not be made or planning permission should be refused."

In terms of part i, the proposed drainage strategy seeks to incorporate some sustainable drainage elements including swales, a rain garden and permeable paving.

In terms of part ii, the SFRA sets out at Paragraph 9.1.5 that there are a range of factors to be considered when determining whether or not a development is 'safe'. As set out previously, the site is not within hazard area as identified by SFRA and the FRA contains sufficient mitigation measures.

In terms of part iii, According to the submitted information, the proposed surface water discharge rate represents a betterment of approximately 24% compared to the existing development within the site. As such, the proposed drainage strategy is not expected to increase flood risk elsewhere as the proposed discharge rate is likely to be lower than the current discharge rate.

Therefore, it is considered that the development passes the exception test.

As set out previously, the application is accompanied by a drainage strategy which includes some sustainable drainage elements including swales, a rain garden and permeable paving. The proposed discharge rate is 8.9 litres per second which is in excess of the greenfield rate for the new development; however, this rate includes the brownfield rate for the existing development and provides a betterment on the combined discharge rate. South Holland Internal Drainage Board (IDB) has set out that this is acceptable in principle; however, the team have recommended that the applicant review opportunities for reducing the proposed discharge rate prior to applying for consent from the IDB.

The IDB have set out an objection as they consider that evidence is still required that the existing surface water pipe is connected to the wider watercourse network. Whilst the concerns of the IDB have been taken into account, it is considered that these details could be secured via a planning condition.

LCC's highways and sustainable drainage team have set out that the submitted drainage strategy is broadly acceptable in principle; however, further details are deemed necessary and such details could be secured via a planning condition.

In terms of foul drainage, there are currently no foul water sewers close to the site. There is an

existing treatment plant within the site; however, a new treatment plant is proposed to accommodate the development.

Therefore, it is considered that the proposed development accords with Policy 4 of the Local Plan and Section 18 of the NPPF in terms of flood risk management.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) requires developers to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain using standardized biodiversity units measured by statutory biodiversity metrics. This is often referred to as the mandatory requirements for Biodiversity Net Gain.

"Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits".

The biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition. This relates to a condition that seeks, once planning permission has been granted, a Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted and approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development, alongside the need to submit a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan.

The effect of Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the "biodiversity gain condition".

The effect of this "biodiversity gain condition" is that development granted by this notice must not begin unless:
(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
(b) the planning authority has approved the plan, or
(c) the development is exempt from the biodiversity gain condition.

The application is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment which indicates that there would be an overall gain of 82.73% in Hedgerow units. The metric also indicates that 10% mandatory net gain cannot be achieved on-site for area and watercourse units and as such, the proposals require 0.25 area-habitat units and 0.16 watercourse units off-site. The council's ecology officer considers that the submitted metric is accurate and a planning condition can be used to secure off-site units.

The ecology officer considers that the habitats on site have the potential to support nesting birds and as such a planning condition is recommended to restrict works during the main nesting season (March to August). If this is not possible, then the condition allows for a suitably qualified ecologist to perform a breeding bird survey of the site prior to any works beginning onsite, the results of which must be provided. Any active nests discovered during inspections will be protected with a suitable exclusion buffer (of appropriate size to the species) to prevent disturbance and monitored until the nest is no longer active / all chicks have fledged, when the ecologist will provide a sign off for clearance work to continue.

The ecology officer has also requested 6 bird nesting bricks and 2 integrated bat boxes which could be secured through a planning condition.

With the inclusion of the relevant conditions, it is considered that the proposal would have an acceptable ecological impact.

Fire Safety

As set out previously, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue have set out an objection to the development in their consultation response as they have set out that a fire hydrant is required within 90m of the site entrance. This was queried with the applicant's agent and they acknowledged the requirement. Approved Document B (Fire Safety) requires an accessible fire hydrant within 90-120m of a care home building, providing a minimum flow rate of up to 35 litres per second, which should be tested annually in accordance with BS:9990 standards. Therefore, the applicant was aware that a fire

hydrant was required. For clarity a planning condition can be included requiring the hydrant to be installed prior to the first occupation of the approved development.

Planning Balance

As detailed above, Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended, requires that the Local Planning Authority makes decisions in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The proposed extension to the care home is considered to be significant and as such, there is a partial conflict with Policy S5 of the NPPF. Notwithstanding this, substantial weight needs to be given to the benefits of improving a healthcare facility for which there is an identified need, in accordance with Policy HC4 of the NPPF.

It is recognised that there is an identified need to provide additional nursing home places to accommodate the needs of an ageing population. For the reasons set out within this assessment, it is not considered practical or reasonable for the existing nursing home to relocate elsewhere within the district and as such, opportunities to expand existing nursing homes such as the current proposal should be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, there are also no allocated care home sites within South Holland, making it difficult to source alternative locations or provide nursing home places elsewhere. Therefore, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

Although the proposed extension is considered to represent a significant addition to the nursing home and this would cause some visual harm due to the loss of some open countryside, the visual impact of the proposals is considered to be acceptable on balance. The development is also considered to be acceptable in terms of other materials considerations such as highway safety, flood risk and biodiversity net gain.

In this case, it is considered that there are factors that weigh substantially in favour of the development and as such, the planning balance is in favour of the development.

Additional Considerations

Public Sector Equality Duty

In making this decision the Authority must have regard to the public sector equality duty (PSED) under s.149 of the Equalities Act. This means that the Council must have due regard to the need (in discharging its functions) to:

A. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.

B. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This may include removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; taking steps to meet the special needs of those with a protected characteristic; encouraging participation in public life (or other areas where they are underrepresented) of people with a protected characteristic(s).

C. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The PSED must be considered as a relevant factor in making this decision but does not impose a duty to achieve the outcomes in s.149. It is only one factor that needs to be considered, and may be balanced against other relevant factors.

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case will have a disproportionately adverse impact on a protected characteristic.

Human Rights

In making a decision, the Authority should be aware of and take into account any implications that may arise from the Human Rights Act 1998. Under the Act, it is unlawful for a public authority such as South Holland District Council to act in a manner that is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. The Authority is referred specifically to Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property).

It is not considered that the recommendation in this case interferes with local residents' right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence, except insofar as it is necessary to protect the rights and freedoms of others (in this case, the rights of the applicant). The Council is also permitted to control the use of property in accordance with the general public interest and the recommendation is considered to be a proportionate response to the submitted application based on the considerations set out in this report.

Conclusion

Taking the above considerations into account, the proposal is considered to accord with Policies 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 28, 30 and 36 of the Local Plan, along with the identified sections contained within the NPPF. There are no significant factors in this case that indicate against the proposal and outweigh the consideration in favour of the proposal and the policies referred to above.

Recommendation

Based on the assessment detailed above, it is recommended that the proposal should be approved under delegated authority.