January 2022

Planning Statement

Land north of Fulney Hall
Camel Gate
Spalding
PE12 6ES

Proposed siting of Portacabins and associated works for use as Training Centre, siting of shipping containers for storage and landscaping works

On behalf of
Lightspeed Broadband Limited

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by ID Planning on behalf of Lightspeed Broadband Limited in support of a full planning application for the at land north of Fulney Hall, Camel Gate, Spalding, PE12 6ES.

1.2 The provision of a training centre and storage seeks to complement the business operations of Lightspeed Broadband's Head Office at Fulney Hall, located to the south of the application site area.

1.3 The facility will support training and development of local engineers and apprentices in the business, which specialises in the roll out of fibre broadband across South Lincolnshire. It will also allow for storage of essential operational materials.

1.4 This Statement describes the application site and proposed development before assessing the proposal against the development plan and relevant material considerations. The latter includes the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated guidance.

1.5 The report proceeds as follows:

- Section 2 describes the application site;
- Section 3 sets out the proposed development;
- Section 4 provides an overview of planning policy;
- Section 5 provides an assessment of planning merits; and
- Section 6 sets out our conclusions.

2. Site Description & Planning History

Site Description and Background

2.1 The application site measures approximately 0.13 hectares and incorporates land to the west of Camel Gate and approximately 40m north of the Camel Gate / A151 roundabout.

2.2 To the south is the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall and associated car parking. The premises are in use by Lightspeed Broadband Limited as a head office. Further details on Lightspeed Broadband are set out in Section 3 of this Statement.

2.3 North of the application site is a dental surgery, whilst further north and to the east of Camel Gate is the Springfields Outlet Shopping & Leisure. The Coronation Channel is further to the west.

2.4 Land within the application red line area currently comprises gravelled surfacing with boundary landscaping on all sides. The south and eastern edges of the site to Camel Gate provide good screening from the highway due to the presence of existing mature trees and hedging. In the western portion of the site are existing building foundations.

2.5 A Site Location Plan is attached.

2.6 The site is served by bus services operating along Camel Gate and Holbeach Road towards central Spalding and is within walking distance from residential areas to the south and west.

2.7 Rail connections are also possible with Spalding Train Station some 2.2km south west of the site, providing frequent access from both Lincoln and Peterborough.

Planning History

2.8 The planning history for the site is set out below.

H16-0109-11: Proposed restaurant (A3) – Approved 1st February 2012.

3. Proposed Development

Introduction

3.1 As set out earlier, the development proposal seeks full planning permission for the proposed siting of portacabins and associated works for use as a training centre, siting of shipping containers for storage and landscaping works at land north of Fulney Hall, Camel Gate, Spalding, PE12 6ES.

3.2 The proposals would see the provision of 6x modular portacabins, 2x shipping containers, mock training street including installation of 2x 4m high telegraph poles and telegraph junction boxes, along with landscaping.

3.3 The proposals seek to link to Fulney Hall to the south of the application site, which is occupied by Lightspeed Broadband Limited in use as their head office. The proposals therefore have a clear functional link with the area and would support the continued operation of Lightspeed Broadband in this location.

3.4 The facility will support network build operations, field training of local engineers and creation and training of apprentices in the business, which specialises in the roll out of fibre broadband across South Lincolnshire. It will also allow for storage of essential operational materials.

Lightspeed Broadband Limited

3.5 Lightspeed Broadband are currently based at Fulney Hall, which is in use as a head office for the business.

3.6 The company are specialising in building a state-of-the-art, full fibre network across South Lincolnshire and West Norfolk, in locations including Stamford, Boston, Spalding, Market Deeping, Holbeach, Long Sutton, King's Lynn, Bourne, Skegness and Sleaford.

3.7 The delivery of the network seeks to future-proof internet connections for residents and local business. The company are focused on making a difference to communities underserved by the big brands to ensure nobody is left behind from advancements in connectivity.

3.8 The companies next phases are in Cromer, Dereham, Hunstanton, Sheringham, Thetford and Fakenham in Norfolk; and Stowmarket in Suffolk and Clacton-on-Sea, Frinton-on-Sea, Maldon, Witham, Braintree, Halstead, Harwich and Manningtree in Essex.

3.9 The proposed training and storage facilities along Camel Gate would allow Lightspeed Broadband to retain proximity to their existing head office. The location would also cause minimal disruption to the current commuting patterns of existing employees.

Proposed Layout

3.10 The proposed training centre seeks to occupy a 0.13ha area of land to the north of Fulney Hall. The development would see the provision of 6x modular portacabins, 2x shipping containers, mock training street including installation of 2x 4m high telegraph poles, dummy telephone junction boxes and landscaping.

3.11 The application is supported by a Proposed Site Plan which details the layout of the proposals. The 6x portacabins are positioned in the western part of the site, where they seek to reflect the existing footprint of building foundations already present on site.

3.12 The eastern part of the site would be occupied by the proposed shipping containers which are to be used for storage. The positioning of the containers has had careful regard to the surrounding context and boundary features of the site to maximise screening opportunities. The positioning has also sought to reflect the established principle of development in this part of the site, as established by the grant of permission for a restaurant in this location under H16-0109-11.

3.13 The application is supported by a Sections Plan which shows the containers will benefit from existing mature hedging and trees along the south eastern and eastern edges of the site, which provide natural screening.

3.14 In the north of the site is a proposed mock-up street, which would be used to train apprentices and local engineers. It includes for the siting of 4m high telegraph poles and dummy telegraph junction boxes which will be utilised to provide field training.

Proposed Design

3.15 Proposed Portable Cabin Plan & Elevations show the appearance of the portacabins and materials, which include a steel structure with galvanised steel skin and exterior colour in grey. Windows would be PVC framed with insulated glazing and PVC roller shutters. Doors are steel framed with galvanised steel sheets on either side.

3.16 Details of the proposed shipping containers are shown by the Storage Container Plan & Elevations. The Plan confirms the containers would have a simple design formed of rust-resistant Corten steel with a colour finish of either blue or green.

3.17 The mock-up street in the north of the site would feature 4m telegraph poles and dummy telephone junction boxes to support field training of local engineers and apprentices. The appearance of the telegraph poles and dummy boxes is included with the submission, with both features shown to be relatively discreet in appearance due to their scale and surrounding landscaping.

3.18 There would be no changes to the existing surfacing of the wider site, which comprises gravelled surfacing.

Landscaping

3.19 The Proposed Site Plan and Section Plan show the approach to landscaping on the site. All existing boundary landscaping is to be retained. Existing hedging in the south eastern part of the site, which is currently maintained, will be allowed to grow to around 3m to provide further natural screening of the proposed shipping containers.

3.20 In addition, new hedging is to be planted along the southern edge of the site to serve as a buffer to Fulney Hall to the south. Hedging, such as laurel, will be provided at an initial height of 2.5m growing to 3m to ensure screening of the proposed portacabins. Additional hedging is positioned near to the site entrance, where it would maximise opportunities for screening with the positioning seeking to direct users into the site.

3.21 The approach will create an attractive green environment and good enclosure for the development.

Access

3.22 The proposed development seeks to complement the existing operations of Lightspeed Broadband at Fulney Hall to the south, through providing storage and opportunities for training apprentices and local engineers. Fulney Hall benefits from an existing access from Camel Gate with a car park to the south of the site.

3.23 Staff using the site will therefore be able to access the training area and storage containers along the southern edge of the site, with a break in landscaping allowing for access.

4. Relevant Planning Policy

Statutory Development Plan

4.1 The South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011 – 2036 (SELLP) (2019) was formally adopted on 8th March 2019 by South East Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee.

4.2 Our assessment of planning issues therefore focuses on the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019).

South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (2019)

- Policy 1: Spatial Strategy
- Policy 2: Development Management
- Policy 3: Design of New Development
- Policy 4: Approach to Flood Risk
- Policy 7: Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio
- Policy 29: The Historic Environment

Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF") was published in July 2021. The introduction confirms it is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

4.4 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. It advises at Paragraph 8 that:

"Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- ***an economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity;*

- ***a social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and*

- ***an environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste*

and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy."

4.5 Paragraph 11 sets out the Government's commitment to supporting sustainable development. In relation to decision taking, it states: *"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.*

c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole."

4.6 Section 6 of the NPPF relates to '**Building a strong and competitive economy**'. Paragraph 81 states planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt taking into account local business needs.

4.7 Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development. The approach should allow each area to build on its strengths, counter any weaknesses and address the challenges of the future. This is particularly important where Britain can be a global leader in driving innovation.

4.8 Paragraph 83 confirms planning policies and decisions should recognise and address the specific locational requirements of different sectors.

4.9 Section 9 sets out how new development should promote sustainable transport choices including through ensuring there are opportunities to promote sustainable modes of travel.

4.10 In this respect, the application site is served by an existing access and car parking associated with Fulney Hall and its occupation by Lightspeed Broadband. The site is also readily accessible by sustainable means of travel due to existing bus links along Camel Gate and Holbeach Road and on foot due to its proximity to existing residential areas.

4.11 Section 10 aims to support high quality communications with paragraph 114 stating advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being. Planning decisions should therefore support the expansion of full fibre broadband connections.

4.12 Paragraph 120 states that to make efficient use of land, planning policies and decisions should give substantial weight to the use of suitable brownfield land and under-utilised land.

4.13 Section 12 considers design matters and states the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment (paragraph 126), stating "*Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities*".

4.14 Paragraph 162 explains the aim of the sequential test is to steer new development away from areas of flood risk. Local planning authorities should ensure when approving development in areas of flood risk that flood risk is not increased elsewhere (paragraph 167). Where appropriate, applications should be supported by a flood risk assessment.

4.15 Finally, Chapter 16 sets out guidance on conserving and protecting heritage assets through consideration of the impact of development on the historic environment.

4.16 Paragraph 194 confirms that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance.

4.17 Paragraph 197 continues by establishing that when determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and

c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.18 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be) (paragraph 199).

4.19 Paragraph 202 states where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

5. Planning Assessment

5.1 Under Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, applications are to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

5.2 The development plan for Spalding comprises the adopted South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP) (March 2019).

5.3 Whilst the development plan provides the starting point for our assessment, the NPPF represents an important material planning consideration and highlights a presumption in favour of sustainable development at the heart of the Framework, which seeks to ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way.

Sustainable Development

5.4 The NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development including economic, social and environmental. We consider that the proposed training centre and storage facilities would make a strong contribution in the context of all three roles.

5.5 In terms of **'economic'** factors, the proposal would support the development and operation of Lightspeed Broadband from their existing head office at Fulney Hall, alongside the continued provision of skilled jobs. The provision of a training centre will enable the company to take on and train apprentices and local engineers, supporting the upskilling and future job opportunities for local residents. The scheme will assist the business function and operation by allowing training to take place next to their headquarters, where staff will benefit from the proximity of the facilities.

5.6 The above, in addition to the proposal for storage of some operational materials on site, will support Lightspeed Broadband in the rollout of a state-of-the-art, full fibre network in 10 market towns including Spading and other towns Stamford, Boston, Market Deeping, Holbeach, Long Sutton, King's Lynn, Bourne, Skegness and Sleaford. The works will ensure a full fibre network meaning residents and local businesses will have access to a future-proof internet connection.

5.7 The NPPF (2021) acknowledges the importance of the roll out of full fibre connections, stating it is essential to economic growth and social well-being. The proposed development will support the operations of Lightspeed Broadband in their rollout of a full fibre network in South Lincolnshire, therefore creating spin-off benefits for local businesses and the wider economy.

5.8 As a result of the above the proposed development would provide an important '**social'** role in supporting the continued provision of employment opportunities associated with Lightspeed Broadband alongside the creation of apprenticeship opportunities with the company and training for local engineers. This would provide local residents with an opportunity to train and develop their skills, creating further opportunities for employment in the future.

5.9 The wider spin-off benefits associated with the enhancement of Lightspeed Broadbands operation from the site will see support towards the rollout of a full fibre network in South Lincolnshire, thereby supporting the social well-being of residents through improved connectivity.

5.10 In relation to the **'environmental role**', the application site comprises gravelled surfacing with the western part of the site occupied by existing building foundations. The proposal would make efficient use of the developed site through providing an active use to support a local business and training, adjacent to the company's head office. The connectivity between the training centre and head office would reduce the need for staff to travel between the two facilities.

5.11 The Proposed Site Plan demonstrates existing landscaping along the site boundaries will be retained with new hedging proposed along the south boundary, ensuring the development would be well screened. Furthermore, due to the nature of the proposed portacabins and storage containers, there would not be a requirement for groundworks associated with these features.

5.12 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment Statement and a Heritage Impact Assessment which demonstrate the development would be acceptable in terms of flood risk, drainage and heritage matters.

5.13 In dealing with sustainable development, the adopted **South East Lincolnshire Local Plan** (SELLP) includes **Policy 2** which deals with 'Development Management' but with a strong emphasis on sustainable development.

5.14 Policy 2 sets out that development will be permitted provided that sustainable development considerations are met, which include criteria against the size, scale and layout of new development and impact on amenity, trees and the character and appearance of the area and existing development. Other criteria relate to use of sustainable materials and resources, site access, sustainable drainage and flood risk, impact on natural habitats and heritage assets.

5.15 The proposals for a training centre seek to respect the siting of the existing building base in the west of the site, along with the principle for built development in the east established by H16-0109-11. The proposed structures are limited in size and height, with careful consideration had towards the positioning of the structures and the approach to boundary landscaping to ensure good screening for the site. The scale and layout of development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

5.16 Due to the nature of the proposed modular portacabins and shipping container units, groundworks would not be required to support their installation, meaning there would also be no impact on boundary features.

5.17 Additional landscaping measures include the planting of hedging, such as laurel, along the southern site edge to ensure good screening between the proposed portacabins and Fulney Hall to the south. The hedging would be planted at a minimum initial height of 2.5m growing to at least 3m to screen the structures.

5.18 Existing hedging in the south east will similarly be allowed to grow to 3m to provide further screening, ensuring the development effectively incorporates landscaping to create a good quality development which respects the wider character.

5.19 Access into the site will utilise the existing connection with Camel Gate to the east, which serves the existing car park already provided at Fulney Hall and used by Lightspeed Broadband.

5.20 Matters including flood risk, drainage and heritage are addressed further below.

5.21 Consequently, we find no material planning conflict in respect of **Policy 2** of the SELLP.

5.22 In light of the above we consider the proposed development would contribute to sustainable development in a positive manner as outlined above and comply with adopted policy for the area.

Principle of Development

5.23 **Policy 1** 'Spatial Strategy' of the SELLP (2019) identifies Spalding as a sub-regional centre, in which development which supports the settlement role is acceptable.

5.24 **Policy 7** 'Improving South East Lincolnshire's Employment Land Portfolio' continues by outlining the aspiration for creation of some 13,800 jobs in South Holland. The policy states new employment development or the extension of an existing business outside the specified allocated employment sites in the SELLP will be supported provided the proposal involves the re-use of previously developed land.

5.25 The proposed development is for a training centre and storage facilities on behalf of Lightspeed Broadband, whose head offices are located directly south of the application site at Fulney Hall. The application site comprises a gravel surfaced site with existing building foundations in the eastern part of the site.

5.26 The scheme lies within Spalding and has a functional link to the head office of Lightspeed Broadband at Fulney Hall, with the proposals situated on previously developed land. The scheme is therefore supported by **Policy 1** and the thrust of **Policy 7**.

5.27 Furthermore, the proposals would assist in enhancing the business function and operation of Lightspeed Broadband in their rollout of a state-of-the-art full fibre network in South Lincolnshire, therefore supporting other businesses in the area through boosting connectivity.

5.28 In light of the above, we consider the principle of proposed development to be acceptable in this location.

Design

5.29 The NPPF aims to achieve well-designed places that function well and add to the overall quality of an area for the lifetime of the development as well as being visually attractive with good layout and landscaping whilst creating places that are safe, inclusive and accessible.

5.30 Adopted **Policy 2** 'Development Management' supports sustainable development, including development which is appropriate in size, scale, layout, density and character.

5.31 As confirmed, the siting of the proposed modular portacabins and shipping container structures have sought to respect the footprint of the existing built foundations on site, as well as the location of development previously approved in the east (H16-0109-11). The layout and density are therefore considered to be acceptable.

5.32 The structure heights are limited, such that the approach to boundary landscaping will ensure the development is well screened from outside the site and would respect surrounding character.

5.33 A mock-up street is proposed in the northern part of the site, with telegraph poles to be installed to assist training. The poles have purposefully reduced to 4m in height, so as to limit their appearance.

5.34 In terms of heritage, the intervisibility between the training centre and the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall will be limited through the use of landscaping. Further consideration of Fulney Hall is undertaken below and by the Heritage Impact Assessment.

5.35 The size, scale, layout and design of the training centre is therefore considered to respond to the surrounds of the site. We therefore find the proposal to accord with **Policy 2** of the SELLP in respect of design.

5.36 **Policy 3** 'Design of New Development' promotes development to create distinctive places through use of high quality and inclusive design and layout. Policy 3 goes on to provide a number of design criteria which include consideration of creation of a sense of place through complementing and enhancing heritage assets, respecting scale, density and visual closure. Other key considerations are landscape character, accessibility, amenity, flood risk and incorporation of landscaping.

5.37 As set out above, the design of the new development has sought to respond to its context, with regard to views along Camel Gate and from Fulney Hall to the south through the use of appropriate building layout, heights, scale and landscaping.

5.38 In terms of accessibility and legibility, the layout of the development including the incorporation of landscaping seeks to guide users into the site from the existing car park and access from Camel Gate, whilst also seeking to maximise screening opportunities. The site is also in an accessible location, with good public transport services along Camel Gate and the A151 to the south.

5.39 The retention of existing boundary landscaping in addition to planting of new hedging to the south boundary will improve the visual appearance of the site through creating an attractive green environment, whilst also serving as a buffer to Fulney Hall to the south. Planting along the south east edge of the site will be allowed to grow to a taller height to add further screening and enclosure of the site.

5.40 The proposals would not impact on residential amenity due to the distance of the site from residential uses. The use would complement the existing operations of Lightspeed Broadband at Fulney Hall to the south.

5.41 In relation to heritage, as Heritage Impact Assessment is submitted which confirms the proposals have sought to mitigate potential harm towards the setting of the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall through consideration of the development scale and appropriate landscaping. Heritage is discussed below.

5.42 A Flood Risk Assessment Statement has also been prepared and demonstrates the development would not alter the existing flood risk experienced by Lightspeed Broadband staff based directly to the south at Fulney Hall and that given the minor scale of development and the existing surfacing of the site, the development is considered to be acceptable in terms of flood risk.

5.43 In light of the above, the development provides an attractive, accessible scheme which incorporates natural landscaping. We therefore find the proposal to comply with **Policy 3**.

Heritage

5.44 **Policy 29** of the SELLP relates to 'The Historic Environment' and indicates that proposals affecting the setting of a Listed Building will be supported where they preserve or better reveal the significance of the Listed Building. Details of how development has sought to mitigate harm is required. Where harm arises, justification for the proposal to demonstrate this would be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme should be provided.

5.45 A Heritage Impact Assessment has been provided with this application and considers the impact of the proposed training centre and storage facilities towards the setting of the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall to the south.

5.46 The Assessment concludes that currently the application site offers limited historical or aesthetic value towards the setting of Fulney Hall. It confirms that due to the limited glimpsed views of the proposed training centre and storage facilities as a result of the development scale and landscaping, the proposal would result in what is considered to be limited and at the lower end of less than substantial harm towards the setting of the Grade II Listed Fulney Hall.

5.47 Taking the balancing exercise set out at Policy 29 of the SELLP and paragraph 202 of the NPPF (2021), the Heritage Impact Assessment confirms the public benefits of the proposed development, which are set out at 5.16 – 5.19 of the Assessment, are considered to significantly outweigh the limited less than substantial harm identified.

5.48 It is also clear the proposals have sought to mitigate any harm arising from the development through the limited scale and height of the proposed portacabins, storage containers and telegraph poles coupled with the approach to landscaping. In respect of the latter, the Proposed Site Plan seeks to ensure new and existing hedging along the south boundary will be grown to a sufficient height to provide screening of the development and enhance the green setting of Fulney Hall.

5.49 Taking the above into account, the proposed development is considered to accord with **Policy 29** of the SELLP.

Flood Risk & Drainage

5.50 **Policy 4** 'Approach to Flood Risk' sets out that development will be permitted in Flood Zones 2 and 3 where there are no other sites available at a lower risk of flooding, meaning that the sequential test in terms of flood risk has been passed.

5.51 The application site is located entirely within Flood Zone 3 which is identified as having a 'high probability' of flooding. However, this is also case for virtually all of the wider area around Spalding and within the South Holland District. Subsequently, there are no reasonably appropriate sequentially preferable sites in terms of flood risk which are available.

5.52 The application is supported by a Flood Risk Assessment Statement which demonstrates the proposals represent a minor form of development linked to the existing business functions of Lightspeed Broadband directly to the south at Fulney Hall.

5.53 The implications of flood risk for the proposed users of the training centre and storage facilities would be no different to those of the existing Lightspeed Broadband head office on-site which is also located in Flood Zone 3.

5.54 Therefore, the flood risk issue affecting staff would not alter from the existing situation, with arrangements to deal with flooding currently in place at the existing Lightspeed Broadband offices.

5.55 In addition, the application proposes only a slight increase in the built footprint of development on the application site with the GIA of the portacabins measuring just 89m^2. However, as set out in the submitted Flood Risk Assessment Statement, the proposal would not increase areas of hard-surfacing across the site, which is already covered with an existing building foundation base and gravelled surfacing.

5.56 In terms of flood risk vulnerability, the FRA identifies the proposed uses are 'less vulnerable' and are therefore appropriate in Flood Zone 3, therefore negating the need for an Exception Test in accordance with NPPG.

5.57 In light of the above, it is demonstrated the proposal would not lead to material conflict with the provisions of the NPPF or emerging Policy 4 SELLP (2019).

Trees & Landscaping

5.58 **Policy 3** of the SELLP relates to good design and creation of distinctive places and includes consideration of the landscape character of a location, incorporation of existing trees and hedgerows and provision of appropriate new landscaping to enhance biodiversity, green infrastructure, flood risk mitigation and urban cooling.

5.59 As set out in this Statement, the proposed development seeks to retain all existing boundary trees and landscaping. Due to the nature of the proposed modular portacabins and shipping containers, associated groundworks would not be required such that there would be no impact on boundary planting.

5.60 Furthermore, the development seeks to enhance existing planting. Additional hedging, such as laurel, is proposed along the southern edge of the site with an initial minimum height of 2.5m and growing to at least 3m in height. This will boost landscaping along an existing gap in hedging on the southern boundary, providing an enhancement to the site,

5.61 Furthermore, existing hedges on the south east boundary will be allowed to grow to at least 3m, providing further screening of the development and ensuring an attractive green environment is retained from views along Camel Gate.

5.62 In light of the above, the development will boost the wider landscape character and has sought to incorporate and enhance planting within the site. The proposals therefore accord with **Policy 3**.

6. Conclusions

6.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Lightspeed Broadband Limited in support of a full planning application for the proposed siting of portacabins and associated works for use as a training centre, siting of shipping containers for storage and landscaping works at land north of Fulney Hall, Camel Gate, Spalding, PE12 6ES.

6.2 The provision of a training centre and storage seeks to complement the business operations of Lightspeed Broadband's Head Office at Fulney Hall, located to the south of the application site area.

6.3 The Statement has set out the significant social and economic benefits that would be delivered by the proposals through the training and upskilling of local engineers and apprentices on the site, therefore boosting employment prospects. The development as a whole will support the operations of Lightspeed Broadband in their rollout of a state-of-the-art full fibre network in South Lincolnshire, enhancing connectivity to the benefit of local businesses and residents.

6.4 It would therefore ensure provision of sustainable development in line with the NPPF and gains support from the NPPF in a number of respects including the significant weight which should be place on the need to support economic growth through the planning system.

6.5 The proposal has been assessed against the development plan as a starting point in consideration of relevant planning policy issues, with account taken of all relevant material considerations.

6.6 In light of the above we consider the proposal would not give rise to material planning harm but would support the continued operation of Lightspeed Broadband in their rollout of a state-of-the-art full fibre network in South Lincolnshire.

6.7 Having regard to all the above we consider that planning permission for the proposed development would not give rise to material planning harm but would support the rollout of a full fibre network in South Lincolnshire.