Dear Ms Pain

Request for Pre-Application Advice
Proposal: Relocation of existing grain store from Lodge Road to Fowlmere Road, Foxton
Location: Land east of Fowlmere Road, Foxton

Thank you for your enquiry. This letter is a response to your pre-application received 31 May 2017 and subsequent meeting held at South Cambridgeshire District Council on 06 July 2017 seeking the pre-application views of the Local Planning Authority. The relevant information is set out below. Please be aware of the disclaimer at the end of this letter. If you have any questions relating to the advice given, please contact the case officer.

Recommendation
In my informal opinion the principle of relocating the grain store to a new site in the Green Belt would represent an exception in the Green Belt and would be accepted under paragraph 89 of the NPPF 2012. There are concerns about the impact of the development on the open countryside through landscape harm which would need to be mitigated.

This is subject to the other material planning considerations being addressed which include highway safety, trees and ecology, neighbour amenity and noise, drainage and flood risk, renewable energy and water conservation and health impact assessment.

Relevant Planning History
None relevant

Site Constraints
The site is located outside of the village framework and in the open countryside. It is located in the Green Belt. There is a public footpath located 400m west of the site. A tree preservation order runs along the western boundary. The site lies in Flood Zone 1.
Planning Assessment

Principle of Development
Applications are to be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The adopted Development plan comprises South Cambridgeshire Core Strategy DPD, 2007 and Development Control Policies DPD, 2007.

The emerging Local Plan comprises the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, Proposed Submission Version, July 2013 and associated Policies Map. This plan has not yet been adopted and is going through independent assessment by an Inspector therefore limited weight can be attached to the policies contained therein.

As the application is in the Green Belt, the main issues are:

- Whether the proposal is inappropriate development for the purposes of the framework
- The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt
- If the proposal is inappropriate development, whether the harm to the Green Belt by reasons of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it

Policy ST/1 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy states that a Green Belt will be maintained around Cambridge. Amongst other things, the purposes of the Cambridge Green Belt are to maintain and enhance the quality of Cambridge’s setting and to prevent communities in the environments of Cambridge from merging into one another and with the city. Moreover, in defining the Green Belt, regard will be given to the special character of Cambridge and its setting, including amongst other things, the distribution, physical separation, setting, scale and character of Green Belt villages and a landscape that retains a strong rural character.

Policy GB/1 of the Development Control Policies DPD states that there is a presumption against inappropriate development in the Cambridge Green Belt as defined on the Proposals Map. The supporting text to Policy GB/1 states that the main purpose of the Green Belt is to keep land open by placing a permanent and severe restriction on inappropriate development; therefore most types of development can only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Such exceptional circumstances will be regarded as Departures from the Development Plan and will only be permitted where other considerations outweigh harm to the Green Belt. It is not sufficient justification to overrise Green Belt policies because a development would be inconspicuous or would not harm the site or locality.

Section 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) seeks to protect Green Belt land. Paragraph 80 of the NPPF sets out that the Green Belt serves 5 purposes, including to check unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas, to safeguard the countryside from encroachment and to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

Paragraph 87 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that inappropriate development, is by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Paragraph 88 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
Paragraph 89 of the NPPF states that a Local Planning Authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt subject to a number of exceptions. One of these exceptions are buildings for agriculture and forestry. Therefore the development would be considered an exception in accordance with paragraph 89 of the NPPF 2012. It would also comply with policy DP/7 of the adopted LDF 2007 that states outside village frameworks only development for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, outdoor recreation and other uses which need to be located in the countryside will be permitted.

Information was provided through the pre-application on the need of the business to expand. The current buildings do not provide sufficient storage capacity and despite maintenance are not able to support modern farming. Therefore it is accepted that new buildings would be required. The intensification of the business on the existing site could cause harm to the amenity of surrounding neighbours and therefore this is why a new site is proposed. The information provided gives justification of the scale of the development which would also need to be submitted as part of any formal application.

**Impact on the open countryside and Green Belt**

Whilst the group of agricultural buildings would result in a loss of openness and visual intrusion into the Green Belt and countryside as it is currently open and undeveloped. This is within the context that the development is considered to be in keeping with the character and appearance of Fowlmere Road that comprises similar scale groups of agricultural buildings set within open arable land which was confirmed through a site visit.

The Landscape officer commented on the landscape effect in accordance with policy NE/4 of the adopted LDF 2007:

Magnitude of landscape effects and the judgement of size/scale, duration and reversibility of landscape effects - medium. This is due to the:
- Introduction of some unnatural features into the landscape – 5m high bund
- The retention and protection of the existing TPO, a key feature of the landscape.
- The effects would be confined to the development site.

**Existing views and visual amenity**

Sensitivity of visual receptors – medium / high. This is due to:
- People engaged in outdoor recreation whose attention is focused on the landscape particularly using the public right of way.
- Residential / visitors in communities where views and landscape setting are particularly valued.
- Cyclists using the cycle byways on roads in predominately rural landscapes.

**Visual effects**

Magnitude of visual effects and the judgement of size/scale, duration and reversibility of visual effects - medium. This is due to the
- Partial loss of, or alteration to the views, and /or the addition of new features in the view that will be notable or would contrast from the existing view.
- The new elements become a noticeable addition to a particular view or views.
- Partial or short duration views of new elements would be experienced from different viewpoints

**Mitigation Works**

Measures to mitigate potential landscape and visual impacts can avoid potential adverse effects, or reduce the scale of unavoidable effects. Ideally, mitigation works can create beneficial effects in the landscape.

The applicant has indicated some potential measures to mitigate the landscape and visual impacts. These included the following:
- An earth bund (not characteristic to the landscape)
• Boundary planting
Applicant to consider further mitigation works which would be a sympathetic treatment in keeping with the local characteristics and help the integration of the new development into the surrounding landscape.

Final statement of likely significant landscape and visual effects
Following mitigation works the predicted level of landscape and visual impact is therefore assessed by considering the sensitivity of the landscape resource or visual receptor, the magnitude of change (including duration and reversibility) and professional judgement at varied stages through the process.
Landscape – Slight adverse. Some elements of the proposed changes would be uncharacteristic of the study area.
Visual – Slight adverse. The proposed changes to the views would be perceptible and potentially uncharacteristic in the existing view.

Opportunities for the applicant to consider within the detailed design
- I would recommend that the applicant undertakes a landscape appraisal to assess and address the predicted level of landscape and visual impact.
- Removal of the bund – uncharacteristic within the local landscape
- Undertake further mitigation works following appraisal.
- Extend and infill the eastern and western boundary hedgerow
- Ensure new agricultural buildings, such as large storage sheds, are sited and designed to reduce their apparent mass, minimising their impact on the wider landscape by the appropriate use of texture, colour and planting.

The Urban Design Officer had no objections to the layout, scale, form, massing and design of the buildings subject to appropriate mitigation through substantial hedge/tree planting to screen the buildings. At the meeting I raised concerns the Parish Council had when I met with them on 05 June 2017 which was the impact on the landscape as a result of the development which needs to be considered.

Highway Safety
The development would result in an increase in traffic generation to and from the site. I understand from our meeting that you have been discussing the application with the Local Highways Authority who would provide a view in relation to the impact of the development upon the capacity and functioning of the public highway.

A Transport Statement would be required to be submitted with any application to demonstrate that the development would not have any adverse impact on highway safety. A Travel Plan may also be required to encourage staff to use sustainable modes of transport in accordance with policy TR/3 of the adopted LDF 2007.

The Parish Council were also concerned about the traffic impact on the junction with Fowlmere Road and Cambridge Road. This would need to be discussed with the Local Highways Authority as to whether this would be a concern.

Trees and Ecology
A Tree Preservation Order covers the trees along the western boundary of the site. These trees should be retained and protected during the course of any development. A biodiversity assessment will be required to consider whether the site provides a habitat for protected and priority species including if any mitigation would be required in taking forward any development in accordance with policy NE/6 the LDF Development Control Policies DPD adopted July 2007
**Neighbour Amenity and Noise**
Environmental Health have commented on the noise assessment submitted with the pre-application and commented on the impact from noise and environmental pollution. No significant objections were raised in terms of the impact on neighbouring amenity with regard to noise in accordance with policy DP/3 and NE/15 of the adopted LDF 2007.

**Drainage and Flood Risk**
With regard to drainage policy NE/9 Water and Drainage Infrastructure seeks to ensure there is appropriate drainage infrastructure both through surface and foul water drainage in relation to proposed development which should be incorporated into the scheme. The site is situated in Flood Zone 1 (low risk). The development may increase surface water run-off at the site. A Flood Risk Assessment is required to be submitted with any application to demonstrate that the proposal would not increase the risk of flooding to the site and surrounding area in accordance with policy NE/11 of the adopted LDF 2007.

**Renewable Energy and Water Conservation**
The incorporation of solar panels and rainwater harvesting would be supported. In further discussion with the Principal Planner you would need to ensure the solar panels provide 10% towards the total predicted energy requirements of the development to comply with Policy NE/3 of the adopted LDF 2007 and that rainwater harvesting is a suitable water conservation measure in accordance with Policy NE/12 of the adopted LDF 2007.

**Health Impact Assessment and Other Matters**
Policy DP/1 of the adopted LDF 2007 states that all planning applications for major development are required to submit a sustainability appraisal and a Health Impact Assessment to demonstrate that they have addressed sustainability issues, including impact on health in their development proposals. Major development in the case of this pre-application is defined by where the floor area to be created is more than 1000m2 or more, or the site area is 1 hectare or more. Given the nature of the development the Environmental Health Officer has advised carrying out the screening approach as outlined in the Supplementary Planning Document.

As this application is supported in principle this scheme could be presented to the Design Enabling Panel, a service we provide to enable further guidance on the design and landscape impact.

**Conclusion**
In my informal opinion the principle of relocating the grain store to a new site in the Green Belt would represent an exception in the Green Belt and would be accepted under paragraph 89 of the NPPF 2012. There are concerns about the impact of the development on the open countryside through landscape harm which would need to be mitigated.

This is subject to the other material planning considerations being addressed which include highway safety, trees and ecology, neighbour amenity and noise, drainage and flood risk, renewable energy and water conservation and health impact assessment.

**Please Note**
Validation requirements:
The table in Appendix 1 details the documentation required to validate an outline and full application which would also require the correct fee.

Applicants are encouraged to submit planning applications through the national Planning Portal. This can be found using the following link [http://www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)
If you are submitting documents in CD form or in electronic format to be loaded into the Public Access System on our website, please note that in order to ensure complete compatibility with our on-line system, all documents must be under 5MB in size. They should also be correctly orientated and are either in Adobe pdf or Microsoft Word format.

Failure to do so, will delay validation and registration of your application

Kind Regards

Lydia Pravin

Lydia Pravin
Senior Planning Officer
### Appendix 1 - List of information required to validate an application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Required</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application Form – Full Planning Permission</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Agricultural Dwellings</td>
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<td>Air Quality Assessment</td>
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<td>Biodiversity Survey and Report</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daylight / Sunlight Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design and Access Statement</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drawings: Location Plan, Block Plan, Roofplan, Floor Plans and Elevations</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Statement</td>
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<td>Flood Risk Assessment</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Foul Sewage and Utilities Assessment</td>
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<td>Heritage Statement (including Historical, Archaeological features and Scheduled Ancient Monuments)</td>
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<td>Land Contamination Assessment</td>
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<td>Landscaping Details and Landscape Visual Impact Assessment</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Lighting Assessment</td>
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<td>Noise and Vibration Assessment</td>
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<td>Open Space Assessment</td>
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<td>Parking Provision</td>
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<td>Photographs / Photomontages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Obligation(s) / Draft Heads of Terms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning Statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renewable Energy Statement</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Surface Water Drainage</td>
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<td>Sustainability Statement and Health Impact Assessment</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telecommunication Development - Supplementary Information</td>
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<td>Town Centre Uses - Evidence to Accompany Applications</td>
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<td>Transport Statement</td>
<td>YES</td>
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<td>Travel Plan</td>
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<td>Tree Survey / Arboricultural Survey</td>
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<td>Waste Design Guide Toolkit</td>
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<td>Waste Management Audit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Conservation Audit and Strategy</td>
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**Disclaimer:**
The above advice is given for purposes relating to the Town and Country Planning Acts and for no other Council function.

The advice is given without reference to statutory or other consultees, except where stated. The comments of such consultees may affect the advice given.

The advice is given on the basis of the information that you have supplied. The Local Planning Authority will not be responsible for any errors resulting from inaccuracies in that information.

The Local Planning Authority is required to perform within government targets with respect to processing planning applications. You are therefore advised to conclude your pre-application discussions before submitting a planning application.

The advice given may subsequently be affected by external factors (e.g. new government guidance, local appeal decisions) which could result in a different view being subsequently put forward.

Planning policies are periodically reviewed and updated. The advice given relates to the policy framework at the time the advice was given.

The Local Planning Authority seeks to provide the best advice possible on any enquiry received. However, the advice given does not bind the authority to any particular decision on any planning application that may subsequently be submitted which will be the subject of the publicity and consultation.

Planning permission does not override the need to obtain any necessary approvals under the Building Regulations, Party Wall Act or any other relevant legislation. Separate approval may also be required in other areas, for example, restrictive covenants, shared agreements, easements, rights of way etc.

Any advice given in relation to the planning history of the site, planning constraints or statutory designations does not constitute a formal response under the provisions of the Local Land Charges Act 1975.

The Council positively encourages applicants to enter into pre-application discussions but if a major or minor application is submitted without such discussions, the Council may determine the application as submitted without post-submission discussions.

The provisions of The Freedom of Information Act bind the Council, as a public authority, and therefore it should be presumed that information supplied to the Council is likely to be disclosable under the above Act. If you want information to remain confidential, you should state clearly why. Information sent to the Council "in confidence" may still be disclosable under the above Act. Before sending such information you are advised to take legal advice if there are fears that disclosure would prejudice you in some commercial way.