



Great Witchingham Parish Council resolved to object to this planning application at their meeting on July 30th 2026 for the following reasons:

1. The application does not clearly identify the maximum number of occupants proposed for the accommodation. Whilst there are 20 units proposed, there is no indication of the maximum occupancy of each unit or the overall number of residents that could be accommodated. This information is fundamental to assessing the likely impact of the proposal on highways, schools, parking, infrastructure, drainage and local services. The Council therefore considers that the application lacks sufficient information to enable a full assessment of its impacts. Should planning permission be granted, a condition limiting the maximum number of occupants should be imposed.

The Parish Council considers that the proposal represents a significant change in the use of the site within a rural village and has the potential to materially alter the character of the locality. Any change of this scale should be carefully assessed against the objectives of the Broadland Development Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which seek to ensure that development is appropriate to its location and responds positively to local character.

2. The Parish Council does not consider that the highway implications of the proposal have been adequately assessed. The site is accessed directly from the B1067 Fakenham Road via a single-width access, joining a road subject close to a 50mph speed limit. The application has not demonstrated that the existing access arrangements and visibility splays are capable of safely accommodating the likely increase in vehicle movements associated with the proposed use. Norfolk County Council, as the Local Highway Authority, should be satisfied that the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on highway safety, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework

The Parish Council also notes that, during previous large events held at the site, visitors have been advised to exercise particular caution when leaving the premises because of the nature of the access and the speed of traffic on the B1067. This highlights the existing highway constraints, which should be fully considered when assessing the cumulative impact of increased daily vehicle movements.

The proposed use differs significantly from the existing hotel operation. Hotel guests typically generate irregular vehicle movements associated with short-term stays, whereas long-term residential occupation is likely to result in predictable daily journeys to and from work, education and essential services, particularly during morning and evening peak periods. In the Parish Council's view, the submitted Transport Statement does not adequately assess this change in travel patterns, the likely increase in peak-hour traffic movements, or whether any highway improvements or mitigation measures would be necessary to ensure the proposal can operate safely.

3. The application proposes 18 additional parking spaces. However, without knowing the intended number of occupants, it is not possible to determine whether this level of parking provision is sufficient. The Parish Council considers the application lacks adequate evidence to justify the proposed parking arrangements. Although sustainable transport options should always be encouraged, the site's rural

location limits realistic alternatives to private car use. Whilst the local bus service is relatively frequent, destinations and journey times restrict its practicality for many employment locations. Cycling is also unlikely to be a realistic option for many residents given the nature and speed of traffic on the B1067. The proposal has therefore not demonstrated compliance with the sustainable transport objectives of the NPPF.

4. The application has not demonstrated that conversion to this form of residential accommodation is the only viable option for the future of the business. No robust viability assessment or business case has been submitted to justify the loss of hotel accommodation. In the absence of such evidence, the Parish Council considers that insufficient justification has been provided for the proposed change of use.

Furthermore, the application has not demonstrated an identified need for this type of accommodation in this rural location. The proposal is remote from major employment areas and relies heavily on private vehicle use, which does not accord well with the sustainable development principles contained within the NPPF.

5. The Parish Council is concerned that, if the proposed use proves unsuccessful, there would be pressure for further changes of use in the future. The application provides little certainty regarding the long-term use of the accommodation, and Members are concerned that this proposal could represent the first stage of a more extensive conversion of the hotel to residential accommodation. Appropriate planning conditions should therefore be considered to control future changes of use.

6. Concerns remain regarding the capacity of the existing foul drainage infrastructure and the potential impact of increased sewage discharge. The application does not demonstrate that existing infrastructure has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed increase in occupancy. The views of the relevant statutory consultees should be carefully considered. Similarly, the application provides limited information regarding the effect of increased occupation on local water supply and infrastructure. The cumulative impact of the proposal should be fully assessed by the appropriate statutory bodies before any decision is made.

7. The Parish Council also has concerns regarding the suitability of the proposed accommodation for long-term residential occupation. Great Witchingham has very limited local services. The village contains only a small convenience shop, which does not provide a full range of fresh food or everyday household goods and a butcher. There are no public houses, cafés, restaurants or other community facilities providing meals or social opportunities within the parish. Occupants would therefore be reliant upon travelling outside the village for many day-to-day needs or alternatively relying upon facilities provided by the hotel itself. This raises questions regarding the sustainability of the proposed location for long-term residential accommodation. The proposal has the potential to place additional demand upon local services, including GP provision and other healthcare facilities. The Parish Council notes that local medical provision is limited, and no assessment has been provided of the likely impact on existing community infrastructure.

8. The proposal would result in the loss of hotel accommodation and would represent an intensification of the site's use. The application does not adequately assess the planning implications of this change.

9. The Parish Council notes that there are already short-term visitor accommodation options available in the locality, including nearby holiday accommodation at Sparham, Felthorpe and Weston Longville. However, the application has not demonstrated a clear need or identified demand for long-term House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) accommodation in this rural location. HMOs are intended to meet the needs of a specific sector of the housing market, and the supporting information does not provide sufficient evidence to justify why this type of accommodation is appropriate in Lenwade or why this location represents a sustainable and suitable site for such a use.

10. Whilst pre-application public consultation may not be a requirement for developments of this nature, the Parish Council notes that there has been no engagement with local residents regarding the proposal. Greater community engagement would have assisted in identifying and addressing local concerns.

11. The application contains insufficient information regarding external lighting and the potential impact of the proposal on the surrounding natural environment. The site is located within a rural area that benefits from low levels of artificial light and is known to support bat populations. Any lighting scheme should be fully assessed to ensure compliance with relevant ecological legislation, current best practice guidance and no less than the conditions placed on Roarr. Should planning permission be granted, the Parish Council would expect appropriately worded conditions requiring a bat-sensitive lighting strategy that protects the area's dark skies and biodiversity, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Parish Council also notes that the wider site lies within an area protected by a Tree Preservation Order dating from 1972 and adjoins the River Wensum, a nationally important chalk stream designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The application provides little information on how these important environmental assets will be safeguarded during either the construction phase or the ongoing operation of the development. Given the ecological sensitivity of the site and the surrounding landscape, the Parish Council considers that a robust assessment should be provided demonstrating how protected habitats, mature trees and species will be conserved and enhanced, consistent with the requirements of the NPPF and Broadland District Council's environmental policies.

Furthermore, the Parish Council is aware that the surrounding area supports a wide variety of protected and priority species, including the presence of Great Crested Newts, no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that appropriate surveys have been undertaken where required. The Parish Council therefore requests that the Local Planning Authority is satisfied, through the advice of its ecological consultees, that sufficient ecological surveys have been completed and that appropriate mitigation measures are secured before any development proceeds.

12. The Parish Council considers that there is insufficient clarity regarding the relationship between the proposed HMO accommodation and the continuing hotel operation. Long-term residential accommodation would ordinarily be expected to include access to facilities such as kitchens, laundry and communal living space. The submitted plans indicate bedroom accommodation only, raising questions regarding how the accommodation would function in practice and whether it is suitable for its intended use. Greater clarity is required regarding the management of the site, the relationship between the two uses and the future operation of both elements should circumstances change

13. The application provides only limited information regarding the ongoing management of the development, including arrangements for responding to complaints, site management, resident supervision and maintaining residential amenity for neighbouring occupiers.

The Parish Council is concerned that the cumulative impact of the proposal would alter the character of the village through increased vehicle movements and additional pressure on local infrastructure and services. Paragraphs within the NPPF make clear that development should be supported by appropriate infrastructure and should contribute to creating sustainable communities. The Local Planning Authority should therefore consider whether planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (where they meet the statutory tests) or the Community Infrastructure Levy, if applicable, are necessary to mitigate the impact of the development. The Parish Council considers that, should permission be granted, the developer should make an appropriate contribution towards infrastructure required to support the proposal.

For the reasons set out above, Great Witchingham Parish Council objects to this application. The Council considers that insufficient information has been submitted to enable the Local Planning Authority to fully assess the likely impacts of the proposal, particularly in relation to occupancy levels, highway safety, sustainability, infrastructure capacity, drainage, ecological impacts and the long-term management of the site. As submitted, the proposal has not demonstrated that it accords with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly those relating to achieving sustainable development, promoting sustainable transport, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, and ensuring that development is supported by appropriate infrastructure. The Council also considers that the proposal should be carefully assessed against the adopted Broadland Development Plan policies relating to sustainable development, the rural economy, design, residential amenity, transport and infrastructure, with due regard to the advice of Norfolk County Council as Highway Authority, Lead Local Flood Authority and other statutory consultees where appropriate.

In the absence of sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would not result in unacceptable impacts on the rural character of Great Witchingham or on local infrastructure and services, the Parish Council respectfully requests that planning permission be refused.