Ref 25/01971/FUL Full planning application for the construction of 65no. residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated landscaping, access arrangements, parking, and infrastructure.

At the Planning, Contract and Works Committee meeting held on Thursday 9 April 2026, Prudhoe Town Council AGREED to OBJECT the application for the following reasons:-

Highway Safety and Traffic Impact

Prudhoe Town Council is deeply concerned about the implications of this development for highway safety and the cumulative increase in local traffic. The proposed site access arrangements will introduce additional vehicle movements onto roads that already experience congestion during peak hours, particularly in and around key junctions and residential streets.

There is a significant risk that the increased volume of traffic will:

- Compromise the safety of vulnerable pedestrians, cyclists, and road users
- Exacerbate delays and queuing in the local road network
- Place additional pressure on already constrained access routes, which are not designed to accommodate the volume of traffic associated with a development of this scale. This is of particular concern in relation to congestion caused by heavy construction traffic, as well as the prolonged period required for deliveries on a site of this size, given the already overburdened highway network.

Highfield Middle School and St Matthew's Catholic Primary School are located directly opposite the proposed development site. These schools generate significant pedestrian activity during morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times. At present, there is no formal pedestrian crossing or traffic-calming infrastructure in place, nor is there a school crossing patrol officer to guide children and families safely across the road.

With 65 additional dwellings, it is reasonable to anticipate not only more vehicle movements but also more children walking to and from school. Without the implementation of safe pedestrian routes, such as a controlled crossing, and without personnel to manage crossing safety, the risk to young pedestrians will increase significantly.

The local road infrastructure lacks the capacity to accommodate this additional burden without adverse effects on road safety and network efficiency.

A traffic survey was undertaken on 5 January 2026, during a period when both Highfield Middle School and St Matthew's Catholic Primary School had not yet re-opened following the Christmas break. As a result, the data collected is not representative of typical term-time conditions and is therefore considered unreliable for assessment purposes.

It is therefore requested that the survey be repeated during normal school opening hours in order to obtain accurate, representative data reflective of peak pedestrian and vehicular activity associated with the school environment.

Infrastructure Strain

Prudhoe Town Council is also concerned that the scale of this development will place significant additional strain on existing local infrastructure, which is already operating close to capacity in several key areas.

Key concerns include:

• **Utilities capacity (water, drainage, electricity, and broadband):** Existing services may not have sufficient resilience to accommodate a development of this size without requiring substantial upgrades. Any such works are likely to result in significant disruption and severely impact nearby residents, as well as local schools and surrounding community facilities, during installation and reinforcement periods.

Furthermore, limited evidence has been provided to demonstrate that relevant infrastructure providers have confirmed available capacity or committed to necessary reinforcement works, raising further concerns regarding the deliverability and timing of essential service upgrades.

• **Surface water and foul drainage systems:** The addition of 65 dwellings will increase demand on already constrained drainage networks. Without major upgrades, this risks system overload during peak rainfall events, contributing to localised flooding and environmental stress.

• **Education provision:** The proximity of the site to existing schools raises concerns about increased pupil numbers placing additional pressure on already stretched school capacity, both in terms of physical space and staffing resources.

• **Health and community services:** A development of this scale will generate increased demand for GP services, dental care, and wider community health provision, at a time when local NHS services are already experiencing significant waiting times and capacity challenges.

• **Waste management and public services:** Increased household numbers will add pressure to waste collection services, recycling infrastructure, and wider council service delivery, without clear mitigation or enhancement proposals.

Overall, Prudhoe Town Council is not satisfied that the application adequately demonstrates that the existing infrastructure network can sustainably support the proposed development without causing unacceptable strain or requiring unconfirmed upgrades.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) – Effects on Existing Surrounding Area
The secondary SuDS feature along the southern boundary, if not appropriately designed, adequately maintained, or demonstrably effective, presents several potential risks to an area that already experiences issues with flooding:

- **Residual flood risk** if systems are undersized or fail during extreme weather events
- **Overland flow routes** could direct water toward neighbouring properties or roads if poorly designed
- **Long-term maintenance issues**, as SuDS require ongoing management to remain effective (and failure to maintain can lead to system breakdown)
- **Ground conditions constraints**, where infiltration SuDS may not work effectively due to soil type or high groundwater levels

Previous Planning Decisions

Previous planning decisions for this site applications have been refused, in 1974 the proposal for 66 houses, in 2001 construction of four dwellings, and in 2004 construction of two dwellings.

These refusals demonstrate a consistent and long-standing position that development of this nature is inappropriate for this location, due to its adverse impact on the established character and setting of the surrounding area.

Prudhoe Town Council therefore urges that this application be consistent with the prior decisions and to give due weight to the material considerations previously identified. These historic objections remain highly relevant and must inform the determination of the current application.

Impact on Conservation and the Environment

The proposed development would have a significant and detrimental impact on the local environment, natural landscape, and the limited green infrastructure within Prudhoe. The site currently plays a valuable role in maintaining ecological balance and supporting local biodiversity.

Key concerns include:

- **Loss of greenfield land and open space**: The development would result in the irreversible loss of one of the few remaining undeveloped green areas in the town. This land provides important visual relief within the urban landscape and contributes to residents' health and wellbeing by offering natural views and proximity to open space.

- **Reduction in biodiversity:** The development would destroy or fragment existing habitats, reducing biodiversity and diminishing the area's ecological value.

- **Surface water drainage and flood risk**: The conversion of permeable greenfield land to impermeable surfaces (roads, pavements, rooftops) will increase surface water runoff, placing additional pressure on local drainage systems. Prudhoe already experiences surface water issues in certain areas, and further development of this kind risks exacerbating localised flooding.

- **Pressure on limited green space in the town**: Prudhoe has few accessible green spaces available for recreation and environmental enhancement. The loss of this site would further reduce the town's natural assets at a time when access to green areas is increasingly recognised as vital for community wellbeing and climate resilience. Once lost, these spaces cannot be recovered.