



Delegated Report

Householder Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20240289

Location: Earl House Priestwood Road Meopham Gravesend

Description: Erection of a new canopy porch, fenestration alterations, construction of a hip roof dormer in the rear roof slope and installation of solar panels within the rear roof slopes.

Applicant: Mr & Mrs Dickens

Site Visit Date: 20th May 2024

Submitted Documents/Plans

Planning Application Form;
Planning, Design & Access Statement;
Site Location Plan;
Block/Site Plan;
Drawing No. PDS/EH.06 Rev C – New Scheme Proposed Floor Plans and Section Rev C;
Drawing No. PDS/EH/07 Rev C – New Scheme Proposed Elevations Rev C; and
Drawing No. PDS/EH/08 – Existing Floor Plans and Elevations.

Relevant Planning History

Reference	Description	Decision	Decision Date
20221198	Demolition of artists studio, oil store and porch; erection of rear extension and porch; alteration of existing porch with internal alterations	Refused Appeal Dismissed	03.03.2023 02.02.2024
19930282	Erection of a two storey rear extension to form living room with study and bathroom over.	Permitted	02.07.1993
19780717	Erection of 2 storey side and rear extension to form wc lobby kitchen and store on ground floor and bedroom and stair case on first floor	Permitted	31.08.1978
19540090 (TH/6/54/90)	Additions	Permitted	07.04.1954

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (September 2014):

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS12 – Green Infrastructure
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 – Development & Design Principles

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- C13: Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside
- P3 – Vehicle Parking Standards

Paragraph 33 of the NPPF (2023) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2023), the Council will also seek to replace these.

National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

- Section 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- Section 12 – Achieving well-designed and beautiful places
- Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
- Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- 2 - Residential layout guidelines including Housing Standards Policy Statement October 2015 Adopted 1996 – amended June 2020;
- Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standard (2015);
- SPG 4 - KCC Parking Standards (2006);
- Householder Extensions/Alterations Design Guide (2021); and
- Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment (2009).

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

Meopham Parish Council

Meopham Parish Council raises no objection to this application subject to Gravesham Planning being satisfied that the new application was no longer disproportionate to the original dwelling and complied with all necessary local and national guidance and that the addition of the solar panels was not detrimental to the street scene in a green belt location.

Neighbouring properties

Neighbour notification was originally sent to 4 surrounding dwellings and a site notice was displayed on site (under Article 15). The expiry date for the receipt of any comments was 29th April 2024.

No comments have been received.

Officer's Analysis

Site Description

Earl House is an attractive detached two storey dwelling located on the eastern side of Priestwood Road close to the junction with Horns Oak Road and is within the Green Belt. The dwelling is set close to the road and there is a low hedge to the frontage. The dwelling was formerly known as the Squirrels and the original building dates from the late 19th century when it appears to have comprised two small cottages.

The application dwelling externally originally comprised a ground floor of white painted brickwork and with black weatherboarding to the first floor. It has a plain tiled roof. At the time of the officer site visit,

scaffolding had been erected and works commencing.

The property has been extended at the rear and there is a cat slide roof at the rear with 3 large roof lights in the roof slope. There is a small timber porch with a shallow lean-to slate roof at the front (western side). There is an open porch on the north side.

Property Prior to Work Starting



Property As Of 20.05.24



There is a timber detached single garage with metal roof on the south side and behind it and in the rear garden another timber shed building termed an artist's studio. There is parking in front of the garage and parking for 2-3 cars on a hardstanding between the garage and the south side of the dwelling.

Property Prior to Work Starting



Property As Of 20.05.24



Most of the rear garden is lawned and there are a number of trees to the boundaries. There are also further outbuildings behind a hedge to the rear of the back garden including a large and a small timber shed and a Wendy house.

To the south and fronting Priestwood Road are a pair of two storey cottages, Greyridge Cottage and Priestwood Cottage, while to the north and located on the corner with Chandlers Road is Wentways, an extended two storey thatched roof cottage set in large grounds. There is woodland opposite the site on the corner of Priestwood Road and Horns Oak Road. At the rear the property adjoins former agricultural land running southwards, now in the ownership of Priesthood a chalet bungalow further to the south.

The application site is outside of any rural settlement and is within the Green Belt and just to the south of the Kent Downs National Landscape.

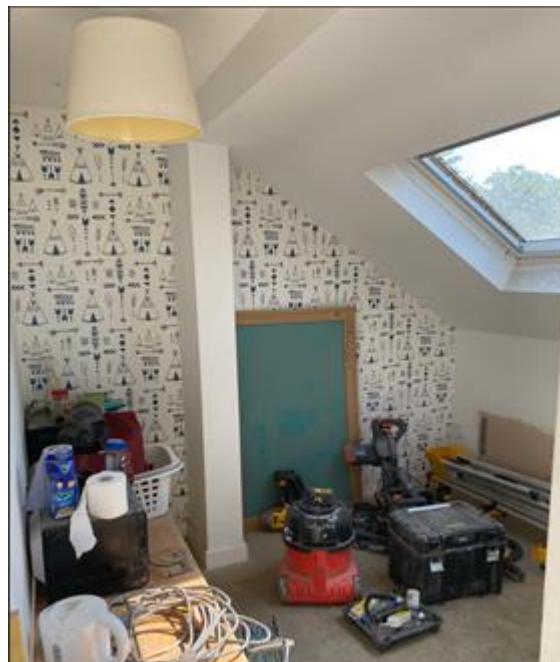
Priestwood Road is a narrow single width country lane with limited passing places (often available only where there are vehicle accesses from dwellings on to the road) and with poor forward visibility edged by trees and hedging.

Proposal

The application seeks to erect a new canopy porch, fenestration alterations, construction of a hip roof dormer in the rear roof slope and installation of solar panels within the rear roof slopes.

The submitted plans show that the ground floor will not increase in size and the extent of the works is the change in layout only. Currently the ground floor consists of kitchen, dining room and study at the front with wc and lounge at the rear with two stairwells to the first floor. The change in layout would consist of a bedroom, lounge and study at the front, new entrance hall, plant room and kitchen/dining area at the back with the middle stairwell being changed to a utility room and the rear stairwell being retained only.

The first floor plan currently consists of three bedrooms at the front and two bathrooms within the rear roofslope. The proposal would facilitate the enlargement of one of the bedrooms with one of the bathrooms being an en-suite and the other bathroom being a family bathroom. The proposed dormer would increase the head room of the en-suite and bathroom. The existing first floor plan shows an internal floor area (excluding the rear stairwell) of 62.47m². The proposed first floor plan shows the same internal floor area as the existing and therefore no increase in overall floor area. The proposed sectional plans show an increase in internal headroom in the en-suite and bathroom to 1.77m. The existing height are shown in the following photos:



The proposed rear dormer would measure 22.47m wide, 6.74m in height to the eaves and 13.3m to the ridge with a hip roof. It would be inset from the side by 1.13m and from the eaves by 910mm. The angle of the hip would follow that of the existing catslide.

The existing open porch with dwarf wall on the north east facing side elevation would be replaced with an open canopy porch that would project a further 560mm and be 1.19m wider than the existing. However there would be no dwarf wall and would be an open canopy design with no increase in internal footprint of the dwelling.

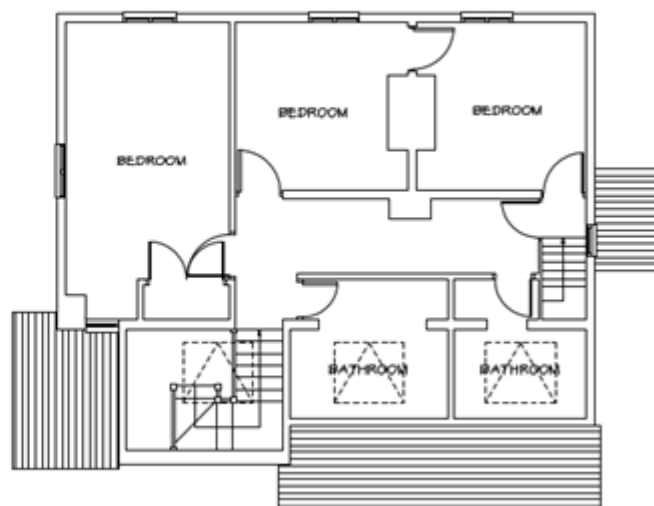
In terms of fenestration alterations, the rear single door would be removed. On the south west facing side elevation there would be an additional smaller ground floor window and a single door would replace the window to access the new hall. The rear rooflights would be removed and replaced with 9no. solar panels on the original roofslope and 2no. solar panels on the proposed dormer roof. There would be no alterations to the front of the property.

The existing and proposed floor plans and elevations are shown below:

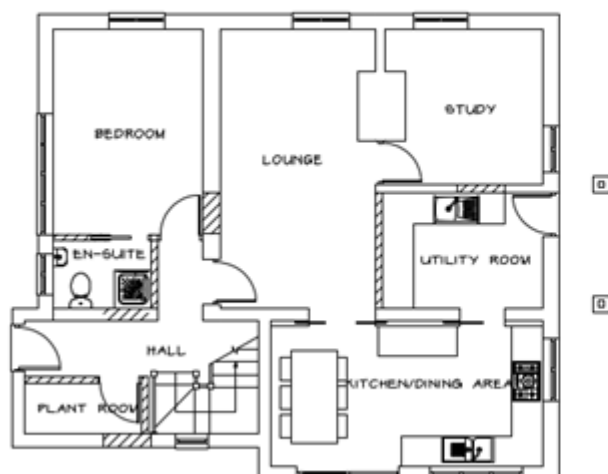
EXISTING GROUND FLOOR



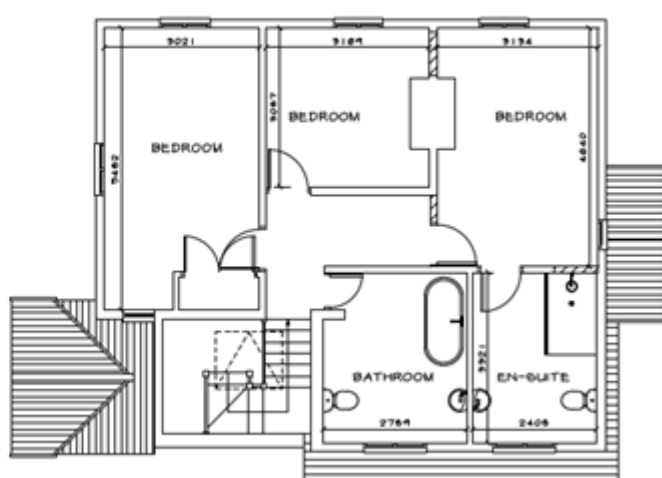
EXISTING FIRST FLOOR

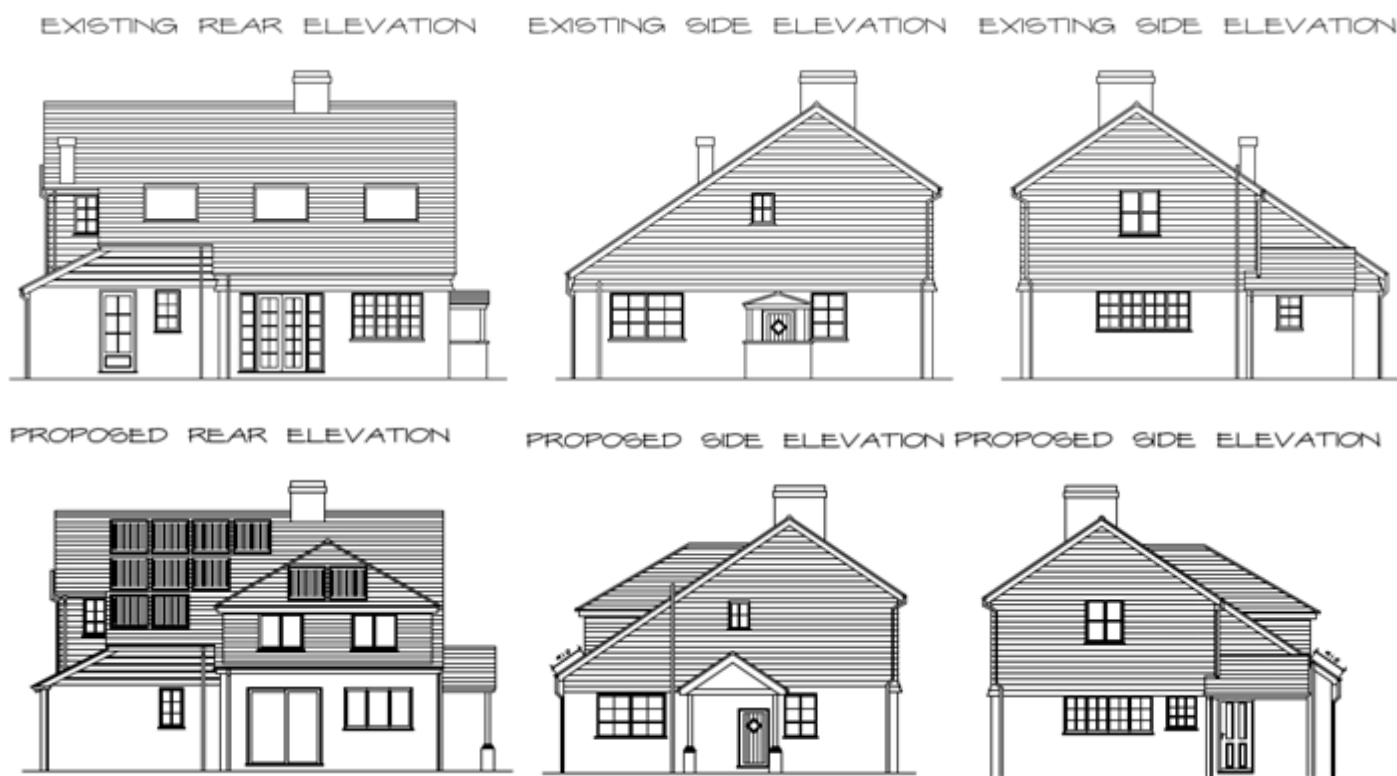


PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR



PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR





The principle issues in the assessment of the application are:

- Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt;
- Effect on the openness of the Green Belt;
- Very Special Circumstances;
- Character and Appearance including the effect of the proposal on landscape character;
- Impact on Occupier Amenity
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity;
- Parking and Highway Safety;

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt

The application site is located within the Green Belt where inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances (Paragraph 152 of the NPPF (2023)).

Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2023) states that when considering any planning application, 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 resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2023) states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

- a) buildings for agriculture and forestry;
- b) the provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use) for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments; as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Green Belt and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it;
- c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building;**
- d) the replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;

- e) limited infilling in villages;
- f) limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan (including policies for rural exception sites); and
- g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:
 - not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or
 - not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.

In this case point (c) is relevant. Any extension to the property must not result in disproportionate additions over and above the original building.

Saved Policy C13 (LPFR) states that extensions to dwellings will be considered on their merits but the Council will expect the following criteria to be satisfied:-

- (i) The existing dwelling must be an “original dwelling”* in permanent use as a dwelling.
- (ii) There will be an overall limit of one third of the gross floor area of the original dwelling (measured externally) prior to any later extension or alteration, unless the increased floorspace has no overall effect on the existing bulk and appearance of the dwelling.
- (iii) Those extensions which provide essential basic amenities such as a bathroom, toilet or kitchen, which are currently not available or are clearly inadequate, will normally be permitted.**
- (iv) The extension shall not be in a form which would facilitate the future formation of a separate residential curtilage.
- (v) The dwelling to be enlarged must have sufficient curtilage to accommodate the extension without undue visual intrusion into the open countryside.
- (vi) The appearance, massing, scale, form and materials of any extension shall be appropriate to the existing dwelling and the Green Belt setting.
- (vii) Proposals for domestic garages and for other outbuildings will be considered on their individual merits but will be required to be well designed, discreetly sited and subservient to the scale of the main dwelling on the plot.

In this case point (iii) is relevant. An extension which provides essential basic amenities such as a bathroom which are inadequate. This was substantiated by the Inspector within the recent Planning Appeal Decision Notice (APP/K2230/D/23/3322888 – attached as Appendix 1) which stated in paragraph 13 that *‘the existing first-floor bathroom at the rear of the building has limited headroom across much of its area, and I agree therefore that it is inadequate in the policy’s terms’*.

The plans submitted to the Council in 1978 (ref 19780717) show the following as the existing plans. There was a small lobby and wc at ground floor at the rear. It can be construed that this is the original floor space, thus as the **original building as at 1 July 1948**.

Based on those plans the ‘original’ dwelling (formerly two separate cottages) and taking into account the ground floor south side extension and the rear (east side) lobby would mean a dwelling of circa 65m² at ground floor and 39m² at first floor, as measured externally and 104m² in total.

The 1977 application added a first-floor bedroom on the south side and a larger lobby and wc plus staircase. This amounted to circa 15m² (enlarged ground floor lobby and wc and first floor staircase) and 19.0m² at first floor (bedroom), thus 34m², or as a percentage around a 32% increase.

The 1993 application for a rear ground floor living room and a first-floor study bathroom added 17.3m² and 9.8m² (useable floor space) respectively thus a further 27m² **and thus over a 58% cumulative increase**.

This current proposed dormer does not result in any additional floorspace, but increases the existing internal head height to 1.77m to create more usable space within the existing bathrooms.

Therefore the proposal would not exceed the one third limit (33%) over what is existing.

Although an increase in floorspace is a useful indicator, it is only one measure of the impact of a development and other factors that are taken into account in determining whether a proposal is proportionate are its footprint and volume compared to the original building and whether its scale, mass and height is subservient to the original building.

The application seeks to add a rear dormer which will provide additional headroom for the existing bathrooms. The dormer is of a hip roof design which roofslope falls in line with the existing catslide. Whilst the dormer is large, it only sits within a portion of the rear roofslope and has been set in from the side and the eaves significantly to be subservient to the existing rear roofslope.

As such, it is considered that the proposed dormer would respect the character of the property and would not significantly increase the volume of the property. Whilst it is acknowledged that the original property has already been extended, the proposal would improve the basic amenities of the property.

The proposal would therefore be an appropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with Policy CS02 (LPCS), saved Policy C13 (LPFR) and Section 13 (NPPF, 2023).

Effect on the openness of the Green Belt

Paragraph 142 of the NPPF (2023) states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open.

The proposal would not increase the footprint of the property, with the only increase being a modest enlargement to the existing canopy porch. As such, the proposal would not add to significantly to the built form of the dwelling and would not add any internal floorspace over and above the existing dwelling. The dormer would sit in the existing roofslope and would be set in from both the side boundary and eaves. The proposal is therefore considered to not have an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Very Special Circumstances

Very Special Circumstances

The development comprises of an appropriate development as defined by the NPPF (2023). Paragraph 153 requires that:

“When considering any planning application, 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 resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.”

Whether the development causes any other harm and whether there are any other relevant considerations to balance the overall planning argument, should now be considered.

As previously stated, and agreed by The Planning Inspector, the existing bathrooms are inadequate in terms of headroom and the proposed dormer seeks to address this. It is therefore considered that the proposal is acceptable and there are ‘very special circumstances’.

Character and Appearance including the effect of the proposal on landscape character

The application site is located in the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Areas and as such, Policy CS12 (LPCS) is relevant. This policy states that the overall landscape character of the Borough will be conserved, restored and enhanced and that the Gravesham Landscape Character Assessment will be taken into account in determining applications.

In relation to the Harvel Wooded Downs Landscape Character Area the document highlights that the key

landscape characteristics, Varied topography with steep valley sides and plateaux, Ancient woodland, chestnut coppice and small paddocks and pasture, Traditional historic settlement of Harvel set around village green, Occasional traditional farmsteads and Haphazard mosaic of residential plots and small holdings set within the woodland. It states that the overall condition of the landscape is moderate and has a moderate sensitivity.

The site itself contains a dwelling and three outbuildings. The proposed development would not result in a significant increase of built form of the dwelling as the dormer would sit within the existing roofslope and would not increase the external footprint of the dwelling and as such it would not extend the level of built development on the plot and in the wider area. It is therefore considered that there would not be an adverse impact on the landscape character. As such, the proposal would be in accordance with Policy CS12 (LPCS) and Section 15 of the NPPF (2023).

In design terms the dormer would be set in from the side boundary, the eaves and the set down from the ridge and its hip roof would follow the line of the existing catslide. As such it is considered to be a subservient addition that would not dominate the existing roof and would be in keeping with the scale or character of the host dwelling.

In respect of character and appearance including landscape character it is therefore considered the proposal is in accordance with Policy CS19 (LPCS) and Section 12 of the NPPF (2023).

Impact on occupier amenity

The proposed dormer would result in a 4 bedroom property with all the internal rooms complying with the local and national space standards and there would be sufficient outside amenity space for future occupiers.

In respect of the amenity of occupiers the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Impact on neighbouring amenity

Due to the distance of the nearest neighbouring property, to the application site and the siting of the extension, there would be no impact on this property with regards overshadowing or loss of outlook. In respect of neighbouring amenity, the proposal is therefore considered compliant with Policy CS19 (LPCS).

Parking and Highway Safety

As stated the property would be a 4 bedroom dwelling. The application dwelling has a large area of hardstanding with space for two spaces and more therefore the proposal is considered to provide sufficient off-street parking provision for the property and in respect of parking and highways safety the proposal is therefore considered compliant with saved Policy P3 (LPFR).

Balancing Exercise/Conclusion

In this instance, the proposed development would be an appropriate development in the Green Belt and would not result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt or landscape character. The development has been designed to respect the host dwelling and there would be no harm to occupier or neighbouring amenity or parking and highway safety. The proposal would accord with local and national planning policy and is recommended for approval.

(For detailed conditions / reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Amanda Cue	Team Leader:	Richard Hart
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Signed:	<i>A Cue</i>	Signed:	<i>R Hart</i>
Dated:	29 th May 2024	Dated:	29th June 2024