Parish:	**Clenchwarton**	
Proposal:	**Proposed Condenser Unit**	
Location:	**The Barn Station Road Clenchwarton KINGS LYNN PE34 4DH**	
Applicant:	**Mr M Means**	
Case No:	**25/00451/F (Full Application)**	
Case Officer:	**Kirsten Jeavons**	**Date for Determination:** **13 May 2025** **Extension of Time Expiry Date:** **4 August 2025**

Reason for Referral to Planning Committee – Called in by Cllr Bearshaw and deferred from the Planning Committee of 30th June 2025.

Neighbourhood Plan: No

Members Update

The application was deferred during the Planning Committee meeting of 30th June 2025 as additional comments and queries relating to the proposed noise level condition were provided, which required further consideration prior to a decision being made on the application. The additional comments are highlighted in bold throughout the report.

Case Summary

Planning permission is sought for a proposed condenser unit at The Barn, Station Road, Clenchwarton.

Clenchwarton is classified as a Tier 4 Settlement (Key Rural Service Centres) under Policy LP01 of the Local Plan 2021-2040. The application site is located to the west of Station Road and approximately 307m from the A17.

Key Issues

Principle of development
Form and character
Noise and impact on neighbour amenity
Highway Safety
Climate Change
Biodiversity Net Gain
Other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of this application

Recommendation

APPROVE

THE APPLICATION

The application is for a proposed condenser unit at The Barn, Station Road, Clenchwarton.

The red line is located around the area of the condenser unit only and not the adjacent agricultural building. The proposed condenser unit would serve the agricultural building which was approved in June 2023 by Planning Committee under planning reference 22/02214/F, to provide cooling to facilitate the use of the building as a potato store.

The application site is located to the west of Station Road and to the southwest of Clenchwarton. The wider site comprises a detached, agricultural storage building, with associated hardstanding and is surrounded by countryside.

SUPPORTING CASE - Provided by the Agent

This report supports the planning application for installing a condenser unit adjacent to an existing agricultural building. The unit (7.0m x 1.8m x 1.8m) will be positioned on existing hardstanding to support ongoing farm operations, with minimal visual or environmental impact.

Planning Policy Context
The proposal is assessed against the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan 2021-2040 and national policy frameworks, which supports sustainable development in rural areas and economic resilience of agricultural enterprises. Relevant policies include:

- **Policy LP04 (Development in Rural Areas**): Supports appropriately scaled proposals that contribute to the sustainability and diversification of the rural economy.

- **Policy LP14 (Design and Local Distinctiveness):** Encourages high-quality, context-sensitive design that integrates well into its surroundings.

- **Policy LP17 (Environmental Assets) and LP18 (Amenity and Local Environmental Quality):** Require that development avoids adverse impacts on local character, amenity, and the environment.

- **Paragraph 90:** Encourages sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas, including agriculture.

- **Paragraph 94:** Recognises the essential need for modern agricultural infrastructure and support facilities.

- **Paragraphs 173-175:** Relate to planning and flood risk, supporting development that is safe and flood resilient without increasing flood risk elsewhere.

Flood Risk and Drainage

Located in Flood Zone 3, a detailed Flood Risk Assessment (April 2025) confirms:
- No increased runoff or offsite flood risk;
- Use of resilient materials and raised electrical elements;
- Existing flood defences ensure safe access and egress;

Design and Visual Impact

The unit is small in scale, screened by the main building, and will not rise above its roofline. Its siting ensures no adverse effect on the landscape character or views from Station Road.

Amenity Considerations

The site is remote from sensitive receptors. The unit meets acoustic standards and poses no significant noise issues.

Conclusion

This modest proposal:
- Enhances a viable rural enterprise;
- Avoids harm to local character, flood safety, or amenity;
- Aligns with local and national planning policy.

We respectfully request approval of this application in line with the Development Plan and NPPF.

PLANNING HISTORY

25/00645/LDP: Application Withdrawn: 10/06/25 - LAWFUL DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATE-Installation of solar panels onto existing south facing roof - The Barn

22/02214/DISC_A: Discharge of Condition final letter: 24/10/24 - DISCHARGE OF CONDITIONS 4 AND 6 ATTACHED TO PLANNING PERMISSION 22/02214/F - Part retrospective agricultural store - The Barn

22/02214/F: Application Permitted: 05/06/23 - Part retrospective agricultural store - Land W of Kenwick Hall And S of Track

21/01725/F: Application Permitted: 08/12/21 - Construction of new agricultural field access - Land Off Station Road

21/01732/AG: Consent Not Required: 13/12/21 - Agricultural Prior Notification: Steel framed and clad building in modern style of farm buildings - Land Off Station Road

RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

Parish Council: OBJECTS - comment is summarised as:

Concerns are raised regarding this application on the grounds of noise, dust, highway, access and traffic impact on the neighbouring properties. The applicant previously stated that a dryer would not be erected in this area.

CSNN: NO OBJECTIONS - comment is summarised as:

Following confirmation from the agent regarding the site and noise report, I have no objections, however, recommends conditions regarding internal fans being removed from the building, no additional plants or fans and a revised noise management plan approved under 22/02214/DISC_A.

Additional Comments:

The Noise Impact Assessment dated 10 April 2025, ref NIA-12018-25-12265-v1, submitted on 1 May 2025, relative to the proposed condensing unit, considers the components of the condensing unit:
1 no. Bock HGX66e/2070/4 compressor (in an enclosure)
3 no. Ziehl Abegg ZNo80ZIL.GG.V7.P3 fans.

The baseline noise survey carried out from Wednesday 6 to Thursday 7 March 2024 used two monitoring locations representative of Noise Sensitive Receptor 1 (Kenwick Hall, approx. 145m North East) and NSR 2 (Lyndhurst, approx. 203m South). The survey identified background noise levels of 45 dB LA90 (lowest) during the day and 33 dB LA90 overnight representative of NSR1, and 49 dB LA90 (lowest) as a daytime level at NSR2.

The sound power level (noise at source) of the compressor is stated to be 86 dB LWA within the NIA. As it will be housed in a steel enclosure, a conservative reduction of 15 dB has been applied to that figure for the sound reduction of a standard steel plate i.e. resulting in a 71 dB(A) noise emission level. The report advises the manufacturer's data indicates a sound power level for each of the three fans to be 67 dB LAW per fan, based on operating at 500 rpm.

Environmental Noise Solutions Limited have considered the noise propagation from the site to the nearest receptors and our assessment of the potential noise impact to the neighbours has been based on this information. The additional noise comments via a memo (12018 - Memo, dated 2 July 2025) explain clearly that to achieve a 'same as background' noise level, the unit would have to emit (sound power level) noise at 87 dB(A) at source. Including the attenuation provided by the proposed steel enclosure, the unit will be 71 dB(A) at source. Without the attenuation it will still be 1 dB lower.

Based on formulas used for calculating decibels, a doubling of the sound pressure results in a 3 dB increase, and halving it results in a 3 dB decrease. You do not add the decibel values because decibels are a logarithmic scale. You use the 'Nomogram for the addition of decibels' which is a scale with the top line showing the difference in decibels between the levels being added and the bottom line showing the correction in decibels to be added to the higher level. As an example, using this method, adding 71 dB (for the compressor) and 67 dB (for one fan), the difference between these numbers is 4 dB, which gives a correction of approximately 1.5 dB, which is added to the higher sound giving a total noise level of 72.5 dB (71 dB + 67 dB = 72.5 dB).

CSNN has considered all the information supplied to assess impacts on residential amenity and it is the noise consultant's professional opinion that there will be no adverse impact. CSNN have no reason to question the information in the latest NIA and Memo or the results/conclusions with respect to the cumulative impacts of the three fans and compressor combined. Should the NIA or condition not be complied with and complaints from residents are received, CSNN have powers to take action if required.

REPRESENTATIONS

FOURTEEN OBJECTION comments received, comments are summarised as:

- Grain dryers are noisy, dusty and not suitable near residential areas,
- A grain store/dryer was refused two years ago and this application should be too,
- Increase in traffic movement from HGVs, this will cause highway safety impacts and the road is not suitable for the increase in traffic,
- The site is located in Flood Zone 3,
- The application form states that the site area is 74m2, why is the applicant claiming BNG exemption, over 25m2,
- The site plan does not match the noise assessment report,
- The cumulative noise levels from the grain dryer and associated plant could be considerable and cause nuisance to the local residents,
- The current application does not include the existing air vents,
- The application has been changed from a grain dryer to condenser unit, this make no changes the detrimental impacts of the development and does this mean there is an existing grain dryer, which this is to be used with,
- Industrialisation is eroding the rural character of the village,
- Bulk of the dryer and height would overpower the area,
- Applicant has previously stated that there would be no grain dyer,
- Impact the air quality and the lights create unacceptable light pollution throughout the night,
- The noise report does not take into account the A17 between midnight and 5am, and
- Health concerns from dust created by the dryer.

Councillor Bearshaw, comment summarised as:

FAN

The Optimum airflow is 18424 M3/h, with Eta opt at 287 Pascals (Pfs being pressure fluctuation signal and crucial for safe and reliable operation).

Not running the Fan at the optimum speed will result in
1- Temperature inconsistencies,
2- Excessive noise,
3- Increased stress, fatigue resulting in premature failure,
4- Insufficient flow,
5- Higher operational costs
6- Reduced system life span.

Running a fan in the stall characteristic (anything left (Slower) of peak) results in surge and will create resonance and fans should only pass through this region on start up or shut down. Peak for this fan commencing at 15000 RPM. Stall creates strong enough vibration that cracks in the casings and ducting can occur and will occur if ran continuously in the stall region. This is due to rotating stall, where a blade will starve the next of air which then diverts the air and stalls the next. The process continues and the stalled blades rotate around the impeller causing large pressure pulsations particularly when ran at 2/3 optimum speed. If opposite fan blades stall, a frequency is created 2x 2/3 (4/3) which will exacerbate the cracking in an extremely short period.

The quoted 58.0% efficiency will drop further when the fan is connected to ducting and elbows. (Without convergent or divergent ducts which will cause a pressure and temperature decrease and a velocity increase or vice versa for divergent. Which will

further increase noise due to pressure changes on the blades) the resultant being the fan required to run at a higher RPM for given flow and even more noise.

If we take the acoustic graph on page 4, 15000m3/h shows 87 DB and 18424m3/h although not shown would be around 90-91 DB. The 18424m3/h figure is further backed up on the efficiency graph on page 4.

Condenser - The condenser will run 24/7, this includes winter night temperatures of below -10c

It's worth noting here, the Sound power level (Lwa) is the fixed value of a machine, where as the Sound pressure level is dependant on position and environment. So in this case, the bund and building are mitigations in sound pressure travel. The actual recording of the machine prior to any suggested mitigations is 89 DB with a Kwa variation of 2.5 DB's in either direction. So the condenser could be as much as 91.5 DB's at a 1m distance.

Fan= 87 DB @15000 or 90-91DB @ 18424 (the later being the most optimal for fan performance)

Condenser = 89 DB +-2.5 DB (86.5 to 91.5 DB)

KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK LOCAL PLAN 2021-2040

LP18 - Design & Sustainable Development (Strategic Policy)

LP21 - Environment, Design and Amenity (Strategic Policy)

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)
National Design Guide 2021

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The main considerations are:

- Principle of development
- Form and character
- Noise and impact on neighbour amenity
- Highway safety
- Climate change
- Biodiversity Net Gain
- Any other matters requiring consideration prior to determination of the application

Principle of Development:

Paragraph 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) reiterates the requirements of planning law which is that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Clenchwarton is classified as a Tier 4 Settlement (Key Rural Service Centres) under Policy LP01 of the Local Plan 2021-2040 and the relevant policies of the Local Plan to this development are LP18 - Design and Sustainable Development and Policy LP21 - Environment, Design and Amenity.

Form and Character:

The application is for a proposed condenser unit at The Barn, Station Road, Clenchwarton. The condenser unit would be approximately 1.2m deep, 5.9m wide and 2.1m high sited on the north elevation of the agricultural building. The condenser unit would be used in connection with the existing agricultural storage building on site, to cool the facility.

Policies LP18 and LP21 of the Local Plan states that development should respond to the context and character of places in West Norfolk by ensuring that the scale, density, layout, materials and access will enhance the quality of the environment and should respond sensitively and sympathetically to the local settings and pattern of adjacent streets.

The proposed condenser unit would be small in scale and be set approximately 43.6m back from Station Road, well screened by the existing building and earth bund surrounding the site. The proposed unit is therefore considered to be in keeping with the character and form of the existing site and would not cause harm to the visual amenity of Station Road and surrounding countryside.

Overall, the form and character of the proposed condenser unit is considered to be acceptable and would be in accordance with Policies LP18 and LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040.

Noise and Impact on Neighbour Amenity:

The closest neighbouring dwellings to site are Kenwick Hall, situated approx. 145m to the northeast and Lyndhurst, situated approx. 203m to the south. A line of dwellings is located further along Station Road. Due to the small scale of the proposed condenser unit, the proposal would not cause any detrimental impacts from overlooking, overbearing and overshadowing to the surrounding neighbouring dwellings.

The Planning Agent submitted a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) to understand the noise impact of the proposed condenser unit on the local area. Two assessments for the NIA were carried out on two different dates: March 6th and 7th 2025. The Assessment found that the background noise levels were around 45dBL during the daytime and 33dBL in the nighttime. The compressor within the proposed condenser unit would generate around 86dBL, however, reduced to 71dBL as it would be within the steel enclosure of the unit.

Whilst the Community Safety and Neighbourhood Nuisance team initially objected to the proposal on noise impacts, following discussions with the consultants who provided the NIA, CSNN removed their objections subject to a condition for the NIA, removal of an existing fan and permission to be sought from the Local Planning Authority before the installation of any equipment. However, as the agricultural building is not included in the red line of this application and the internal fans benefit from permitted development rights, the conditions requested by CSNN would not meet the test of conditions. Condition 3 of previous application 22/02214/F has already removed permitted development rights for fans, vents or any other mechanical plant for the purpose of drying, ventilation or extraction to be installed on the building without planning permission. The noise management plan approved under application 22/02214/DISC_A relates to the previous development on site and a condition to amended this would also not be enforceable.

Following the application being deferred during the Planning Committee meeting of 30th June 2025, additional noise comments were provided by Cllr Bearshaw, the applicant and the applicant's noise consultant and refrigeration engineer. All of these comments have been taken into consideration and are addressed as follows:

The impact on the surrounding neighbours and residential area has been assessed on all the comments and information received. Cllr Bearshaw has raised concerns regarding the noise levels generated by the condenser unit and fans and the efficiency of their use. The comments were sent across to the applicant and were reviewed by the refrigeration engineer who will be producing, installing and maintaining the condenser unit. The refrigeration engineer has stated that the wrong fans have been referenced and that the fans will not run at full speed as this is not required by the proposed unit and the lower speed will generate a lower level of noise. The noise levels of the condenser and fans will be in accordance with the provided Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) and the noise consultant (Simon Jefferson, Environmental Noise Solutions Limited) provided a noise memo which reiterates the findings of the NIA and the noise impact on the surrounding residential area/ neighbours has been assessed based on the highest noise level of this assessment (87 dB(A)).

All the additional comments received from Cllr Bearshaw, the applicant, the noise consultant and the refrigeration engineer have been reviewed and assessed by our Community Safety and Neighbourhood Nuisance (CSNN) team.

The main aim with considering this application is the potential noise impact at the boundaries of residential receptors. CSNN know the measured background level is 33dB. The additional noise comments via a memo (12018 - Memo, dated 2 July 2025) explain clearly that to achieve a 'same as background' noise level, the unit would have to emit (sound power level) noise at 87 dB(A) at source. Without the attenuation it would be 86dB(A), which is 1 dB lower than this. Including the attenuation provided by the proposed steel enclosure, the unit will be 71 dB(A) at source.

In situations like this, CSNN consider the information supplied in order to assess impacts on residential amenity. CSNN have noted Cllr Bearshaw's comments, however, the noise consultant's professional opinion is that there will be no adverse impact and CSNN have no reason to question the information in the latest NIA and Memo or the results/conclusions with respect to the cumulative impacts of the three fans and compressor combined.

Overall, based on all the information provided and comments received from the CSNN team, the noise level which would be generated by the proposed condenser unit is considered to be low and would not be detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding neighbours. The noise impact assessment submitted with this application and the noise level at source would be conditioned, limiting the noise level generated by the proposed condenser unit to 87 dB Lwa (at source). If this condition is not complied with enforcement action could be taken by our Planning Enforcement Team. Additionally, if a statutory nuisance were to result from the proposed development CSNN have powers to take action if residential complaints are received. The impact on neighbours is therefore considered acceptable and would be in accordance with Policy LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040.

Highway Safety:

The proposal would not result in additional traffic movement to the agricultural building, the proposed condenser unit is to be used in connection with the existing use of the building and to provide cooling to the facility.

In terms of highway safety, the proposal would meet LP13 and LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040.

Climate Change:

In relation to LP06 of the Local Plan 2021-2040, it is not considered to be reasonable or appropriate to require climate change mitigation measures for a development of this scale given that it is for the installation of a small standalone condenser unit. Furthermore, the proposed condenser unit would not generate dust or affect the air quality.

Biodiversity Net Gain:

The applicants have claimed a de minimis exemption from Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The proposed condenser unit would cover approx. 12.6m2 of land and therefore the development would impact less than 25 square metres of non-priority onsite habitat.

Other matters requiring consideration prior to the determination of this application:

During the application process the description of development was changed from a "proposed grain dryer" to a "proposed condenser unit". The application form was incorrectly filled out and an incorrect noise report was submitted, however, the original plans submitted were for the correct proposal (condenser unit). A revised application form and noise report was submitted, and re-consultation was undertaken. Many of the third-party comments and comment from the Parish Council relate to a grain dryer. Whilst they have been included and considered as part of this application, the proposal is for a condenser unit only and the impact of the development has been assessed against this proposal only.

The existing agricultural building is also not included in the red line and therefore the existing vents and lights are not considered as part of this application.

The site is located in Flood Zone 3 and due to the nature of the development, is considered compatible development in this area.

Conclusion:

Overall, the proposed condenser unit would be a small-scale structure, which would be in keeping with the character of the existing agricultural building and being set back from Station Road, screened by the existing landscaping and building, the proposal is considered to not cause detrimental harm to the visual amenity of the street scene and the countryside. The proposal would also not cause detrimental impact to the surrounding neighbours or highway safety concerns.

The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable and in accordance with LP18 and LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040 and the NPPF 2024.

RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE subject to the imposition of the following condition(s):

1 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

1 Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004.

2 Condition: The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans, Drawing numbers:

- 22-P19-PL200A - EXISTING AND PROPOSED PLANS AND ELEVATIONS (Received 16/05/25)

2 Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3 Condition: The noise level generated by the condenser unit herby permitted shall not exceed 87 dB Lwa (at source) and the development shall be constructed in full accordance with the Noise Impact Assessment written by S.Jefferson MSC, MIOA, dated 10th April 2025.

3 Reason: In the interests of the amenities of the locality in accordance with Policy LP21 of the Local Plan 2021-2040 and the principles of the NPPF.