THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1RL

PLANNING COMMITTEE

NOTICE AND AGENDA

For a meeting to be held on Thursday, 19 November 2026 at 7.30 pm in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth WD3 1RL.

Members of the Planning Committee:-

Councillors:

Chris Whately-Smith (Chair)
Oliver Cooper
Stephen Cox
Raj Khiroya
Chris Mitchell
Elinor Gazzard (Vice-Chair)
Debbie Morris
Reena Ranger OBE
Tom Smith

Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
Wednesday, 11 November 2026

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public on agenda items at Planning Committee meetings. Details of the procedure are provided below:

For those wishing to speak:
Members of the public are entitled to register and identify which item(s) they wish to speak on from the published agenda for the meeting. Those who wish to register to speak are asked to register on the night of the meeting from 7pm. Please note that contributions will be limited to one person speaking for and one against each item for not more than three minutes.

In the event of registering your interest to speak on an agenda item but not taking up that right because the item is deferred, you will be given the right to speak on that item at the next meeting of the Committee.

For those wishing to observe:
Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting. If you wish to observe you can arrive on the night from 7pm.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 any matters considered under Part I business only of the meeting may be filmed, recorded, photographed, broadcast or reported via social media by any person.

Recording and reporting the Council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Legislation and the laws of libel and defamation.

The meeting may be livestreamed and an audio recording of the meeting will be made.

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Minutes (Pages 5 - 24)

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on 22 and 28 October 2026.

3. Notice of Urgent Business

Items of other business notified under Council Procedure Rule 30 to be announced, together with the special circumstances that justify their consideration as a matter of urgency. The Chair to rule on the admission of such items.

4. Declarations of Interest

To receive any declarations of interest.

5. 25/2197/OUT – Outline application: Erection of up to 93 dwellings with associated access, parking, amenity space and landscaping (Appearance, Layout, Landscaping and Scale as reserved matters) at Land Adjoining Notley Farm, Bedmond Road, Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire (Pages 25 - 116)

Outline application: erection of up to 93 dwellings with associated access, parking, amenity space and landscaping (Appearance, Layout, Landscaping and Scale as reserved matters) at Land Adjoining Notley Farm, Bedmond Road, Abbots Langley.

Recommendation: that authority is delegated to the Associate Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to grant planning permission following the completion of a S106 agreement securing the Heads of Terms (set out in 9.24 of the report), subject to planning conditions (set out at section 10.1.2) and to make any minor amendments necessary to the Heads of Terms and planning conditions in consultation with the Planning Committee Chair.

6. 26/0849/FUL – Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site comprising 2no. Gypsy/Traveller pitches, each accommodating 2 caravans including no more than 1 static caravan/mobile home, together with the laying of hardstanding and construction of new access at Land at Long Spring, Sarratt Lane, Loudwater, Hertfordshire (Pages 117 - 154)

Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site comprising 2no. Gypsy/Traveller pitches, each accommodating 2 caravans including no more than 1 static caravan/mobile home, together with the laying of hardstanding and construction of new access at Land at Long Spring, Sarratt Lane, Loudwater.

Recommendation: that planning permission be refused.

7. Other Business - if approved under item 3 above

Exclusion of Public and Press

If the Committee wishes to consider any items in private, it will be appropriate for a resolution to be passed in the following terms:

"that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information."

(Note: If other confidential business is approved under item 3, it will also be necessary to specify the class of exempt or confidential information in the additional items).

General Enquiries: Please contact the Committee Team at
committeeteam@threerivers.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1RL

Planning Committee
MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Wednesday, 28 October 2026 from 7.30 – 8.49pm

Present: Councillors Chris Whately-Smith (Chair), Oliver Cooper, Raj Khiroya, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger OBE, Tom Smith, Louise Price and Narinder Sian

Also in Attendance:

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard (Abbots Langley Parish Council)

Officers in Attendance:

Matthew Barnes, Principal Lawyer - Planning
Adam Ralton, Development Management Team Leader
Lucy Smith, Committee and Electoral Services Manager
Scott Volker, Development Management Team Leader

PC198/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Elinor Gazzard, Chris Mitchell and Stephen Cox.

Councillor Louise Price replaced Councillor Elinor Gazzard and Councillor Narinder Sian replaced Councillor Chris Mitchell.

PC199/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Liberal Democrat Group declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 3 (26/1253/FUL – 42 Marlin Square, Abbots Langley) as the agent is a member of the authority and a member of the Liberal Democrat Group.

The Chair informed that Committee that Councillor Jon Tankard had a pecuniary interest in agenda item 3 (26/1253/FUL – 42 Marlin Square, Abbots Langley) as the agent for the application. Councillor Tankard intended to speak on agenda items 4 and 5 but would not join the meeting until item 3 had been concluded.

PC200/26 26/1253/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSION; REMOVAL OF CHIMNEY STACKS; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION; CONSTRUCTION OF PATIO AT 42 MARLIN SQUARE, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 0EG

The application was for construction of single storey side and rear extension; removal of chimney stacks; alterations to the fenestration; and construction of patio at 42 Marlin Square, Abbots Langley.

The Planning Officer provided an update that following publication of the officer report with the agenda for the meeting of 22 October, a letter had been circulated to all Committee Members which detailed the applicant's circumstances and the reasons why permission for the development was being sought. The Planning Officer confirmed that the letter did not contain any material planning conditions to change the officer's recommendation, which remained that the application should be refused.

The applicant spoke in favour of the application.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- Committee Members acknowledged the personal circumstances affecting the applicants, as expressed in their address and representation. However, in response to a question the Planning Officer clarified that any grant of planning permission would relate to the land only and not to any individual. Therefore, personal circumstances were not a material planning consideration. Instead, the Committee was obliged to be satisfied that local planning policies were being adhered to. Comments made by the applicant relating to the lack of space and relative size compared to other properties on the street could be given consideration but needed to be weighed against the statutory requirement to comply with the development plan, which would be given greater weight.

- In response to questions, the Planning Officer clarified that a potential fallback position had been indicated of a smaller extension with a detached outbuilding in the garden. The outbuilding would have a height of no more than 2.5m due to its proximity to the boundaries, and due to its lower height and position would have a different impact. However, it did not form part of the application before the Committee, and the Planning Officer advised that it was not possible to pre-determine or pre-judge whether or not any fallback scheme would be recommended for approval. Further clarification was given that there was scope, should Members consider it necessary, to withdraw permitted development rights for outbuildings as part of any approval for this application. However, should this application be rejected then permitted development rights did exist at the site which would allow construction of outbuildings, subject to such outbuildings not exceeding plot coverage of greater than 50% or exceeding 2.5m in height when located within 2m of the boundary.

- In response to a question the Planning Officer confirmed that officers' concerns about the proposal included overshadowing and loss of light to the neighbouring properties at nos. 40 and 46 arising not only from the impact on rooms within these properties, but also the wall of the extension which extended all the way to the boundaries at a 2.7 metre height, and the depth of the extension, which would result in an overbearing structure with a harmful impact.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Morris seconded, that the application be refused for the reasons set out at section 8 of the officer report. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 5 for, 0 against and 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused for the reasons set out at section 8 of the officer report.

PC201/26 26/1263/RSP – PART RETROSPECTIVE: CONVERSION OF GARAGE INTO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION AND ALTERATIONS TO DRIVEWAY AT 17 EDSON CLOSE, LEAVESDEN, WATFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE WD25 7BX

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard joined the meeting.

The application was part retrospective for conversion of garage into habitable accommodation; alterations to the fenestration and alterations to driveway at 17 Edson Close, Leavesden.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

The agent spoke in favour of the application.

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard of Abbots Langley Parish Council spoke on the application.

Points raised by the speaker in favour of the application included: the proposal would provide two dedicated off-street parking spaces matching the pre-existing parking provision and resulting in no net loss of assigned parking spaces; the design was of high quality, would integrate with the street scene and respected local design precedents; the proposal was compliant with core policies and the policies of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan; and concerns about future use and intensification were speculative.

Points raised by the speaker against the application included: the application lacked a third parking space which was required for a six-bedroom HMO; access and exit from the site by car would involve crossing neighbouring land; the road was already heavily parked and could not accommodate further parking pressure; and the amount of parking required for an HMO meant that the proposal was inappropriate at this site.

In response to the points made by the speaker against the application, it was clarified that whilst the dwelling was being used as a House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) there was no evidence that it housed more than six occupants. An HMO licence application had been submitted and was under consideration by the Council's Environmental Health department; however, the planning application before the Committee did not seek permission for the change of use and accordingly officers had not assessed the suitability of the dwelling for use as an HMO.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member expressed concern about the parking shortfall, noting that this amounted to a half-a-space shortfall when assessed against the current local plan and a two-space shortfall when assessed against the emerging local plan. Whilst only limited weight could be given to the policies in the emerging Local Plan, the Committee Member expressed the view that the weight given to the parking shortfall should be proportionate the pre-existing difficulty of the on-road parking situation in Edson Close which caused difficulties for residents in turning in and out of their driveways and impacted on neighbouring amenity. Given the road safety aspect, significant weight should therefore be given to even the half a space shortfall against the current Local Plan. Furthermore, whilst it was noted that Condition C1 required the driveway to be extended, this was not considered to be sufficient to make the proposed parking arrangements safe. This viewpoint was endorsed by other Committee Members.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that the application be refused for the reason that the resultant shortfall in parking would exacerbate existing on-street parking pressures and lead to concerns in respect of highway safety and neighbouring amenity. Final wording of the full reasons for refusal to be circulated after the meeting.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused for the reason that the resultant shortfall in parking would exacerbate existing on-street parking pressures and lead to concerns in respect of highway

safety and neighbouring amenity. Final wording of the full reasons for refusal to be circulated after the meeting.

PC202/26 26/1321/RSP - PART RETROSPECTIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF A PART SINGLE, PART TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION; LOFT CONVERSION INCLUDING WITH A REAR DORMER AND FRONT ROOF LIGHT; INTERNAL ALTERATIONS; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION; ALTERATIONS TO EXTERNAL MATERIALS; CONVERSION OF GARAGE TO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION AT 10 HYDE LANE, NASH MILLS, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTFORDSHIRE HP3 8RY

The application was part retrospective for construction of a part single, part two storey side extension; loft conversion including with a rear dormer and front roof light; internal alterations; alterations to the fenestration; alterations to external materials; and conversion of garage to habitable accommodation at 10 Hyde Lane, Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead.

The Planning Officer reported that there were two updates. Firstly, amended plans had been received following publication of the officer report which more accurately showed the fenestration within one of the elevations. Condition C1 therefore required updating to reference these amended plans. Secondly, the reason attached to Condition C1 required correction to refer to the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan and not the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan.

A local resident spoke against the application.

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard of Abbots Langley Parish Council spoke on the application.

A representation was also read on behalf of Councillor Elinor Gazzard as ward councillor.

Points raised by speakers against the application included: the high level of objections arising from the public and neighbour consultation; a high number of planning applications in the area causing incremental harm; the application was over intensive and represented over-development in the Green Belt; there would be harm to the openness of the semi-rural location; parking shortfall and risk of on-street parking capacity causing danger to health and safety; concerns regarding potential use as a HMO and scale of occupation; use of the garage conversion should be incidental only, and not ancillary to, the use of the dwelling; impact on neighbouring properties; visual bulk of the outside extension; tree removal; elevated compound style fencing; dominant rear dormer; and detrimental impact on the elevated corner plot in the semi-rural character area.

Responding to the points raised by speakers, the Planning Officer highlighted that the impact of the bulk and scale of the proposal in relation to the Green Belt was addressed in the officer report at section 7.1, and in relation to character and appearance at section 7.2. Further clarification was provided that the two-storey side extension had already been approved under a separate application. However, the applicant had implemented both that planning permission and a Certificate of Lawfulness for a rear dormer / hip to gable extension simultaneously, therefore voiding both applications. Officers did not consider that the dormer, whilst visible, would add too much additional bulk.

In relation to concerns about intensification of use, the Planning Officer confirmed that it was open to Members to seek amendment to the wording of Condition C3 to remove the word ancillary and require the use of the garage conversion to be incidental to the enjoyment of the residential dwelling only, should this be considered necessary.

With regard to parking concerns, the Planning Officer clarified that there was potential for additional parking to be accommodated in future within the front curtilage of the property, although this would require extensive works to the garden which were not proposed as part of this application. The submitted parking plan had also shown two spaces to be accessed via a driveway at the rear. However, as this was not served by a dropped kerb it had not been

afforded weight in the assessment of the application as it was not a lawful route. Woodlands Road was a private road which was not maintained by the County Council. It would therefore be a civil matter for the owner of 10 Hyde Lane to seek permission from the management company or registered owner of that strip of land to install a dropped kerb privately.

With regard to any potential use of the dwelling as an HMO, the Planning Officer clarified that this was not under consideration as part of the application.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member supported a speaker's recommendation that in the event of any grant of permission, use of the garage conversion should be conditioned to only be incidental, and not ancillary, to the use of the dwelling.

- A Committee Member questioned why the area of hardstanding in front of the garage had been considered by officers to constitute a parking space given that there was no dropped kerb and it was only able to be accessed by crossing privately owned land. For applications which were accessed from the public highway, the lack of a dropped kerb generally meant that an area could not be considered as a parking space. Additionally, given the level of objection from residents in Woodlands Road, consent for a dropped kerb might be unlikely to be given. The Planning Officer clarified that the occupier of no.10 had historically used the hardstanding in front of the garage for parking. However, fomalising the arrangement, or enforcing against any unauthorised use of the private land, would be a civil matter. The applicant was aware that there was a need for a further planning application to regularise the works to the site as there had been changes to the land levels at the front, and that application would probably seek to include a driveway which would accommodate additional cars.

- In response to a question from a Committee Member regarding the status of the dormer window if the application were to be refused, the Planning Officer clarified that the applicant could apply for a lawful development certificate; however, until such an application were submitted it was not possible to determine whether or not it would be approved.

- Some Committee Members disagreed with the officer's view that the size of the dormer window was proportionate and considered that due to the plot's elevated position, the extension and dormer window would be overly prominent compared to the rest of the street scene and would have a harmful impact on Woodlands Road and Hyde Lane. Other reasons justifying refusal were cited as the parking shortfall, and highway safety due to lack of on-street parking.

- A Committee Member commented that paragraph 2 of policy DM8 of the new NPPF set out that in cases of unauthorised development where retrospective planning permission was being sought, substantial weight should be given where it was concluded, based on evidence, that the unauthorised development was intentional. The Committee Member expressed the view that this application would likely meet that test, as the application site had been subject to an extensive planning history and the applicant would have known that planning permission was required. It was therefore recommended that intentional unauthorised development should be added to the reasons for refusal.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that the application be refused on the grounds that the extension and dormer window would cumulatively harm the character of the area and represent intentional unauthorised development, and on the basis of the car parking shortfall. Full wording of the reasons for refusal to be circulated following the meeting.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused on the grounds that the extension and dormer window would cumulatively harm the character of the area and represent intentional unauthorised development, and on the basis of the car parking shortfall. Full wording of the reasons for refusal to be circulated following the meeting.

PC203/26 26/1359/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE-STOREY REAR EXTENSION, AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP; ALTERATIONS TO LANDSCAPING INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF OUTBUILDING; INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AT 36 GIRTON WAY, CROXLEY GREEN, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE, WD3 3QN

The application was for construction of single-storey rear extension, air source heat pump; alterations to landscaping including demolition of outbuilding; and internal alterations at 36 Girton Way, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

In response to a Committee Member's question the Planning Officer clarified the location of the air source heat pump within the site and confirmed that its operating noise level was not considered to have any impact on neighbours.

Councillor Morris moved, and Councillor Whately-Smith seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 7 in favour, 0 against, 1 abstention.

RESOLVED:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

CHAIR

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1RL

Planning Committee
MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 22 October 2026 from 7.00 - 9.59 pm

Present: Councillors Chris Whately-Smith (Chair), Elinor Gazzard, Oliver Cooper, Stephen Cox, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris, Tom Smith, Louise Price and Krutika Patel

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Aidan Bentley, Councillor Vicky Edwards, Councillor Jon Tankard, Parish Councillor Andrew Gallagher (Croxley Green Parish Council), Parish Councillor Elizabeth Willetts (Batchworth Community Council) and County Councillor Vishal Patel

Officers in Attendance:

Matthew Barnes, Principal Lawyer - Planning
Alex Laurie, Principal Trees and Woodlands Officer
Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer
Suzanne O'Brien, Principal Planning Officer
Adam Ralton, Development Management Team Leader
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Scott Volker, Development Management Team Leader

PC180/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Raj Khiroya and Reena Ranger. The substitutes were Councillors Louise Price and Krutika Patel respectively.

PC181/26 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 10 September 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

PC182/26 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

PC183/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Liberal Democrat Group declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 15 (26/1253/FUL – 42 Marlin Square, Abbots Langley) as the agent is a member of the authority and a member of the Liberal Democrat Group.

Councillor Gazzard declared that she was a ward councillor for the application at agenda item 17 (26/1321/RSP - 10 Hyde Lane, Nash Mills, Hemel Hempstead) and intended to speak against the application in this capacity if the item was reached at the meeting. Having formed a view on the application, Councillor Gazzard would not participate in determining it.

PC184/26 CONFIRMATION OF TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 938 (PENFOLD PARK GOLF CLUB, ST ALBANS ROAD) 2026

The Committee was invited to consider confirmation of Tree Preservation Order (TPO) 938 (Penfold Park Golf Club, St Albans Road).

The Principal Trees and Woodlands Officer reported that the Order had been served on 11 June 2026 in response to concerns raised by ward councillors and residents about the risk of pre-development clearance, as the location was included in the site allocations in the emerging Local Plan. The TPO was an area order which was specifically designed to provide temporary protection for trees and deter clearance work. Once any development for the site was agreed, the intention was that the area order would be replaced with a more specific TPO which protected individual trees and tree groups.

In response to the serving of the TPO, one letter of objection and one letter of support had been received.

The objection cited that it was not expedient to make the order and the council had made no assessment of this; that no assessment of the amenity value of the trees had been made and the trees do not have sufficient amenity value to warrant protection; that council officers did not engage with the landowner prior to serving the TPO and did not visit the site to view the trees; and that the use of an area order was not justified as the situation was not an emergency.

Officers' response was that the site was included in the emerging local plan for housing, but the trees had no protection to prevent their removal. The trees could be clearly viewed from several public vantage points, and officers had visited the site on two occasions to assess the trees from the public realm. It was not usual to consult tree owners prior to serving a TPO, as this may provide the opportunity for trees to be removed before they are protected; and finally, government guidance advised that there did not need to be an immediate risk to trees to justify the serving of a TPO, particularly where there may be pressure from development.

The letter of support had cited a number of reasons why the order should be confirmed, including the benefits of reduction in air and noise pollution; biodiversity benefits; and benefit to public amenity and screening, climate resilience and flood management.

The officer recommendation was that the TPO should be confirmed.

The Chair summarised that two options were available to the committee. Option one was to confirm the order and make TPO 938 permanent. In the future, were the site to be developed, a new specific TPO would be served to protect individual and/or groups of trees which were to be retained. Option two was to not confirm the order and allow it to lapse. This would result in the majority of trees in Area 1 ceasing to be protected.

For the reasons set out above and contained in the report Committee Members supported the confirmation of TPO 938.

Councillor Whately-Smith moved, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that TPO 938 (Penfold Park Golf Club, St Albans Road) be confirmed. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That TPO 938 (Penfold Park Golf Club, St Albans Road) be confirmed.

PC185/26 25/0563/RSP - PART RETROSPECTIVE: CREATION OF VEHICLE PARKING AREAS FOR COMPANY VEHICLES INCLUDING ALTERATIONS TO LAND LEVELS AND ASSOCIATED BOUNDARY TREATMENT HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING, ATTENUATION BASIN, LIGHTING; THE USE OF THE EXISTING BUNGALOW AS OFFICES INCLUDING LOFT CONVERSION WITH DORMERS AND ROOFLIGHTS; AND DEMOLITION OF STABLES AND CONSTRUCTION OF TWO-STOREY BUILDING FOR OFFICE / TRAINING / VEHICLE MAINTENANCE PREMISES (USE CLASS SUI GENERIS) AT THE PADDOCK, LITTLE OXHEY LANE, CARPENDERS PARK, WATFORD WD19 5BA

The application was part retrospective for creation of vehicle parking areas for company vehicles including alterations to land levels and associated boundary treatment hard and soft landscaping, attenuation basin, lighting; the use of the existing bungalow as offices including loft conversion with dormers and rooflights; and demolition of stables and construction of two-storey building for office / training / vehicle maintenance premises (Use Class Sui Generis) at The Paddock, Little Oxhey Lane, Carpenders Park, Watford.

The Planning Officer reported that a correction was required to Condition 2 to update a drawing number. Additionally, a representation of support from the South West Herts Coalition had been received since the publication of the agenda but did not change the officers' recommendation.

County Councillor Vishal Patel spoke on the application.

The applicant spoke in favour of the application.

Points raised by the speaker against the application included: harm to openness and loss of Green Belt which was not outweighed by the public benefit; the proposal was inappropriate development which would permanently urbanise the Green Belt and weaken its role in preventing encroachment; and the proposal would risk the site being used in future for significant housing development.

Points raised by the speaker in favour of the application included: the proposal would enable the applicant to meet a growing demand for transport for children with special educational needs and vulnerable adults, including providing a training centre for staff and facilities to maintain vehicles on site; very special circumstances had already been established for the business to occupy the site; the new building would cut carbon emissions by a level significantly in excess of policy requirements; the proposal provided a benefit to the local economy through the provision of jobs; and the application would deliver a new footway and a crossing on Little Oxhey Lane.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member commented that Policy GB7(g) of the NPPF required development on Grey Belt land to also evidence unmet need for the type of development proposed, in order to not be considered as inappropriate in the Green Belt. It was therefore important to establish whether the harm to the Green Belt was proportionate to the need, and also where the locality of that need was. The Planning Officer responded that officers considered there was evidence of demonstrable unmet need across the district and countywide for specialist day transport, for the reasons set out at paragraph 7.2.13 of the report. This was also reflected in HCC's published figures for children in need of specialist day transport which showed an increasing demand for the service which was expected to continue to grow. The business operators at the site had also stated that they had been unable to bid for transport contracts due to a lack of space, further indicating unmet need.

- A Committee Member questioned whether additional space might be found elsewhere in the county in order to meet need which was more local to those areas, rather than building on the district's metropolitan Green Belt to address demand which came from outside Three Rivers and its immediate area. Another Committee Member commented that this approach could risk the operator moving to a larger site elsewhere and ceasing to operate from the site completely, which would negatively impact the social and economic benefits currently provided within the community.

- In response to a question from a Committee Member, the Planning Officer confirmed agreement that the circumstances which had been outlined in a representation circulated by the applicant to Committee Members did represent very special circumstances.

- A Committee Member recommended amendment to Condition 14 to require the proposed building to be used only in accordance with the business operating on site, in order to prevent sub-letting or use by other organisations. Officers agreed to circulate proposed revised wording for the condition after the meeting.

- Some Committee Members considered that the unmet need claimed by the applicant had not been sufficiently evidenced or evidenced as being local to Three Rivers. It was suggested that the application might be deferred to allow more information to be obtained. However, in debate Committee Members considered that very special circumstances had nonetheless been demonstrated and therefore that approval should be granted.

Councillor Gazzard moved, and Councillor Mitchell seconded, that part retrospective planning permission be granted subject to conditions; an update to Condition 2 to correct a drawing number; and amendment to Condition 14 to require the proposed building to be used only in accordance with the business operating on the site. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That part retrospective planning permission be granted subject to conditions; an update to Condition 2 to correct a drawing number; and amendment to Condition 14 to require the proposed building to be used only in accordance with the business operating on the site.

PC186/26 25/2168/OUT - OUTLINE APPLICATION: CONSTRUCTION OF UP TO 70 RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS (USE CLASS C3) WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS ONTO OXHEY LANE AND INFRASTRUCTURE (APPEARANCE, LAYOUT, LANDSCAPING AND SCALE AS RESERVED MATTERS) AT LAND ADJACENT TO WOODLANDS COTTAGE, OXHEY LANE, CARPENDERS PARK, WATFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

The application was outline for construction of up to 70 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) with associated access onto Oxhey Lane and infrastructure (Appearance, Layout, Landscaping and Scale as reserved matters) at Land Adjacent to Woodlands Cottage, Oxhey Lane, Carpenders Park, Watford.

The Planning Officer clarified that the application was before the Committee again (following a previous resolution of refusal in August 2026, a few days after the 2026 National Planning Policy Framework update) as officers had subsequently sought external advice in relation to the merits of the application.

Following this advice the scheme had been comprehensively re-assessed against the new updated NPPF, and the application was being brought back for further consideration by the Committee.

The Planning Officer reported that two further objections had been received following publication of the report. One of these had raised matters which were already addressed in the report. The second had raised objections to the contents of the report, suggesting that it

represented a misreading of the 2026 NPPF. This letter had been uploaded to the planning portal and circulated to Committee Members. In response the Planning Officer confirmed that officers had taken full consideration of the 2026 NPPF in reaching the recommendation to approve the application and did not agree that it rested on a misreading of the national policy.

County Councillor Vishal Patel spoke on the application.

A representative of the South West Herts Coalition spoke against the application.

Concerns raised by speakers against the application included: harm to the Green Belt; heritage impact; the absence of completed section 106 agreement to secure an infrastructure contribution to address local pressures on schools, healthcare and drainage; the officers' assessment that the site did not strongly serve the relevant Green Belt purpose was too narrow; there would be harm to the setting of the Grade II listed Oxhey Grange and Lodge, and potential impact on the Watford Heath Conservation Area, which would not be outweighed by the public benefit and this should be given significant weight; there was insufficient capacity in the road network and local services to support the development; there was a lack of compliance with the NPPF benchmark in relation to the distance from Bushey Station; the site was not sustainable; and the cumulative impact of a number of developments within a small area should be considered.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- In response to a question, the Planning Officer confirmed that the proposal was unchanged from that which had been considered by the Committee in August. There was therefore nothing new which sought to address the reasons for refusal given by the Committee. Rather, it was the assessment of the application in relation to the updated NPPF, and whether the reasons for refusal could be justified, which required further consideration by the Committee. This included whether the public benefits of the scheme outweighed the low level of harm identified by the Conservation Officer to the setting of the Grade II listed Oxhey Grange. Officers were firmly of the view that the application should be approved, and the advice which had been sought strongly indicated that any appeal against refusal would be very difficult to defend.

- Responding to a point raised by a speaker about the distance from Bushey Station, which had also been discussed by the Committee at the August meeting, the Planning Officer confirmed that the site was considered to be within reasonable walking distance of the station. However, officers considered the site to be Grey Belt which fell within policy GB(7)(g). This required a different assessment in relation to site sustainability, set out in policy TR3 of the NPPF, which did not reference reasonable walking distance.

- A Committee Member commented that some other local planning authorities had reached the conclusion that Carpenders Park was a town. It was questioned whether Committee Members might take the same view and therefore consider that the proposal would breach Purpose B of the Green Belt. The Planning Officer responded that as set out at paragraph 7.2.24, officers considered that even if Carpenders Park and South Oxhey were considered to be towns, the site did not form part of a substantial gap between Watford and Carpenders Park and the development would not result in the loss of visual separation of towns. Members would therefore need to clearly justify why the site was considered to strongly contribute towards the purpose of preventing neighbouring towns from merging, taking account of all of the elements of Annex E and whether the site's contribution was weak, moderate or strong in terms of that assessment. Officers also expressed the view that determination of the application should be based on the Council's own Local Plan and evidence base rather than those of other authorities.

- Some Committee Members expressed regret that the proposal would result in the site being taken out of the Green Belt and supported it reluctantly, acknowledging that that

there were not sufficient reasons to justify refusal on planning grounds given the lack of objection from statutory consultees, the Conservation Officer's conclusion that the level of harm would be low, and the policies within the new NPPF.

- A Committee Member recommended that officers should seek to ensure that the proposed buildings were of as high a standard as possible in relation to energy efficiency at the reserved matters stage, and that an informative should be added to this effect.

Councillor Price moved, and Councillor Whately-Smith seconded, that an informative be added to encourage the applicant to maximise the energy efficiency of the proposed buildings; and that authority be delegated to the Head of Regulatory Services to grant planning permission, following completion of a S106 Agreement (securing the Heads of Terms set out at section 7.20 of the report including affordable housing provision, travel plan, contributions to infrastructure including education, healthcare and waste infrastructure and monitoring fees) subject to conditions and to make any minor amendments to the Heads of Terms and Planning Conditions in consultation with the Planning Committee Chair.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 5 for, 3 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED:

That an informative be added to encourage the applicant to maximise the energy efficiency of the proposed buildings; and that authority be delegated to the Head of Regulatory Services to grant planning permission, following completion of a S106 Agreement (securing the Heads of Terms set out at section 7.20 of the report including affordable housing provision, travel plan, contributions to infrastructure including education, healthcare and waste infrastructure and monitoring fees) subject to conditions and to make any minor amendments to the Heads of Terms and Planning Conditions in consultation with the Planning Committee Chair.

PC187/26 26/0331/FUL – DEMOLITION OF EXISTING WORKSHOPS AND CONSTRUCTION OF A TWO-STOREY BUILDING CONTAINING 4 RESIDENTIAL UNITS (USE CLASS C3) WITH ACCOMMODATION IN THE ROOF SERVED BY FRONT DORMERS, SIDE/REAR ROOFLIGHTS, SOLAR PANELS, ALTERATIONS TO VEHICULAR ACCESS, WITH ASSOCIATED CAR AND BIKE PARKING, REFUSE AND RECYCLING STORAGE, LANDSCAPING WORKS AT GREYSTONE WORKS, THE GREEN, CROXLEY GREEN, HERTFORDSHIRE

The application was for demolition of existing workshops and construction of a two-storey building containing 4 residential units (Use Class C3) with accommodation in the roof served by front dormers, side/rear rooflights, solar panels, alterations to vehicular access, with associated car and bike parking, refuse and recycling storage, landscaping works at Greystone Works, The Green, Croxley Green.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates but clarified that the proposal largely represented a re-submission of a previously approved scheme dating back to 2019/20 which had lapsed. The only physical difference to the approved scheme was the relocation of one parking space away from the northern boundary in order to ensure improved highway visibility, as requested by Hertfordshire County Council.

The only other change to the approved scheme related to affordable housing. In 2019 the scheme had been subject to a contribution for affordable housing; however, due to the increase in benchmark land value and build costs in the intervening the scheme was no longer viable to contribute towards affordable housing.

Parish Councillor Andrew Gallagher of Croxley Green Parish Council spoke on the application.

Concerns raised included a lack of car parking space on the local roads; the impact on neighbours' gardens by overlooking; blocking of views from the flats above the shops;

inappropriate and incongruous design and overbearing scale which would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area; and a lack of compliance with policy CA1 of the Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan.

A Committee Member supported points made by the speaker from the Parish Council, expressing the view that the proposal represented over-development of what was a very small site. However, other Committee Members considered that the only material change to the previously approved scheme was minor, that the Committee was bound by its previous decision, and that there was a demonstrable need for housing and for these reasons should be accepted, noting that the proposal was also recommended for approval by officers.

Another Committee Member commented that whilst it was not a material planning consideration, it was regrettable that the Council had lost the contribution towards affordable housing which had been required under the original grant of permission due to the applicant not having implemented the scheme.

Councillor Morris moved, and Councillor Whately-Smith seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 8 for, 1 against and 0 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

PC188/26 26/0645/FUL - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION, SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND FRONT PORCH; CONSTRUCTION OF TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION AND SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION, LOFT CONVERSION INCLUDING ALTERATIONS TO ROOF FORM, WITH FRONT/REAR DORMERS, REAR JULIET DORMER AND FRONT/SIDE ROOFLIGHTS; INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO FENESTRATION AT 75 NIGHTINGALE ROAD, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 7BU

The application was for demolition of existing two storey side extension, single storey rear extension and front porch; construction of two storey side extension and single storey rear extension, loft conversion including alterations to roof form, with front/rear dormers, rear Juliet dormer and front/side rooflights; internal alterations and alterations to fenestration at 75 Nightingale Road, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates but reminded Committee Members that the application had been deferred at the August meeting to allow the applicant to consider amendments to the scheme in response to concerns expressed by Committee Members. These principally related to setting the two-storey side extension further from the boundary with No. 73 Nightingale Road, overcoming the Conservation Officer's outstanding objection in respect of the number of rooflights and the size of the dormer windows, and a clarification as to which room the flank window in the neighbouring dwelling served. Officers had discussed these issues with the applicant; however, no amendments to the scheme had been proposed. The report had also been updated to reflect the revised NPPF.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member commented that one of the concerns previously raised had related to the outlook from the first floor side window of number 73. As it had now been clarified that this window served a bathroom and was obscure glazed, this concern had been allayed.

- Another Committee Member expressed the view that whilst it was regrettable that the applicant had not made changes in response to Committee Members' concerns, there were no other material planning considerations to counter the opinion that the proposal would,

on balance, make a positive contribution in comparison to the current building in terms of preserving and enhancing the Conservation Area.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Simth seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

PC189/26 26/0907/FUL – CHANGE OF USE OF LAND FOR USE AS A RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN SITE COMPRISING 2NO. GYPSY/TRAVELLER PITCHES, EACH ACCOMMODATING 4 CARAVANS INCLUDING NO MORE THAN 2 STATIC CARAVAN/MOBILE HOMES, WITH ASSOCIATED HARDSTANDING, ALTERATIONS TO ACCESS AND ERECTION OF TWO AMENITY BUILDINGS AND BOUNDARY TREATMENTS INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION OF TIMBER POST AND RAIL FENCING AT LAND SOUTH OF HARTHALL LANE, KINGS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE

The application was for change of use of land for use as a residential caravan site comprising 2no. Gypsy/Traveller pitches, each accommodating 2 caravans including no more than 2 static caravan/mobile homes, with associated hardstanding, alterations to access and erection of two amenity buildings and boundary treatments including construction of timber post and rail fencing at Land South of Harthall Lane, Kings Langley.

The Planning Officer reported that a correction was required to the description of the development as shown at the top of the report, to reflect that the proposal was for change of use of land for use as a residential caravan site comprising 2no. Gypsy/Traveller pitches, each accommodating 2 caravans (not 4).

The Planning Officer also demonstrated, by use of the block plan, how the various measurements given in the report related to different parts of the site.

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard of Abbots Langley Parish Council spoke on the application.

A local resident spoke against the application.

Points raised by speakers included concern that the site was not in a sustainable location; density of traveller sites in the Toms Lane area, as well as elsewhere in Kings Langley, Bedmond and Langleybury; the site should be classified as Green Belt and not Grey Belt, and forms part of the parcel of land that stops Hemel Hempstead and the built-up area of Watford from merging; there is no footpath nor any public transport links for a significant distance; and the development does not meet a demonstrable unmet need as the new Local Plan allocates sufficient sites for gypsy pitches.

In response to points raised about the sustainability of the site location, the Planning Officer clarified that paragraph 7.2.22 of the report set out the requirement to have regard to footnote 42 and policy HO12 of the NPPF when assessing development involving the provision of traveller sites, in addition to policy TR3. The Planning Officer summarised the assessment of the application against these requirements as set out at paragraphs 7.2.22 to 7.2.28 of the report. This assessment had led to the officers' conclusion that the application site was in a sustainable location for gypsy and traveller pitches.

In response to points raised about reported issues at other gypsy and traveller sites in the district, some of which had resulted in enforcement action, the Planning Officer highlighted that this was not a material planning consideration and that the application must be determined on its own merits.

In response to other points raised by speakers, the Planning Officer clarified that the need for pitches was addressed in the report. Officers were of the view that there was demonstrable unmet need, for the reasons set out in the report. The reasons why the application site was not considered to strongly contribute to purposes A, B and D and the reasons for the officers' assessment of the site as Grey Belt were also set out in the report. Additionally, the argument that the site contributed towards preventing Hemel Hempstead and the built-up area of Watford from merging did not, in the Planning Officer's professional view, have merit in light of the distances involved.

The Planning Officer also clarified that whilst the emerging Local Plan was at Regulation 19 stage and some weight was being given to its policies, it had not undergone examination and the application ultimately had to be determined in accordance with the current planning policy and NPPF as detailed in the report.

In response to a further question about sustainability, it was acknowledged that if relying on a car the nearest settlements and facilities were about a 5 minute (or one and a half mile) drive away. However, the Planning Officer drew attention to a recent appeal decision relating to a similar site in Bucks Hill where the Planning Inspector had found that the site, which was a similar drive and a similar quality of walk to other settlements and local facilities, was in a sustainable location. Some Committee Members did not agree that the location was sustainable, citing the fact that the development would be car dependent and walking routes were poor.

Councillor Cox moved, and Councillor Smith seconded, that the application be approved subject to conditions and correction to the description of the development. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 5 for 3 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED:

That the application be approved subject to conditions and correction to the description of the development.

PC190/26 26/0909/FUL – CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY SIDE EXTENSION AT 62 STATION ROAD, KINGS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE, WD4 8LB

The application was for construction of single storey side extension at 62 Station Road, Kings Langley.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

Parish Councillor Jon Tankard of Abbots Langley Parish Council spoke on the application.

Councillor Bentley spoke on the application.

A local resident spoke against the application.

Points raised by speakers included: the proposal would result in over-development of the site and harm to nearby listed buildings and the character and appearance of the area; the proposal would result in a parking shortfall in an area where parking was already very constrained; there would be no legal or safe access to the garage from the public highway and a crossover would not be permitted due to the site's location which was close to a corner and bus stop with a lack of sufficient visibility; and the proposal would result in a loss of outdoor amenity space and negatively impact on hedgerows and biodiversity.

In responding to the points raised by speakers the Planning Officer confirmed that no restrictions were being sought on the use of the room, which was labelled as a garage. However, if Members were concerned then a planning condition could be attached requiring its use to be incidental to the main building. The building was shown on both the existing and

proposed set of plans as a house in multiple occupation for six occupants. Planning permission would be required in the event that the new space were to be used as a seventh bedroom, as it would allow a seventh occupant.

The Planning Officer also advised that refusal based on safety concerns relating to vehicular access would be difficult to justify, as the application was for a side extension only with no changes to the vehicular access. There was therefore nothing within the proposal which was inherently unsafe. In relation to parking, whilst it was acknowledged that there was a parking shortfall, there was nothing within the application which would worsen the existing shortfall.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the application which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- Committee Members supported the addition of a condition to restrict the use of the room in the event of any grant of permission.

- A Committee Member noted that a previous application at the site had been refused by the Planning Committee on the grounds of over-development and loss of amenity space and questioned why officers considered this proposal to be acceptable. The Planning Officer responded that the previous application had been materially different in that it was for a larger, two storey extension with a larger footprint. However, that refusal had been contrary to the officer recommendation. Officers did not consider that sufficient harm to justify refusal could be demonstrated in relation to this application. Some Committee Members disagreed, considering that the application was unacceptable for the same reasons as the refusal of the earlier application. Whilst this application was for a smaller extension, there had been a significant amount of development at the site under permitted development in the interim (principally, a single story rear extension and loft conversion) meaning that this proposal would result in cramped over-development.

- In response to a Member's question the Planning Officer clarified that if the application were approved then the applicant would be likely to have exhausted permitted development rights at the property. However, if the application were refused, a single storey side extension and additional outbuildings might be possible under permitted development, subject to meeting the relevant criteria. Removal of permitted development rights for outbuildings was proposed as a condition of this application in order to prevent further reduction in amenity space.

- In response to a question, the Planning Officer confirmed that officers did not consider the extension to be excessively prominent, and that it was considered to be subordinate to the house and not obtrusive to the street scene. There was also not considered to be any harm to the heritage cottages opposite the site due to the separation distance.

Councillor Morris moved, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that the application be refused by reason of the shortfall in car parking spaces which was in breach of the car parking standard and design criteria, and shortfall in outdoor amenity space resulting in cramped over-development of the site harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Full wording of the reasons for refusal to be circulated following the meeting.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 6 for, 0 against and 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused by reason of the shortfall in car parking spaces which was in breach of the car parking standard and design criteria, and shortfall in outdoor amenity space resulting in cramped over-development of the site harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Full wording of the reasons for refusal to be circulated following the meeting.

PC191/26 26/1102/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF ENTRY PORCH; ALTERATIONS TO FENESTRATION; CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW BOUNDARY WALL AND GATE AT THE EBURY ROOMS, EBURY ROAD, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 1BL

The application was for construction of entry porch; alterations to fenestration; construction of a new boundary wall and gate at The Ebury Rooms, Ebury Road, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that since publication of the officer report Batchworth Community Council had withdrawn its objection.

Committee Members had no questions or objections to the application, considering that the proposal would result in improvement to the area.

Councillor Morris moved, and Councillor Whately-Smith seconded, that the application be approved subject to conditions. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the application be approved subject to conditions.

PC192/26 26/1116/FUL – CONSTRUCTION OF DETACHED GARAGE, GREENHOUSE AND BIN STORE, ALTERATIONS TO DRIVEWAY, CONSTRUCTION OF NEW ACCESS GATE TO GARAGE AREA, ALTERATIONS TO HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING, DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION TANK AND EXTERNAL LIGHTING AT REDWOOD HOUSE, 12 TEMPLE GARDENS, MOOR PARK, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 1QJ

The application was for construction of detached garage, greenhouse and bin store, alterations to driveway, construction of new access gate to garage area, alterations to hard and soft landscaping, drainage and irrigation tank and external lighting at Redwood House, 12 Temple Gardens, Moor Park, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that Condition 2 required updating to correct discrepancies in the plan numbers, and to reflect that an updated levels plan had been received. Informative 4 also needed correction to reflect that the Biodiversity Net Gain exemption was a householder exemption, rather than because the scheme was below the de minimis threshold.

Parish Councillor Elizabeth Willetts of Batchworth Community Council spoke on the application.

A local resident spoke against the application.

The agent spoke in favour of the application.

Points raised by speakers against the application included: the proposal would cumulatively result in an urbanisation of the site, detracting from its rural character and be out of keeping with the registered park and gardens; harm would be caused to the significance of the Moor Park Registered Park and Garden and the Moor Park Conservation Area as well as to the Green Belt; there would be no public benefit and no very special circumstances to justify the harm caused; concern about the significant number of previous applications, numerous additions to the property, breaches of planning permission and destruction of trees; there should be consistency of approach to planning decisions given previous refusals; and the negative impact on wildlife and biodiversity arising from lighting.

Points raised by the speaker in favour of the application included: the application sought only to reinstate the garden and provide extensive landscaping and drainage enhancements following building work at the property; the scheme had been carefully and sensitively designed in the context of the site location; and the applicant had engaged with officers and

responded to concerns raised during the planning process resulting in amendments to the proposal.

In response to points raised by speakers against the application, the Planning Officer summarised the main differences between the current and previously refused applications. This included a reduction in the extent of hardstanding to the front of the property; removal of the turning area; removal of the parking area which would have been visible from Temple Gardens; removal of the woodland walk and the additional hardstanding to the east leaving a mown grassed walkway; removal of the gabion walls and replacement with a more natural sloping bank down to the landscaped garden; relocation of the refuse collection spot away from the front boundary; and a further enhancement of the soft landscaping around the perimeter of the site, creating a betterment.

The Planning Officer also reported that the Conservation Officer had withdrawn their previous objection following the submission of amended plans which replaced the paladin fencing accompanying the sliding gate with hedgerow. With regard to concerns about lighting and the impact on wildlife, a condition was proposed which would require details of lighting to be submitted in order to enable this to be controlled as part of the discharge conditions application and Herts Ecology had not raised any objection to the application. With regard to the size of the gate at 2 metres high, the Planning Officer clarified that gates of such height were permissible under permitted development without a requirement for planning permission.

Committee Members asked questions about the detail of the report which were responded to by officers. The Committee's discussions included the following:

- A Committee Member commented that notwithstanding that the applicant had reduced the scale of the development following previous refusal, there remained a number of concerns. These included objections by The Gardens Trust and Historic England; the removal and death of trees arising from previous works; the cumulative impact of development and the increase in the built form footprint; and the urbanising effect of the additional structures and hardstanding on a sensitive site which was of great importance to the character of the area and which would harm the openness of the Green Belt.

- Responding to the above points, the Planning Officer reported that the plot coverage was calculated to be c13.5%, which was within the 15% set out within the Moor Park Conservation Area Appraisal. Hardstanding was regarded to be an engineering operation, which was considered to be an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. The proposed outbuildings were all considered to be of a size and scale which were ancillary to the main dwelling and therefore compliant with policy DM2, and additionally the plot was very large. Collectively, therefore, the impact on openness and also heritage impacts were not considered to be sufficient to justify refusal of the application.

- Another Committee Member highlighted that Historic England had identified only minor harm, which needed to be balanced against any public benefit and expressed the view that a potential benefit was an increase in trees. A rainwater tank could be considered a necessity in the current climate conditions, and the alterations to the drive and garage and the greenhouse might not be considered to be detrimental. Another Committee Member expressed the view that the proposal represented a significant improvement on the previous application and should be supported.

Councillor Morris moved, and Councillor Cooper seconded, that the application be refused on the grounds that the proposal would result in an urbanising form of development which caused harm to the Green Belt and heritage assets. Full wording of the reasons for refusal to be circulated after the meeting.

On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 5 for, 3 against and 1 abstention.

RESOLVED:

That the application be refused on the grounds that the proposal would result in an urbanising form of development which caused harm to the Green Belt and heritage assets. Full wording of the reasons for refusal to be circulated after the meeting.

PC193/26 26/1228/FUL – INSTALLATION OF LIGHTING TO GOLFPOD FACILITY AT RICKMANSWORTH MUNICIPAL GOLF CLUB, MOOR LANE, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE WD3 1QL

The application was for installation of lighting to Golfpod facility at Rickmansworth Municipal Golf Club, Moor Lane, Rickmansworth.

The Planning Officer reported that there were no updates.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Price seconded, that planning permission be granted subject to conditions. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 8 for, 0 against, 1 abstention.

RESOLVED:

That planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

PC194/26 26/1253/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE STOREY SIDE AND REAR EXTENSION; REMOVAL OF CHIMNEY STACKS; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION; CONSTRUCTION OF PATIO AT 42 MARLIN SQUARE, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE WD5 0EG

Consideration of this application was deferred to a meeting to be held on 28 October 2026.

PC195/26 26/1263/RSP – PART RETROSPECTIVE: CONVERSION OF GARAGE INTO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION AND ALTERATIONS TO DRIVEWAY AT 17 EDSON CLOSE, LEAVESDEN, WATFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE WD25 7BX

Consideration of this application was deferred to a meeting to be held on 28 October 2026.

PC196/26 26/1321/RSP - PART RETROSPECTIVE: CONSTRUCTION OF A PART SINGLE, PART TWO STOREY SIDE EXTENSION; LOFT CONVERSION INCLUDING WITH A REAR DORMER AND FRONT ROOF LIGHT; INTERNAL ALTERATIONS; ALTERATIONS TO THE FENESTRATION; ALTERATIONS TO EXTERNAL MATERIALS; CONVERSION OF GARAGE TO HABITABLE ACCOMMODATION AT 10 HYDE LANE, NASH MILLS, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD, HERTFORDSHIRE HP3 8RY

Consideration of this application was deferred to a meeting to be held on 28 October 2026.

PC197/26 26/1359/FUL - CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE-STOREY REAR EXTENSION, AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP; ALTERATIONS TO LANDSCAPING INCLUDING DEMOLITION OF OUTBUILDING; INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AT 36 GIRTON WAY, CROXLEY GREEN, RICKMANSWORTH, HERTFORDSHIRE, WD3 3QN

Consideration of this application was deferred to a meeting to be held on 28 October 2026.

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank

PLANNING COMMITTEE – 19 November 2026

25/2197/OUT – Outline application: Erection of up to 93 dwellings with associated access, parking, amenity space and landscaping (Appearance, Layout, Landscaping and Scale as reserved matters) at LAND ADJOINING NOTLEY FARM, BEDMOND ROAD, ABBOTS LANGLEY, HERTFORDSHIRE

Parish: Abbots Langley Parish Council
Expiry of Statutory Period: 09.04.2026
Extension of Time: tbc

Ward: Abbots Langley And Bedmond
Case Officer: Scott Volker

Development type: Major Development

Recommendation: That authority is delegated to the Associate Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to grant planning permission following the completion of a S106 agreement securing the Heads of Terms (set out in 9.24 of the report), subject to planning conditions (set out at section 10.1.2) AND to make any minor amendments necessary to the Heads of Terms and planning conditions in consultation with the Planning Committee Chair.

Reason for consideration by the Committee:

Who made the request that the application be subject of the Gateway Test?	Triaged for a Gateway Test review at the request of the Head of Regulatory Services, being a Schedule 2 application, subject of a committee call-in received prior to the National Scheme of Delegation coming into effect
What were the reasons for the request?	• Large application should come to Committee • Highways impacts • Impact on the Green Belt • Understanding impact on existing community
What was the outcome of the Gateway Test and reason?	The Nominated Officer and the Nominated Member agreed that the application should be referred to the committee as the site raises a social issue of significance to the local area, in that it comprises a major residential development which fails to meet Policy CP4 in relation to affordable housing.

To view all documents forming part of this application please go to the following website:
https://www3.threerivers.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=T7GQSBQFJBH00

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This report makes a full assessment of outline planning application 25/2197/OUT, for the proposed development comprising up to 93 new dwellings, parking and landscaping with associated access onto Bedmond Road at land adjoining Notley Farm on Bedmond Road. The application is in Outline, with details of access provided for full consideration. Appearance, landscape, layout and scale are reserved matters.

1.2 The Emerging Local Plan has completed Regulation 19 consultation stage, and this includes future site allocations for housing within the District. The application site is referred to as 'H7' in the Site Allocations Document with an indicative dwelling capacity of 98 dwellings. This document sets out that the site would have a phasing of 1-10 years thus is anticipated to be delivered early within the plan period.

1.3 The assessment has considered all relevant material planning considerations, including the provision of the 2026 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Three Rivers Local Development Plan. The responses from consultees have also been considered and are listed at Section 5 and appended to this report in full. The majority of consultees raised no objection subject to conditions and/or S106 agreement. There is an objection raised by the Conservation Officer.

1.4 The primary planning considerations include the principle of the development in the Green Belt; impact on landscape, character and heritage; housing provision; highways and access considerations and residential amenity. Officers have assessed these matters and all other planning considerations and conclude that the proposal is acceptable.

1.5 In relation to Green Belt, officers consider that the site is Grey Belt and the proposal accords with Policy GB7(g) i.-iv. of the NPPF (2026). As such, it is considered that the development is an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt. In relation to the existing use, the development would result in the loss of an agricultural field but is, as explained later in Section 9.2 , of moderate to poor quality. Subject to conditions/S106 there are no objections on highways, amenity or other grounds.

1.6 The benefits of the scheme are considered at Section 9.25 and include the need for housing, the need for affordable housing, compliance with the 'Golden Rules' – all of which are afforded significant weight in support of the application.

1.7 This report therefore recommends approval, subject to conditions and a S106 agreement.

1.8 This executive summary provides an overview. It is not exhaustive and should be read in conjunction with the full report for a complete understanding.

2 Relevant Planning History

2.1 Notley Court (Former Mansion House Farm Equestrian Centre)

18/0223/FUL - Demolition of existing equestrian centre and construction of 15 dwellinghouses and 2 flats (17 units in total) with associated vehicular access, car parking, landscaping and engineering works – Permitted 14 May 2018; implemented.

3 Description of Application Site

3.1 The application site is located at the northern edge of Abbots Langley on the eastern side of Bedmond Road before it crosses the M25. The site is accessed via an access point from Bedmond Road through a residential development comprising 17 dwellings known as Notley Court.

3.2 The site is roughly 'L' shaped and wraps around the northern and eastern sides of a covered reservoir (not forming the application site). The site is mostly flat, comprising two fields, divided by a tall hedgerow and measuring approximately 2.7ha. As existing it is agricultural land used for grazing. There are no buildings on the site and is bounded by mature trees and hedges. The site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt but adjoins the Green Belt boundary at the western edge with Notley Court and the south-eastern edge.

3.3 Directly north of the site are open agricultural fields which separate the site from the M25 although this land has outline planning permission for the construction of a data centre of up to 84,000sqm (LPA Ref: 23/1068/OUT, PINs Ref: APP/P1940/W/24/3346061).

3.4 Urban development is located to the south of the site with a mixture of houses and apartments from Notley Court around to Summerhouse Way. Characterised by two-storey, traditional pitched roof semi-detached and terraced properties. A three storey flatted development is visible from Love Lane but fronts onto Parnell Close and there is the presence of both three and four storey flatted developments (Nicholas Court & Turnbull Court) on Summerhouse Way. Love Lane play area exists to the south of the site.

3.5 To the western side of Bedmond Road, set back from the road frontage and accessed via Dairy Way, are Tithe Barn Cottages, a residentially converted former Dairy Farm. To the south of this is Abbots Langley Primary School.

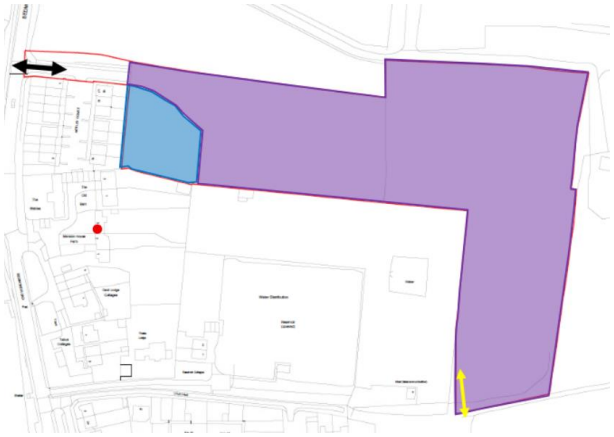
3.6 The site is located in close proximity to Statutorily Listed Buildings and Locally Important Buildings including Tithe Barn – Grade II* Listed; Mansion House Farmhouse – Grade II Listed; Ovaltine Dairy Farm and Cecil Lodge Cottages– Locally Listed.

4 Description of Proposed Development

4.1 This application seeks **Outline planning permission** for the erection of up to 93 new dwellings with associated access, parking, amenity space and landscaping. Approval is sought for Access with matters of Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale reserved.

4.2 The application is accompanied by an Opportunities & Constraints Plan (25020-243-XX-XX-DR-A-0001), a Proposed Illustrative Masterplan (25020-243-XX-XX-DR-A-1200) and a Parameter Plan (TRDC 001). The illustrative masterplan shows how the site **could** potentially be developed, although approval is not sought for these details within the application and this illustration is considered as indicative only. Therefore, whilst the following assessment may acknowledge the layout, appearance, landscaping and scale of development, the detail of these matters would be assessed at a subsequent stage should this application be deemed acceptable and permitted.

4.3 The illustrative proposed site layout plan indicates that the proposal could comprise a linear form of development set around a central internal access road, reflecting the 'L' shape of the application site. The plan shows a development characterised by semi-detached houses but with some detached properties and short terraces. Three apartment blocks are proposed, with one adjacent to the site entrance and a proposed attenuation basin (Block 1) with Blocks 2 and 3 to the north-eastern corner of the site, adjacent to a further attenuation basin and an area of public open space. The submitted Parameter Plan details that Block 1 would be located within an area of the site where the built form would be limited only to two and half-storeys (area shaded blue).



Above: Parameter plan identifying section (shaded blue) of the site whereby development would be restricted to two & half storeys; with development up to three storeys contained within the remainder of the site (shaded purple)

4.4 Curtilage parking is typically provided for the houses, with enclosed landscaped parking courts proposed for the three apartment blocks. Visitor parking is dispersed along the material access road, but with a concentration adjacent to the apartment blocks and public open space to the north-eastern corner.

4.5 The development will be primarily accessed off Bedmond Road, which also provides the principal pedestrian and cyclist access, forming an extension to the existing Notley Court carriageway. The principal access provides a simple priority junction serving the development road with a width of 5.5m which is bounded on two sides by 2m wide footways. The internal footway would provide a connection to the adjacent PRoW – Abbots Langley 029 – which runs from Bedmond Road, east along Love Lane, before crossing East Lane and heading toward the M25.



Above: Illustratative site layout plan

4.6 The proposed dwelling mix is not known at this stage, but the supporting planning statement provides an indicative housing mix in the table below. The detailed housing mix will be a consideration for the Reserved Matters stage, when a detailed layout will be established. The scheme would include 47 affordable homes (50%), with a split of 31 (65%) mix of social and affordable rent and 16 (35%) intermediate ownership.

Fig. 7.3.1.1c Indicative proposed housing mix – 93-unit scheme

Proposed	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market Housing	0	23	19	4
Affordable Home Ownership	6	8	2	0
Social / Affordable Rented Housing	10	12	9	0
Total	16	43	30	4

Above: Table taken from Section 7.3.0 (page 25) of the supporting Planning Statement

4.7 The application is accompanied by the following plans/reports:

- Location Plan (25020-243-XX-XX-DR-A-1000)
- Opportunities & Constraints (25020-243-XX-XX-DR-A-0001)
- Proposed Masterplan (25020-243-XX-XX-DR-A-1200)
- Parameter Plan (TRDC 001)
- Proposed Street Scenes (25020-243-XX-XX-DR-A-3200 REV P01)
- Proposed Visual SUDS (25020-243-XX-XX-DR-A-5000)
- Landscape Masterplan (PRI24773 10)

- Tree Protection Plan (PRI24773-03A)
- Acoustic Assessment
- Agricultural Land Classification Report
- Air Quality Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement
- Archaeological Assessment
- Biodiversity Checklist
- Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool
- Biodiversity Net Gain Plan
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Energy Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage Statement
- Landscape Visual Impact Assessment
- Planning Statement with Affordable Housing Statement
- Transport Assessment

4.8 The following documents have been submitted during the course of the application:

- Hydrogeological Risk Assessment Report (June 2026)

5 Consultation

5.1 A summary is provided below, with the full comments set out in **Appendix 1.**

Abbots Langley Parish Council	1.1.1	Objection
Herts County Council: Minerals & Waste Policy Team	1.1.2	No objection, subject to condition
Herts County Council: Highway Authority	1.1.3	No objections, subject to conditions
Community Safety Intervention Officer	1.1.4	Comments received
East of England Ambulance Service	1.1.5	Comments received
Local Plans Section	1.1.6	Comments received
Thames Water	1.1.7	Comments received
Environmental Health Officer	1.1.9	No objection, subject to conditions
Herts County Council: Growth & Infrastructure Unit	1.1.10	Comments received
Conservation Officer	1.1.11	Objection
National Grid	1.1.12	Comments received
Herts County Council: Lead Local Flood Authority	1.1.13	No objection, subject to conditions
Herts Ecology	1.1.14	No response received
Affinity Water	1.1.15 and 1.1.16	Initial objection overcome
Herts County Council – Footpath Section	1.1.17	No comments received
Landscape Officer	1.1.18	Verbally raised no objection in principle
National Health Service	1.1.19	Comments received

6 Public/Neighbour Consultation

6.1 Site Notice: Posted – 08.04.2025 Expired – 01.05.2025

6.2 Press notice: Published – 11.04.2025 Expired - 04.05.2025

6.3 Number consulted: 87

6.4 No of responses received: 24 (18 Objections; 3 neutral and 2 support)

6.5 Summary of responses received:

Objections:

- Overlooking established private gardens
- Loss of privacy
- Loss of natural light & overshadowing
- Overbearing visual presence
- Loss of outlook
- Increased perception of enclosure
- Increased noise and disturbance, especially during construction
- Development contrary to Policy CP1
- Landscape mitigation not sufficient to overcome overlooking
- Overly intensive and cramped form of development
- Development fails to reflect the established character of Notley Court
- Substantial increase in traffic on surrounding roads
- Roads already at capacity
- Development fails to demonstrate that the local road network can safely accommodate additional vehicles.
- Increased parking pressure
- Insufficient on-site parking
- Risk to pedestrian and highway safety
- Inadequate access for service and emergency vehicles.
- Erode openness of the Green Belt, encroach into the countryside and erosion of the settlement edge
- Undermines the fundamental purposes of the Green Belt.
- Development does not comply with the Golden Rules
- No very special circumstances exist
- Impact on biodiversity and wildlife in the area
- Development conflicts with the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan
- Approval of Data Centre application raises the bar for development in the Green Belt rather than lowering it. (Development of national infrastructure required exceptional justification to overcome Green Belt policy; a speculative residential scheme cannot reasonably do so).
- Lack of allocation in the Development Plan
- Approval would undermine the plan-led system
- No Section 38 Agreement for road adoption and therefore not deliverable due to private unadopted road (Notley Court)
- Lack of local education capacity
- No meaningful mitigation in planning terms to flood risk
- Local drainage issues will be compounded with this development

Cumulative impact of this development and data centre need to be taken into account

Supporting:

- Housing development would make a positive contribution to the local community
- Development helps address housing demand
- Well located to local centre of Abbots Langley

Other Representations:

- Developments should include integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) where possible and should be secured by condition.

7 Reason for Delay

7.1 The application has been extended beyond its original statutory determination period in order to enable the applicant to work with those statutory consultees who requested further information.

8 Relevant Planning Policy, Guidance and Legislation

8.1 Legislation

Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise as set out within S38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and S70 of Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

S66(1) of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires LPAs to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant planning permission.

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The Growth and Infrastructure Act achieved Royal Assent on 25 April 2013.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Habitat Regulations 1994 may also be relevant.

The Environment Act 2021.

8.2 Statutory Development Plan

The application has been considered against the policies of the Local Plan, including the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (adopted July 2013) and the Site Allocations Local Development Document (adopted November 2014) as well as government guidance.

The Core Strategy was adopted on 17 October 2011 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include Policies PSP2, CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP8, CP9, CP10, CP11 and CP12.

The Development Management Policies Local Development Document (LDD) was adopted on 26 July 2013 after the Inspector concluded that it was sound following Examination in Public which took place in March 2013. Relevant policies include DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM6, DM7, DM8, DM10 and DM13 and Appendices 2 and 5.

Site Allocations Local Development Document (SALDD) was adopted on 25 November 2014 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public.

Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2041 (Referendum Version March 2026, made June 2026). Relevant Policies include: AL1, AL2, AL3, AL4, AL5, AL6, AL10 and AL19.

8.3 Other Material Considerations

In August 2026 the NPPF was updated. Relevant policies include DM3, DM5, DM6, S3, S5, CC1, CC2, CC3, HO7, HO8, L2, L3, GB6, GB7, GB8, DP3, DP4, TR3, TR4, TR6, TP8, HC3, P2, P3, F4, F7, F8, N2, N3, HE4, HE5, HE6.

The new Three Rivers Local Plan 2026-2042 reached publication stage on 31 July 2026, with the Regulation 19 consultation taking place from 31 July 2026 – 25 September 2026. The consultation period has now expired. The Local Plan is presented in two parts. Part I contains detailed planning policies and supplementary appendices, which will be used for determining development proposals. Part II details the site allocations (including site specific requirements), supporting the delivery of the planning policies. The Local Plan 2026-2042 (pre-submission version, July 2026) can be afforded limited weight. Relevant policies include HOU1, HOU2, HOU3, GB1, CNZ1, CNZ2A, BLG1, BGL2, BGL4, BGL6, ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, DH1, DH2, TC1, TC2, TC3 and Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

Open Space, Amenity and Children's Playspace Supplementary Planning Document (December 2007).

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (adopted June 2011).

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (adopted February 2015).

South-West Hertfordshire Local Housing Need Assessment (2024)

Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (June 2024)

Housing Land Supply Update (April 2026)

Stage 1 Green Belt Review – Strategic Analysis (2017)

Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment for Three Rivers and Watford Borough (2019)

Stage 4 Green Belt Review (January 2026).

9 Planning Analysis

9.1 Principle of Development

9.1.1 The application site has not been allocated as a housing site by the Site Allocations Local Development Document (2014) and as such is not identified as part of the District's housing supply. The site should therefore be considered as a windfall site. Policy CP2 of the Core Strategy (adopted 2011) states that applications for windfall sites will be *considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to:*

i. the location of the proposed development, taking into account the Spatial Strategy
ii. the sustainability of the development and its contribution to meeting local housing needs
iii. infrastructure requirements and the impact on the delivery of allocated housing sites
iv. monitoring information relating to housing supply and the Three Rivers housing target.

9.1.2 The Spatial Strategy within the Core Strategy states that new development will be directed towards previously developed land in the urban area of the Principal Town (Rickmansworth) and Key Centres which are identified as most sustainable locations in the District. Whilst it is acknowledged that the majority of the site does fall outside of the settlement boundary, the access road serving the proposed development would be through the Notley Court development which falls within the settlement of Abbots Langley and the application site immediately adjoins the settlement boundary and as such PSP2 of the Core Strategy is applicable.

9.1.3 The development proposes the construction of up to 93 residential units. The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land as required by the NPPF and currently has a 1.2-year housing land supply. The delivery of 93 dwellings would make a positive contribution to much needed housing provision within the district. Additionally,

there has been an undersupply of affordable housing within the district throughout the plan period and as such there is a pressing need for the delivery of affordable housing.

9.1.4 It is noted that the Emerging Local Plan has completed Regulation 19 consultation and this includes future site allocations for housing within the District. The application site is referred to as 'H7' in the Site Allocations Document with an indicative dwelling capacity of 98 dwellings. This document sets out that the site would have a phasing of 1-10 years thus is anticipated to be delivered early within the plan period. Consequently, if permission was granted and delivered within the allowed time period this would meet the phasing if the Local Plan progresses in accordance with the estimated delivery timeframes. Thus, the granting of permission would not prejudice the Emerging Local Plan or result in the premature delivery of housing.

9.1.5 Notwithstanding this, it is important to note that the NPPF makes it clear that evidencing a housing need/unmet housing need is not solely reliant on the current housing land supply. The Housing Delivery Test is also material to this consideration. With regards to evidencing unmet need the NPPF states:

'Development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or ***scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test).***

9.1.6 The latest published housing delivery score for Three Rivers District Council for 2025 sits at just 45% significantly below the 75% delivery as required by the NPPF. Thus, irrespective of the status of the Emerging Local Plan and future land supply there is still an identified evidenced unmet need for housing of which the provision of 93 dwellings would make a positive material contribution towards.

NPPF Policy HO7 relates to meeting housing need and states:

'In applying the policies in this Framework, substantial weight should be given to the benefits of providing homes which will contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community, as identified through needs assessments prepared for the area of the local planning authority and other relevant evidence. This includes, but is not limited to, homes needed for different groups assessed under policy HO1'.

9.1.7 The recent Local Housing Need Assessment identifies that there is an annual affordable housing need (both rented and low cost ownership products) of 527 units. Thus, considering the current housing land supply, housing delivery test score and demonstrated affordable housing need substantial weight will be given to the delivery of both the market and affordable housing which would contribute towards meeting the evidenced needs of the community.

9.2 Existing Use

9.2.1 The application site is currently in agricultural use and forms part of a much larger arable field extended to the north. The Government's 'A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment' sets out the government's 25-year plan to improve the health of the environment by using natural resources more sustainably and efficiently and includes plans to protect the 'best' agricultural land. It was observed on site that the land was used for grazing.

9.2.2 The application is supported by an Agricultural Land Classification Report which identifies the land on the site to be classified as Grade 3b and 4. Grade 3b and 4 fall within the moderate and poor-quality agricultural land. The loss of the land to development would weigh against the proposal; however, it is recognised that the proposal would result in the loss of low quality agricultural land of a wider agricultural unit and it is of the view of officers

that the proposal is not considered to impact on the Government's aim to protect the 'best' agricultural land as the site is not identified as Grade 1 land.

9.3 Impact on the Green Belt

9.3.1 The NPPF (August 2026) sets out that the objective of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts, the essential features of which are their openness and permanence.

9.3.2 Policy GB2 of the NPPF states that Green Belt serves five purposes:

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
c) To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
e) To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

9.3.3 Policy GB6(2) states that inappropriate development, is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Such circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reasons of its inappropriateness and any other harm resulting from the proposed development is clearly outweighed by other considerations. In making this assessment, substantial weight should be given to the harm to the Green Belt which would be caused, including harm to its openness.

9.3.4 Policy GB6(1) states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless it falls within one of the categories in policy GB7. Policy GB7 sets out that the following categories of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate very special circumstances:

a) Development which is for agriculture, horticulture, forestry, or which is solely for nature conservation, restoration and/or enhancement;
b) The re-use, extension, alteration or replacement of an existing building, provided that the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, is lawful in planning terms, and any extension or alteration will not result in a disproportionate increase in size compared to the original building. In the case of proposals for a replacement building, it should be for the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces;
c) Limited infilling in villages lying within the Green Belt.
d) Limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in this Framework or the development plan (for instance, on a rural exception site);
e) The redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed-use including residential), which would not cause substantial harm to openness of the Green Belt;
f) Certain other forms of development, provided the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised, and there would not be a significant conflict with the Green Belt purposes. These are:
    i. Mineral extraction and processing, engineering operations, and transport, electricity network, water and telecommunications infrastructure required in a Green Belt location);
    ii. Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order;
    iii. Material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
    iv. The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments.
g) Development where all of the following apply:
    i. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not

fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

ii. There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed;

iii. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to policy TR3 of this Framework42; and

iv. In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with policy GB8.

h) Residential or mixed-use development which would:

i. Be within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station (applying the definitions in the glossary at Annex B);

ii. Be physically well-related to the station or the settlement within which the station is located;

iii. Be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure;

iv. Not prejudice any proposals for long-term comprehensive development in the same location; and

v. In the case of proposals for major development, comply with policy GB8.

9.3.5 Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) sets out that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, or which would conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Policy DM2 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) notes that "as set out in the NPPF, the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate with certain exceptions, some of which are set out below". Relevant to this current application is a) New Buildings, which states "Within the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances, approval will not be given for new buildings other than those specified in national policy and other relevant guidance". Policy DM2 was adopted prior to the publication of the current NPPF. However, it was adopted after the publication of the original 2012 NPPF, and the Green Belt policies in the NPPF in relation to inappropriate development are not materially different between the two. On that basis, it is considered that Policy DM2 is in accordance with the NPPF and may be afforded weight.

9.3.6 The proposed development is for the erection of up to 93 residential dwellings and associated access and infrastructure. Much of the site is not within a defined settlement, although the access road to the north of Notley Court is located within the settlement boundary of Abbots Langley. Similarly, most of the site is not previously developed land, except for the access to the north of Notley Court.

9.3.7 In this case, consideration is given to GB7g) which requires the development to comply with i)-iv) to be an appropriate form of development in the Green Belt.

9.3.8 In respect of paragraph i), in considering whether the site would constitute Grey Belt land, reference must be had to Annexe 2 of the NPPF which defines Grey Belt as follows:

'For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in policy GB2.'

9.3.9 It should be noted that the council has undertaken a Stage 4 Green Belt Review (January 2026) which now forms part of the Regulation 19 evidence base and therefore holds weight in the assessment of whether the application site contributes to the purposes of including land within Green Belt. The report includes a map (page 29) that identifies provisional grey belt across the parcels that have been assessed at the settlement edge and the application site is identified as provisional grey belt on the map.

9.3.10 In this case, the site is *'any other land'*, as it is not *'previously developed land'*. For it to be considered Grey Belt land, the land needs to not strongly contribute to any of the purposes (a), (b) or (d) of paragraph 1 of Policy GB2 of the NPPF. These purposes are:

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas
b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another
d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.

9.3.11 In considering whether the application site contributes to the purposes (a), (b) or (d) regard must be had to Annexe E: Green Belt Assessments of the NPPF which provides guidance in relation to informing judgements as to whether land can be considered as Grey Belt. In addition, Paragraph 007 of the PPG (Reference ID: 64-007-20250225) is also relevant and sets out the following:

After consideration of the above criteria, any assessment area that is not judged to strongly contribute to any one of purposes a, b, or d can be identified as grey belt land, subject to the exclusion of land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

a) To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas:

9.3.12 The application site lies immediately to the north-east of the settlement edge of Abbots Langley, therefore would be regarded as edge of settlement development. At present, the site itself consists of two fields which are free of built form.

9.3.13 Abbots Langley is identified as a Key Centre in the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy states that Key Centres include a range of medium sized settlements distributed throughout the District. All are fairly 'self-contained' centres that primarily serve the local population. They provide a range of services and facilities, and access to public transport is generally good. Therefore, it is appropriate that a proportion of future development should be located within and immediately surrounding the Key Centres. In this instance, Officers consider that Abbots Langley is not a large built-up area. Furthermore, the northern boundary of the site abuts land which has extant planning permission for a data centre allowed on appeal (LPA Ref: 23/1068/OUT, PINs Ref: APP/P1940/W/24/3346061[M). In their assessment of the appeal scheme against purpose a) the Inspector commented the following:

'In terms of Green Belt purpose a), this is 'to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas'. Regardless of whether Abbots Langley constitutes a 'large built up area', Parcel 1 is well contained by the M25 motorway to the north, Bedmond Road to the west, and the existing settlement edge to the south west. These existing features contain the site to a significant degree and would act as a strong physical boundary to any further outward encroachment.'

9.3.14 Should Members take an alternative view that Abbots Langley should be regarded as a "large built-up area", officers highlight that Annexe E and the PPG sets out that sites which make a strong contribution to purpose a) are likely to be free of existing development and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict or contain development. In addition, they are likely to result in an incongruous pattern of development such as 'an extended finger' of development into the Green Belt.

9.3.15 In this case, the application site is currently open in character, lacks built form except for the access north of Notley Court, and is adjacent to the settlement which makes up Abbots Langley. However, there are physical features such as, Bedmond Road, existing tree line belts and existing residential built form to the west and pockets of development to the east which would contain further development. Beyond that appeal site is the M25. As such, officers consider the site's contribution is weakened and therefore officers suggest that the site makes a moderate contribution to purpose (a).

b) To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one

9.3.16 The PPG states that this specifically relates to the merging of towns, rather than villages. As set out above, Abbots Langley is a Key Centre as set out in the Core Strategy. Furthermore, the Emerging Local Plan categorises Abbots Langley as a Small Town/Large Suburban Settlement rather than a "large built-up area" or town and therefore b) does not apply in this instance. It should be noted that Bedmond to the north of the M25 is a village and not a town.

9.3.17 Should Members take an alternative view, purpose b) is concerned with the relationship between the two nearest towns of Watford and Hemel Hempstead. Even if Members consider Abbots Langley as a small town there is no intervisibility between Hemel Hempstead and Abbots Langley and a significant distance of 3.75km between the two settlements, with other smaller settlements lying in between. Officers highlight that the site is of limited scale and there is already a degree of containment by the existing and consented development which would prevent any further material decrease of the gap. The PPG sets out that the development of a site having a strong contribution to this purpose would be likely to result in the loss of visual separation between the towns. Thus, in this case, there would be no loss of visual separation. The PPG sets out that sites which make a weak contribution are those which form only a very small part of the gap without making a contribution to visual separation. This is supported by the TRDC Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment (as noted the site forms part of the parcel AL2), which concludes that the parcel makes a 'relatively limited' contribution in relation to the merging of towns:

'The land lies in the gap between Abbots Langley and Hemel Hempstead, which in turn contributes to the gap between the towns of Hemel Hempstead and Watford. However, the extent of existing development within the parcel limits its role in preventing the merging of towns.'

9.3.18 This stance is maintained in the Stage 4 Green Belt Review.

9.3.19 Officers therefore suggest that the site makes a weak contribution in relation to purpose (b).

d) To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns

9.3.20 The PPG sets out that areas that make no or only a weak contribution are likely to include those that *'have no visual, physical or experiential connection to the historical aspects of the town'*. In this case, officers consider that that the application site would make a weak contribution to this purpose on the basis that Abbots Langley has no areas of historical significance.

9.3.21 Officers consider that Abbots Langley is not a "large built-up area" meaning neither a) or b) apply in this instance. Notwithstanding this, should Members take an alternative view, officers consider that the application site makes only a moderate contribution to purpose a) and weak contributions to both purposes b) and d) and therefore suggest that the site should be regarded as Grey Belt. It is noted that the Stage 4 Green Belt Review has been published, this document forms part of the Regulation 19 evidence base and therefore can be attributed weight. This document, identifies the parcel, referred to as 'AL2' which includes the application site as well as the reservoir and land on the west side of Bedmond Road, as being provisional Grey Belt.

9.3.22 Policy GB7g)i. of the NPPF also advises that where development utilises Grey Belt land, it must not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan. In this case, whilst it is recognised that there is some impact on encroachment into the countryside (purpose c), it is not considered that the application site if developed would undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area, given its limited scale when viewed against the totality of Green Belt land within the district. Consequently, it is concluded that the proposal complies with paragraph GB7g)i.

9.3.23 Criteria (ii) of Policy GB7g) of the NPPF sets out that development in the Green Belt would not be inappropriate where *'there is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of the development proposed'*. In this case, the applicant is proposing a residential development for the provision of up to 93 dwellings.

9.3.24 The Council cannot demonstrate a five- year housing land supply as required by the NPPF, with the current housing land supply being at 1.2 years and has a housing delivery test score (45%) significantly below the 75% delivery as required by the NPPF. Consequently, there is a significant need for housing within the district which must be afforded significant weight in the decision- making process. In this case, the scheme would deliver 93 residential dwellings of a range of unit sizes (albeit the mix has not been confirmed), providing an opportunity to meet different needs. In addition, it is noted that there is also a significant need for affordable housing within the district. In this case, 50% of the 93 residential units (47) would be for affordable housing. Given the need for housing and affordable housing within the district, it is considered that the proposed development would be in accordance with criteria (ii) of the GB7g).

9.3.25 Criteria (iii) of Paragraph Policy GB7g) sets out that development should be in a sustainable location with particular reference to Policy TR3 of the NPPF. In response, officers consider the location of the site is considered to be sustainable given its edge of settlement location at the edge of Abbots Langley, adjacent to other existing residential properties and within walking and cycling distance to local amenities and schools. The site is approximately 600m (8-minute walk) north-east of Abbots Langley High Street which contains a daily supermarket, post office, cafés and takeaways; pharmacy and pubs. Abbots Langley School is located to the south east on the opposite side of Bedmond Road 130m from the application site entrance, Furthermore, within Abbots Langley is Manor House Recreation Ground and Skate Park, Abbots Langley Cricket Club, Tennis & Table Tennis Courts, Abbots Langley Community Centre and Vine House Health Centre. Leavesden Country Park is situated approximately 1.3km to the south – equivalent to a 15-minute walk. The supporting Transport Statement illustrates that the range of local amenities and facilities accessible are within a 10 – 15 minutes walking distance.

Fig 2.5.1: Proximity of the Site to local services & facilities

Land Use	Local Provison	Proximity to the Site
Education	Abbots Langley Primary School	300m
	Tanners Wood Junior & Infant School	1400m
	Parmiters School	1700m
Retail	Post office	650m
	Abbots Langley High Street	480m
	Budgens	640m
Employment	Abbots Langley High Street	480m
	Abbots Business Park	2,000m
	Leavesdon Studios	2,000m
Leisure	Love Lane Play Area	0m
	Library	480m
	The Boys Home Pub	490m
	Abbots Langley Cricket Club	1,000m
Medical	Abbots Langley Pharmacy	800m
	Abbots Langley Clinic	700m
	Vine House Health Clinic	800m

Above: Extract taken from the supporting Planning Statement (page. 6)

9.3.26 Additionally, the Transport Statement identifies existing footways of varying widths (1.3-2m) on both sides of the carriageway, providing a direct route towards Abbots Langley. The footways typically provide tactile paving and dropped kerbs at appropriate locations. It is noted that there is a stretch 20m south of the junction of Notley Court on the eastern side

of Bedmond Road for approximately 100m which has not footway; however, there are appropriately located crossing points which will enable pedestrians to cross the road to use the available footway on the western side of the carriageway. Consequently, the footway provision between the development and the local facilities is adequate for purpose and would allow pedestrians a safe route to those local facilities. Notwithstanding this, it is proposed to widen the footway between Notley Court and Dairy Way where it is currently 1.3m wide to 2m. Consideration was also given to the footway on the eastern side of Bedmond Road; however, footway widening would be constrained by several trees and a highway drainage feature. Furthermore, the stretch of footway that could be widened is limited to 35m and would largely be for users of the proposed residential development and existing residents/visitors to the properties currently accessed off Notley Court. The existing pedestrian infrastructure and the cost of providing a new footway on the eastern side of the carriageway would significantly outweigh the benefits it would provide. There are no dedicated cycling routes within the immediate vicinity of the site; however, the Kings Langley Circular Route and the Grand Union Canal Towpath are located to the west and the Radlett Loop to the east.

9.3.27 Furthermore, the application site is reasonably well connected to local bus routes. The nearest northbound bus stop is located along Bedmond Road opposite Summerhouse Way, some 240m from the site access. The nearest southbound bus stop is located another 100m further south, immediately north of the Summerhouse Way, road junction with Tibbs Hill Road The bus stops are currently served by services 20 and 320. Service 20 runs between the Holywell Estate in Watford and Hemel Hempstead and includes stops at Hemel Hempstead Railway Station and Watford Junction Railway Station. Service 20 provides a service with a frequency of between 3 per hour (Mon to Fri), 2 per hour (Sat) and hourly (Sun). HCC as Highway Authority consider this service to be sufficient to support the bus as a feasible form of sustainable travel for residents of the new site. A number of other more infrequent services also stop at the nearest bus stops, with H19 serving Love Lane (the northbound stop) and 329, KL80 and R9 serving Summerhouse Way (the southbound stop).

9.3.28 The nearest national railway station is Kings Langley, some 2.6 km from the development site. The railway station offers regular services to destinations such as London Euston and Watford Junction. The journey time to Kings Langley from the proposed development is approximately a 29mins walk, 9mins cycle or 5mins drive.

9.3.29 As such, officers are of the view that the proposed development would be in a sustainable location and this would be in accordance with Criteria ((iii) of Paragraph Policy GB7g) of the NPPF.

9.3.30 Finally, Criteria (iv.) sets out that the development must meet the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs GB8 of the NPPF as follows:

9.3.31 Policy GB8 of the NPPF sets out the following in relation to The Golden Rules***:***

1. *Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, all of the following contributions ('Golden Rules') should be made [footnote 43]:*

    a. *Affordable housing which reflects either:*
        i. *Development plan policy requirements for major development on land within or released from the Green Belt (as established under policy HO5(1)(a)(ii)); or*
        ii. *Until such policies are in place, a contribution which is 15 percentage points above the highest existing affordable housing requirement which would otherwise apply to the development, subject to a cap of a 50% [footnote 44]. In the absence of a preexisting requirement for affordable housing, a 50% affordable housing contribution should apply by default.*
    b. *Necessary improvements to local or national infrastructure; and*

c. *The provision of new green space, or improvements to existing green space, which is accessible to the public. New residents should be able to access good quality green spaces within a short walk of their homes, whether through on-site provision or through access to offsite spaces. This provision should:*
    i. *Make a positive contribution to the landscape setting of the development;*
    ii. *Support nature recovery; and*
    iii. *Meet local standards for green space provision where these exist in the development plan. Where no locally-specific standards exist, development proposals should meet national standards relevant to the development (these include Natural England's standards on accessible green space and urban greening factor and Green Flag criteria). Where land has been identified as having potential for habitat creation or nature recovery within Local Nature Recovery Strategies, proposals should contribute towards these outcomes.*

2. *In considering applications for major development involving the provision of housing on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, substantial weight should be given to the importance of complying with the Golden Rules.*

9.3.32 The proposed development would deliver 50% affordable housing provision. It is noted that the 65%-35% split is not fully in accordance with Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy. In actual numerical terms a 65%-35% is equal to 31-16 unit split; whereas a compliant 70%-30% split equates to 33-14 unit split. Notwithstanding this, it would continue to deliver a significant amount of social rented properties and the difference is not significant. As such, the proposed development is acceptable in line with Policy GB8(1)(a)(i).

9.3.33 With regards to Criteria (b), the proposed development would make improvements to local infrastructure by widening and resurfacing of the footway. In addition, new pedestrian dropped kerbs and tactile / blister paving on the footway on either side of Dairy Way and easy access kassel kerbing and Real Time Information (RTI) screen for the northbound stop /west side of Bedmond Road are requested by the Highway Authority and agreed by the agent. The development would also provide monetary contributions towards off site infrastructure which would be secured by S106 obligations including monetary contributions towards education, waste transfer and healthcare facilities. The infrastructure provisions are set out in detail in Section 9.24 of this report. Whilst the applicant agrees to the principle of the contributions listed there are ongoing discussions on the exact figures being sought. The proposed development would therefore provide necessary improvements to local infrastructure in accordance with this policy.

9.3.34 Criteria GB8(1) (c) requires development to make provisions for green space or improvements to existing green space which is accessible to the public. This provision should make a positive contribution to the landscape setting of the development, support nature recovery and meet local standards for green space provision where they exist in the development plan. The proposal includes new areas of green space, which would be accessible via the existing PRoW network via the right of way Abbots Langley 029 to the south of the site. The supporting Planning Statement sets out that there is potential for the provision of a financial contribution to be made to the enhancement of the Love Lane Play Area which would also be directly accessible via the proposed PRoW link.

Summary

9.3.35 In summary, officers are of the view that the site is Grey Belt as it does not strongly contribute to purposes (a), (b) or (d). In addition to this, as outlined above, there is a clear demonstrable unmet need for residential development in view of the fact that TRDC is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing supply and that the site is located in a sustainable edge of settlement location in accordance with Policy GB7g). Furthermore, the site meets the 'Golden Rules' set out in Policy GB8 of the NPPF. Great emphasis should also be given to paragraph 2 of Policy GB8 of the NPPF, which states that:

'In considering applications for major development involving the provision of housing on land released from the Green Belt through plan preparation or review, or on sites in the Green Belt subject to a planning application, ***substantial weight should be given to the importance of complying with the Golden Rules****.'*

9.3.36 As such, it is considered that the development represents an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt and consequently is acceptable in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM2 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

9.4 Housing Mix

9.4.1 Policies CP1 and CP3 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) require new development to contribute a range of house types and sizes to reflect needs, Policy CP3 also seeks to cater for a range of housing needs which should include provision of housing for the elderly and supported and specialist accommodation.

9.4.2 Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy sets out that the Council will require housing proposals to take into account the range of housing needs as identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and subsequent updates. The need set out in the Core Strategy is 30% one-bedroom units, 35% two-bedroom units, 34% three-bedroom units and 1% four bedroom and larger units. However, the most recent version of the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LNHA) was finalised in 2024 and is the most recent update to the SHMA. The recommended mix for Three Rivers in terms of market housing, affordable home ownership and social/affordable rented housing identified in the LNHA is shown below.

	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4+ Bedroom
Market Housing	4%	21%	42%	32%
Affordable Home Ownership	19%	39%	30%	13%
Social/Affordable Rented Housing	20%	32%	35%	12%

9.4.3 The housing mix is yet to be finalised as Layout is to be dealt with at reserved matters stage when a detailed layout will be established. The supporting planning statement provides an indicative housing mix in the table below.

Fig. 7.3.1.1c Indicative proposed housing mix – 93-unit scheme

Proposed	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4+ bed
Market Housing	0	23	19	4
Affordable Home Ownership	6	8	2	0
Social / Affordable Rented Housing	10	12	9	0
Total	16	43	30	4

Above: Table taken from Section 7.3.0 (page 25) of the supporting Planning Statement

9.5 Affordable Housing

9.5.1 Core Strategy Policy CP4 states that in order to increase the provision of affordable homes in the district and meet local housing need, the council will seek an overall provision of around 45% of all new housing as affordable housing, incorporating a mix of tenures. All new development resulting in a net gain of one or more dwellings will be expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing. As a guide, 70% of affordable housing would be social rented and 30% intermediate.

9.5.2 For a major planning application such as this, it would be expected that all affordable housing is provided on site. This is reflected in Policy CP4 and the Affordable Housing SPD.

9.5.3 The development proposes the provision of up to 93 dwellings. The submitted Planning Statement details that 50% (47 units) of the housing provided would be affordable units. Although layout is a Reserved Matter, the Council would highlight its expectation that the affordable units would be pepper potted throughout the site to ensure that there is no distinction between affordable and market housing on site. This provision would exceed the 45% affordable housing requirement as set out within Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy. The development would also provide the tenure split for rented and ownership products as set out within Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy. The S.106 Agreement would be worded such to refer to the provision of affordable housing dwellings as 50% of the total number of dwellings. This would ensure that if the total number of units proposed at reserved matters stage is less than 93 there would still be a requirement for 50% of the revised total to be affordable. **The affordable housing must be secured at the outline stage.**

9.5.4 Whilst the details submitted are indicative due to Layout being a reserved matter, there is a firm commitment from the applicant that the tenure mix of 65% social rent and 35% intermediate/affordable ownership, and this would be secured via the completion of a S.106 Agreement. It is acknowledged that the proposed development would not be compliant with Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy. As mentioned above a 65%-35% is equal to 31-16 unit split; whereas a compliant 70%-30% split equates to 33-;14 unit split. Whilst officers acknowledge that the development would not be fully compliant with planning policy, it is emphasised that there is a pressing need for affordable housing within the district and this must be afforded significant weight in the decision making process. **The mix of affordable housing would be secured at the reserved matters stage.**

9.5.5 Whilst the housing mix in terms of unit sizes is to be confirmed at reserved matters stage the Housing Officer has raised no objection to the proposal in this regard.

9.5.6 The submitted Planning Statement sets out the affordable dwellings would be 'appropriately distributed throughout the site.

9.5.7 In summary, whilst the proposed development would provide 50% affordable housing provision, the tenure split would not deliver the 70% vs 30% split required by Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy. However, as already set out, officers consider that the pressing need for affordable housing within the district must be given significant weight in the decision making process.

9.6 <u>Impact on the character and appearance of the locality/landscape</u>

9.6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages the effective use of land. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which seeks positive improvements in the quality of the built environment but at the same time balancing social and environmental concerns.

9.6.2 Chapter 12 of the NPPF states that; "The objective of the policies in this chapter is to promote the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions'. Chapter 14 relates to achieving well-designed places stating; 'The objective of the policies in this chapter is to promote high quality, healthy, inclusive and sustainable places, through setting clear expectations about design outcomes and the use of relevant tools and processes'.

9.6.3 Policy DP3 states that development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3.

9.6.4 Policy DP3 sets out a number of principles that development proposals should reflect. The application is in outline form only where all matters are reserved other than the access. The principles of the building heights will be approved as part of this application where the development would be required to be carried out in accordance with the Parameter Plan. However, the detailed aspect of the scheme including landscaping details, design and layout would be considered against NPPF Policy DP3 at reserved matters stage.

9.6.5 Notwithstanding this, as referenced in NPPF Policy DP3 the density of the development is material to the assessment of the outline application. Policy L3 of the NPPF states that outside of settlements, development footprint should make the best use of a site's potential. The application site area is 2.88 hectares resulting in a density of 32 dwellings per hectare. This is below the 45 dwelling per hectare threshold however consideration is to be had to the constraints of the site including the siting of open space and attenuation basins. In addition, it is noted that the proposed number of units at 93 is close to the indicative capacity for the site allocation H7 in the Emerging Local Plan. The proposed density is therefore considered to be acceptable taking into consideration the constraints of the site.

9.6.6 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) seeks to promote buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design the Council will expect development proposals to 'have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area'. Development should make efficient use of land but should also respect the 'distinctiveness of the surrounding area in terms of density, character, layout and spacing, amenity, scale, height, massing and use of materials'; 'have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area' and 'incorporate visually attractive frontages to adjoining streets and public spaces'.

9.6.7 Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) stipulates that the Council will promote high quality residential development that respects the character of the district and caters for a range of housing needs. In addition, Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) states that development should have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area and should make efficient use of land whilst respecting the distinctiveness of the surrounding area.'

9.6.8 In terms of new residential development, Policy DM1 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that the Council will protect the character and residential amenity of existing areas of housing from forms of new residential development which are inappropriate or the area. Development will only be supported where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not result in:

i. Tandem development.
ii. Servicing by an awkward access drive which cannot easily be used by service vehicles.
iii. The generation of excessive levels of traffic.
iv. Loss of residential amenity.
v. Layouts unable to maintain the particular character of the area in the vicinity of the application site in terms of plot size, plot depth, building footprint, plot frontage width, frontage building line, height, gaps between buildings and streetscape features (e.g. hedges, walls, grass verges etc.).

9.6.9 Policy AL4 of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan sets out that development proposals should demonstrate a high quality of design, which responds and integrates well with its surroundings, and meets the changing needs of the population of the neighbourhood area. In addition, they should minimise their impacts on the natural and historic environment.

9.6.10 A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment supports the application and details that the site benefits from surrounding existing vegetation and built form that provides an effective visual barrier to the site. In addition, receptors within proximity to the site and that have an

elevated, and unrestricted views are likely to appreciate a change by the introduction of residential housing. However, any changes are considered short-term until mitigation planting has matured and materials weathered. It concludes that the development of the site will be seen within the same context as the existing residential properties within the northern extents of Abbots Langley and is therefore not out of context within the surrounding landscape. The site is visually enclosed by dense vegetation with only a few localised instances where visibility into the site is possible where there is breaks in the boundary vegetation. For locations further away from the site no change would be appreciated.

9.6.11 As previously noted, this application has been submitted in outline with only the matter of access to be considered. Matters of appearance, layout, landscaping and scale are reserved for consideration as part of a future formal reserved matters application. Therefore, there is no detailed assessment available as part of this application in respect of the potential design of the proposal. Nevertheless. the application is supported by a Parameters Plan (ref. TRDC 001) which demonstrate the parameters of the building heights limiting the built form in the south-west corner of the site to 2.5 storeys given the location of a nearby heritage asset. In the event that Outline planning permission was granted, a condition would require that the subsequent Reserved Matters accords with the Parameter Plan. The wider area of this part of Abbots Langley consists of a variety of house types including three storey and four storey flatted development. In light of this, at this time there are no in principle objections to the heights proposed. The scale of built form would however be subject to careful consideration with regards to design, spacing, layout and orientation of the built form at reserved matters stage.

9.6.12 Officers recognise that the rural character would be impacted were the site to be developed. It is noted from the submitted indicative masterplan that the proposed dwellings would be street fronting with the majority benefitting from private amenity spaces to the rear and off-street parking. Whilst officers recognise that the development would be urbanising relative to the existing situation, given its edge of settlement location, it is not considered that the proposed development would result in harm to the character of the area or wider landscape. Overall, taking into consideration the enclosed nature of the site and surrounding development the proposal would not result in any significant unacceptable harm to the overall character of the surrounding area including street scene or landscape character. The proposal would be in accordance with Policies CP1, CP3 and CP12 of the Core Strategy, Policies DM1, DM7 and Appendix 2 of the DMP LDD and Policy DP3 of the NPPF.

9.7 Impact on Heritage Assets

9.7.1 The site is located in close proximity to Statutorily Listed Buildings and Locally Important Buildings including Tithe Barn – Grade II* Listed; Mansion House Farmhouse – Grade II Listed; Ovaltine Dairy Farm and Cecil Lodge Cottages– Locally Listed.



Above: Application site (outlined green) relative to Statutory Listed Buildings (dotted red) and Locally Important Buildings (dotted purple).

9.7.2 Policy HE5 of the NPPF advises the following with assessing effects on heritage assets:

'Development proposals affecting heritage assets should be accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the assets affected (including any contribution made by their setting) and of the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential effect of the proposal on their significance. The relevant historic environment record should be referred to in making this assessment, and appropriate expertise employed where necessary.'

9.7.3 The application is supported by a Heritage Statement.

9.7.4 Policy HE6 of the NPPF relates to proposals 'affecting designated heritage assets' and states the following:

1. *When considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm, or total loss of its significance.*
2. *Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported.*
3. *Any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight, which should be dealt with in accordance with paragraphs 4 to 6 of this policy.*
4. *Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.*

9.7.5 Policy HE7 relates to 'decisions on non-designated heritage assets' and advises the following:

1. *Development proposals which would have a positive effect on a non-designated heritage asset should be supported.*
2. *Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, this should be weighed against the benefits of the proposal and a balanced judgement made, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.*
3. *Where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, it should only be supported where the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.*

9.7.6 Development Plan Policy DM3 sets out that when assessing applications for development, there will be a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of heritage assets and to putting heritage assets to viable and appropriate uses to secure their future protection. Applications will only be supported where they sustain, conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, character and setting of the asset itself and the surrounding historic environment.

9.7.7 Policy AL6 of the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan sets out that development proposals affecting designated heritage assets, either directly or indirectly, should conserve or enhance the significance of the asset and those elements of the setting that contribute to the significance. This could include, where appropriate, the delivery of development that will make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of, the heritage asset, or reflect and enhance local character and distinctiveness with specific focus on the prevailing styles of design and use of materials in a local area. These details should be explained in a Heritage Statement. It further adds that proposals affecting the non-designated heritage assets, including those on the Abbots Langley Local List, will be determined based on national planning policy.

9.7.8 The Conservation Officer was consulted on the application and raised an objection to the proposal on heritage grounds, primarily due its impact towards the historic setting of Mansion House Farmhouse and the locally important buildings at Ovaltine Dairy Farm.

9.7.9 The application historically formed part of Mansion Farm and, although now separated from the farm complex, remains an open field that contributes positively to its historic semi-rural setting. The Conservation Officer identified that the setting of the farm buildings has already been diminished by the development at Notley Court, which in their view increases the importance of the application site in preserving their remaining rural character. The proposed development would further erode this setting through the fundamental change from open land to built development. The officer raised particular concern with the indicative layout, which included a three storey apartment building close to the historic farm outbuildings. Following these comments the applicant provided a parameter plan identifying a portion of the site where development would be restricted to 2.5 storeys akin to the development at Notley Court. Whilst this has been noted by the Conservation Officer, this does not overcome their principle objection to the change of use of the open field and the loss of the rural setting of Mansion Farmhouse and its associated outbuildings resulting in harm.

9.7.10 With regards to the Ovaltine Dairy Farm, although the Conservation Officer acknowledged that there is no known historical or functional relationship between the application site and Ovaltine Dairy Farm, they considered that the site contributes positively to the buildings' immediate rural setting. The proposed development would be partly screened by Notley Court, but they raised concern that taller buildings would likely remain visible. However; as discussed above, the height of the built form closest to Notley Court, identified on the Parameter Plan would be limited to 2.5 storeys. Nevertheless, the Conservation Officer considers that the development would erode the rural setting of the Ovaltine Dairy Farm locally important buildings, resulting in less than substantial harm to these non-designated heritage assets.

9.7.11 Regarding the Grade II Listed Tithe Barn, the Conservation Officer concluded that the application site does not form part of the Tithe Barn's setting due to its distance, position and existing screening. Thus, concluded that the proposal would unlikely cause harm to the significance of this heritage asset.

9.7.12 To summarise, the Conservation Officer considers that the proposed development would result in harm to the significance and setting of Mansion Farmhouse and its associated outbuildings, as well as the locally important buildings at Ovaltine Dairy Farm. The principal concern is the loss of the site's open, rural character and its contribution to the historic setting of the surrounding farm buildings.

9.7.13 Policy HE6 of the NPPF relating to designated heritage assets advises that where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal. Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed. In addition, Policy HE7 relating to non-designated heritage assets advises that 'where a development proposal would cause substantial harm to, or the total loss of, the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, it should only be supported where the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefits of the proposal, having regard to the scale of the harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.

9.7.14 In this case, the proposed development would deliver up to 93 residential dwellings, with 50% provided as affordable housing. The Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year land housing supply and is only able to demonstrate a 1.2 year housing land supply. As such, there is a significant need for housing within the district. The scheme would deliver up to 93 residential dwellings and therefore would contribute to the housing supply. In addition, the development would deliver up to 47 affordable dwellings. In light of this, it is considered that public benefits exist that would outweigh the low level of harm that would result from the proposed development on the setting of the statutory listed and locally listed buildings.

9.8 Impact on residential amenity

9.8.1 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy advises that development proposals should 'protect residential amenities by taking into account the need for adequate levels and disposition of privacy, prospect, amenity and garden space'. Policy DM1 and Appendix 2 of the Development Management Policies document set out that residential development should not result in loss of light to the windows of neighbouring properties nor allow overlooking, and should not be excessively prominent in relation to adjacent properties.

9.8.2 Residents have raised concerns regarding the impact of a three-storey apartment block towards those neighbouring plots of Notley Court which back onto the application site.

9.8.3 Loss of light, impact on visual amenities and overlooking is not a consideration under this application as the layout is indicative only and as such any harm cannot be identified as part of the outline application. As previously mentioned in this report, a Parameter Plan has been submitted during the course of the application which would restrict the height of the built form in the area of the site which is adjacent to Notley Court to 2.5 storeys. A full assessment of the impact of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale to be made as part of any subsequent Reserved Matters application.

9.9 Pollution – Air Quality

9.9.1 Policy P3 of the NPPF states:

1. *Development proposals should be appropriate for their location, taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, whether these effects are on or off-site; and whether this is as*

a result of the development itself or the product of preexisting conditions in its vicinity. In assessing the potential effects of pollution, consideration should be given to the potential sensitivity of the site, and its intended occupiers and users, as well as that of the environment and population in the surrounding area (including where certain groups could be particularly vulnerable to its effects, such as children and older people).

2. *Within this context development proposals should:*

a. *Provide healthy living conditions for occupiers and users in terms of adequate access to light and avoiding exposure to levels of air, noise, artificial light or other sources of pollution which could have an unacceptable adverse effect on health and the quality of life. Where necessary suitable mitigation measures should be incorporated to secure acceptable living conditions;*
b. *Not give rise to, or contribute to, an unacceptable level of access to daylight and sunlight for neighbouring residents and occupiers, or unacceptable levels of air, noise, artificial light, water, soil or other forms of pollution on or beyond the site. Adverse impacts of this nature should be avoided where possible, or else mitigated to an acceptable degree. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to reduce pollution affecting the wider area (such as through traffic and travel management or improved external lighting);*
c. *Sustain and contribute to compliance with relevant limit values or national objectives and targets for air pollutants including PM2.5. Development proposals should take account of Air Quality Management Areas and be consistent with the objectives of relevant Air Quality Action Plans, Clean Air Plans and Local Air Quality Strategies;*

9.9.2 In relation to air quality, Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that development will not be permitted where it would:

- Have an adverse impact on air pollution levels, particularly where it would adversely affect air quality in an Air Quality Management Area and/or
- Be subject to unacceptable levels of air pollutants or disturbance from existing pollutant sources.

9.9.3 The application is accompanied by an Air Quality Report AQ14971 2025/11/07. The report has been reviewed by the Environmental Health Officer who has confirmed that they accept the findings of the report submitted which demonstrates that the residents/occupants are not expected to be exposed to any pollutants in excess of the National Air Quality Objectives. The report discusses impacts during construction. It identifies that mitigation measures would be required through the submission of a dust mitigation plan (DMP). This will be secured by condition.

9.10 <u>Pollution – Noise and Vibration</u>

9.10.1 NPPF Policy P3.2.d states development should:

d. Mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise, not result in levels of noise exposure which would have a significant observed adverse effect, and maintain the character of tranquil areas (those areas that have remained relatively undisturbed by noise from human sources and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason);

9.10.2 Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) sets out that planning permission will not be granted for development has an unacceptable adverse impact on the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment of existing or planned development, has an unacceptable adverse impact on countryside areas of tranquillity which are important for wildlife and countryside recreation.

9.10.3 The proposal would consist of residential development which would be compatible with the surrounding uses thus would not result in unacceptable noise and disturbance. It is not considered that the construction of the site would result in unacceptable noise and disturbance to those residential properties in the locality of the site.

9.11 Pollution – Light

9.11.1 Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) sets out that development proposals which include external lighting should ensure that proposed lighting schemes are the minimum required for public safety and security, that there is no unacceptable impact on neighbouring or nearby properties or the surrounding countryside or wildlife.

9.11.2 As the application is in Outline, full details of lighting would be required at Reserved Matters stage or via condition if appropriate.

9.12 Pollution – Land Contamination

9.12.1 Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) states that the Council will only grant planning permission for development on, or near to, former landfill sites or on land which is suspected to be contaminated where the Council is satisfied that there will be no threat to the health of future users or occupiers of the site or neighbouring land, and there will be no adverse impact on the quality of local ground water or surface water quality.

9.12.2 The located within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 (SPZ1) which corresponds to the Affinity Water abstraction boreholes (BRIC) for public water supply. Affinity Water initial raised an objection to the application and requested a ground investigation and a risk assessment be undertaken. This investigation and risk assessment was of particular importance due to the proposals for deep bore soakaways as the proposed method for surface water disposal in an SPZ1, as these are opening up potential pathways for pollutants into the aquifer.

9.12.3 In response, the applicant provided a Hydrogeological risk assessment which was reviewed by Affinity Water and concluded that they were satisfied to remove their objection subject to conditions relating to unexpected contamination and surface water drainage scheme.

9.13 Highways and Access

9.13.1 Core Strategy Policy CP10 relates to Traffic and Travel, and states that Development proposals will be expected to contribute to the delivery of transport and travel measures identified as necessary for the development, either on-site as part of the development or through contributions to off-site provision as appropriate. Provision for interchange and access by public transport, walking and cycling will be regarded as particularly important. The policy explains that all development should be designed and located to minimise the impacts of travel by motor vehicle on the district. The development subject of this application is specifically designed to cater for a variety of modes of travel including by motor vehicle but also proposes implementation of external enhancements that will encourage cycling and walking.

9.13.2 Policy CP10 states that ‘Development will need to demonstrate that it provides a safe and adequate means of access, is appropriate in scale to the existing transport infrastructure 26 and where necessary infrastructure can be improved. It is necessary for the impact of the proposal on transport to be fully assessed through a comprehensive Transport Assessment’.

9.13.3 NPPF Policy TR6 states:

1. *Development proposals that are likely to generate significant amounts of movement should be supported by:*

    a. *A transport statement or transport assessment (depending on the extent and significance of the transport issues involved), which is proportionate to the nature and scale of the development, so that the likely impacts of the proposal for transport can be assessed and monitored;*
    b. *A travel plan, which indicates how sustainable transport objectives will be delivered, monitored and managed over time.*

2. *Transport assessments and statements, and travel plans, should reflect the transport vision for the development and the transport strategy for the area in which it is located, and how these are intended to be achieved (including, in the case of travel plans, identifying fallback options if initial measures do not deliver the expected outcomes).*
3. *In assessing movement patterns and potential impacts, including whether they are considered to be severe, reasonable future scenarios should be considered, taking into account impacts at relevant times of the day, potential cumulative impacts, multimodal trip generation and the promotion of sustainable modes of travel, and realising the transport vision for the development itself. Development proposals should be considered having regard to these potential impacts and the other policies in this Framework which are relevant (including TR3, TR4 and DP3(2)(d)).*
4. *Development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.*

9.13.4 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that in ensuring all development contributes to the sustainability of the District, it is necessary to take into account the need to reduce the need to travel by locating development in accessible locations and promoting a range of sustainable transport modes.

9.13.5 Policy CP10 (Transport and Travel) of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that all development should be designed and located to minimise the impacts of travel by motor vehicle on the District. Development will need to demonstrate that:

i) provides a safe and adequate means of access
j) It is appropriate in scale to the existing infrastructure…
k) It is integrated with the wider network of transport routes…
l) It makes adequate provision for all users…
m) It includes where appropriate, provision for public transport either within the scheme or through contributions
n) The impact of the proposal on transport has been fully assessed
o) The proposal is accompanied by a draft Green Travel Plan

9.13.6 In this case, the application is submitted in outline form, however, matters of access are for full consideration at this stage. The highways works include the following:

- Widening of the footway as indicated on drawing 1140-TA10A and resurfacing of the this length of footway.
- New pedestrian dropped kerbs and tactile / blister paving on the footway on either side of Dairy Way and relocation of the bollards as necessary to facilitate safe access.
- Easy access kassel kerbing and Real Time Information (RTI) screen for the northbound stop /west side of Bedmond Road.

9.13.7 The proposed development would be served by the existing simple T-junction access point on Bedmond Road which currently serves Notley Court. The junction is made up of a 5.5m

carriage width with 2m footways on either side. No alterations are proposed to this access point and the Highway Authority consider the provision to be acceptable to support access to the existing and proposed dwellings and is in accordance with HCC's Place & Movement Planning and Design Guidance (PMPDG).

9.13.8 The Highway Authority have confirmed that they raise no objection to the development, subject to a number of conditions. The site is considered to be located within an accessible location within the District with access to services, amenities and public transport routes that would facilitate the reduction in use of private modes of transport.

9.13.9 The Highway Authority have concluded that the proposal would not have an unreasonable impact on the safety and operation of the surrounding highway. The applicant would need to enter into a Section 278 Agreement with HCC to cover the technical approval of the design, construction and implementation of the necessary highway works. Therefore, HCC has no objections on highway grounds to the application, subject to the inclusion of conditions and a legal agreement. The conditions would relate to the submissions of a Travel Plan Statement and Construction Management Plan, offsite highway improvements and implementation of access roads, parking and service areas. Informatives for the applicant have also been suggested. The proposed development is therefore considered acceptable and in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP10 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and the NPPF (2026).

9.14 Drainage & Flood Risk

9.14.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) requires all development in Three Rivers to contribute to the sustainability of the District, by minimising flood risk through the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems. Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) refers to Flood Risk and Water Resources, and states that development will only be permitted where it would not be subject to unacceptable risk of flooding. It also states that Development in all areas should include Sustainable Drainage Systems to reduce surface water runoff.

9.14.2 Policy DM8 (Flood Risk and Water Resources) of the Development Management Policies LDD advises that development will only be permitted where it would not be subject to unacceptable risk of flooding and would not unacceptably exacerbate the risks of flooding elsewhere and that the Council will support development where the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater are protected and where there is adequate and sustainable means of water supply. Policy DM8 also requires development to include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs).

9.14.3 A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted and reviewed by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA).

9.14.4 The assessment confirms that the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 as defined by the Environment Agency. Flood Zone 1 signifies areas with the lowest probability of flooding (less than a 0.1% annual probability of river or sea flooding, equating to less than 1 in 1000 chance). The assessment also indicates the site is at very low risk of surface water flooding and not at significant risk from reservoirs, groundwater or sewer flooding.

9.14.5 The FRA sets out a drainage strategy based on infiltration, including the use of permeable paving, rain gardens and an infiltration basin discharging to deep borehole soakaways within the underlying chalk strata. Infiltration testing presented in the FRA indicates that deep infiltration is feasible and is the preferred drainage solution in accordance with the drainage hierarchy.

9.14.6 As this is an outline application and detailed drainage design has not yet been provided, the LLFA have no objection in principle, subject planning conditions to secure the detailed design, implementation and long-term management of the surface water drainage system.

9.14.7 Thames Water have confirmed that they have identified an inability of the existing sewage treatment works infrastructure to accommodate the needs of the development proposal and require a condition be attached to any planning permission that does not allow the occupation of the development until all sewage works upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed, or a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed. Officers consider this approach to be acceptable.

9.14.8 With regards to both Foul Water network Thames Water were unable to determine the Foul water infrastructure needs of this application. Thames Water attempted to contact the developer to obtain this information and agree a position for foul water drainage, but have been unable to do so in the time available and as such, Thames Water request that a condition be added to any planning permission with regards to foul water capacity details.

9.14.9 Regarding the Surface Water network, the application indicates that surface water will not be discharged to the public network and as such Thames Water has no objection, however approval should be sought from the Lead Local Flood Authority. This has been confirmed by the LLFA as the development includes attenuation basins on site.

9.14.10 Thames Water do not have any objection to the above planning application, based on the information provided.

9.14.11 In summary, subject to the conditions suggested by both the LLFA and Thames Water, the development is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

9.15 Parking

9.15.1 Three Rivers District Council are the Parking Authority. Appendix 5 of the Development Management Policies LDD sets out the requirements for off-street car parking provision as follows:

1 bedroom - 1.75 spaces (1 assigned space)
2 bedroom - 2 spaces (1 assigned space)
3 bedroom - 2.25 spaces (1 assigned space)
4 or more bedrooms- 3 spaces (3 assigned spaces)

9.15.2 As this is an outline application, the car parking details will be considered at reserved matters stage; however, at this outline stage it is required to demonstrate that car parking can be accommodated on site in accordance with the local standards. The plans submitted are indicative only and thus the provision of vehicular and cycle parking spaces have not yet been determined. Due to the scale of the site, it is reasonable to assume that sufficient parking could be provided to serve the development. The submitted Planning Statement sets out that the indicative masterplan is based on the provision of 1 car parking space for the 1-bed flats; 2 spaces for the 2 and 3-bed units and 3 spaces for the 4-bed units. In addition, 10 visitor spaces are shown. The Highway Authority have commented that the width of the parking spaces should be 2.5m by 5m for a standard space and increased to 2.7m if there is any obstruction on one side or to 2.9m if there is an obstruction on both sides. Any proposed perpendicular parking spaces would need to be provided at a size of 6m by 2.5m.

9.15.3 The Highway Authority commented that EV charging must be demonstrated as part of reserved matters stages and shown to be in line with Building Regulations.

9.16 Refuse and Recycling

9.16.1 Policy DM10 (Waste Management) of the DMLDD advises that the Council will ensure that there is adequate provision for the storage and recycling of waste and that these facilities are fully integrated into design proposals. New developments will only be supported where:

a) The siting or design of waste/recycling areas would not result in any adverse impact to residential or work place amenity
b) ii) Waste/recycling areas can be easily accessed (and moved) by occupiers and by local authority/private waste providers
c) iii) There would be no obstruction of pedestrian, cyclists or driver site lines

9.16.2 The County Council's adopted waste planning documents reflect Government policy which seeks to ensure that all planning authorities take responsibility for waste management. This includes ensuring that development makes sufficient provision for waste management and promotes good design to secure the integration of waste management facilities with the rest of the development and ensuring that the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse/recovery opportunities and minimises offsite disposal.

9.16.3 HCC would require a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) to be submitted which should aim to reduce the amount of waste produced on site.

9.16.4 In relation to minerals, the site falls entirely within the 'Sand and Gravel Belt' as identified in HCC's Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016. The Sand and Gravel Belt', is a geological area that spans across the southern part of the county and contains the most concentrated deposits of sand and gravel throughout Hertfordshire. Whilst the site falls within the Sand and Gravel Belt, British Geological Survey (BGS) data does not identify any potential superficial sand/gravel deposits beneath the application site. Given the lack of deposits beneath the site, the Minerals Planning Authority does not have any mineral sterilisation concerns.

9.17 In respect of domestic and commercial waste, it is considered that further details regarding the storage and management of waste on site would be considered at the reserved matters stage.

9.18 <u>Open Space</u>

9.18.1 Policy DM11 of the Development Management Policies LDD states that developments of 25 or more dwellings or 0.6ha (whichever is greater) should make provision on site for open space and play space. 10% of the site area should be set aside as open space, and where the development is likely to be occupied by families with children 2% of the site area should provide formal equipped play facilities. Where open space is provided on site, the Council will also seek to ensure the proper maintenance of the space and guidance on the provision and maintenance of open space and children's play space is set out in the Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space Supplementary Planning Document.

9.18.2 The application only provides indicative details of the layout of the site, and therefore a full assessment of the quality of the accommodation and quantum and quality of amenity space cannot be made at this time. The supporting Planning Statement sets out that the proposed development would provide around 15% of the Site as open space, including the attenuation basins, as open space in compliance Policy DM11. It is considered that given the nature of the site sufficient space would be available to provide acceptable levels of amenity space provision to serve new residential development. This would be fully considered as part of any subsequent Reserved Matters application.

9.18.3 The Planning Statement sets out that given the close proximity of the Love Lane Play Area, which will be easily accessed via the proposed footpath link to the south, it is proposed that a financial contribution be made to the enhancement of this existing facility.

9.19 <u>Impact on Trees</u>

9.19.1 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy advises that development proposals should ensure that development is adequately landscaped and is designed to retain, enhance or improve

important existing natural features; landscaping should reflect the surrounding landscape of the area and where appropriate integrate with adjoining networks of green open spaces.

9.19.2 Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD advises that development proposals for new development should be submitted with landscaping proposals which seek to retain trees and other landscape and nature conservation features. Landscaping proposals should also include new trees to enhance the landscape of the site and its surroundings as appropriate.

9.19.3 NPPF Policy N3 states:

1. In recognition of the benefits which trees can provide for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the character and quality of the built environment, development proposals should:

a. Make new streets tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets), and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards;
b. Ensure that the selection of species and their placement is compatible with highways and other infrastructure requirements and the needs of different users of public spaces; and will be effective in helping to adapt to the effects of climate change and delivering other environmental benefits. Suitable arboricultural advice should be sought, and proposals discussed with highways and trees officers where necessary, so that the right trees are planted in the right places; and 33
c. Make provision for the long-term maintenance of both existing and newly-planted trees which form part of the development.

9.19.4 The site consists of an open field used for grazing. There are no protected trees located within or nearby the application site; however, there are several trees which line the boundary of the site. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Method Statement has been submitted in support of the application. The AIA and Method Statement sets out that the development proposals are in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'. Adequate protection can be provided to ensure all retained trees are protected throughout development in the form of barriers and/or ground protection. The development proposal incorporates the majority of the better, more sustainable specimens of trees on site. All of the 'A' and 'B' category trees are to be retained and protected throughout the development. All of the trees proposed for removal are in the lower two categories, 'C' and 'U', and are not of a quality that should represent any constraint to development.

9.19.5 The Number of trees to be removed as a direct result of the current design:

BS Category	Number of individual trees	Tree Groups
U	3	1
A	0	0
B	0	0
C	3	2

Above: Table taken from AIA (page 3) showing number of trees removed and their category.

9.19.6 The Method Statement sets out that where excavation for the drainage features are required within retained RPAs, a sensitive methodology is to be used. In addition, where proposed new hard surfaces encroach into the RPA of trees highlighted for retention, sensitive surface construction will be required. Lastly, the statement is support by a Tree Protection Plan referenced PR124773-03A.

9.19.7 The relationship between the buildings and retained trees is sustainable and does not result in any situations which may result in unreasonable pressure to prune requests from future occupants.

9.19.8 The Tree and Landscape Officer raised no principle objections on tree impact grounds. This application has been submitted in outline form, with landscaping to be considered as part of a later reserved matters submission. Any planting would be required to be sited and of a scale and density that would not overshadow the proposed properties and lead to future pressure to fell or lop the trees in the future.

9.20 Wildlife & Biodiversity

9.20.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This is further emphasised by regulation 3(4) of the Habitat Regulations 1994 which state that Councils must have regard to the strict protection for certain species required by the EC Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive places a legal duty on all public bodies to have regard to the habitats directive when carrying out their functions.

9.20.2 NPPF Policy N2 states:

1. *To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should:*

a. *Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);*
b. *Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible;*
c. *Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments;*
d. *Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings;*
e. *Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation;*
f. *Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective; and*
g. *Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management.*

2. *If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated for, then the development should be refused.*

9.20.3 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that; "all development in Three Rivers will contribute to the sustainability of the District. This means taking into account the need to" (amongst other things) (f) "protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment from inappropriate development and improve the diversity of wildlife and habitats". Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) advises that; "The

Council will seek a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure, through the protection and enhancement of assets and provision of new green spaces".

9.20.4 Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) advises that development should result in no net loss of biodiversity value across the District as a whole.

9.20.5 The site mostly comprises two fields of modified grassland that have been grazed by horses, bramble and mixed scrub, and lines of trees around the boundaries. The proposed development will lead to the clearance of the grassland, and sections of mixed scrub. Herts Ecology have confirmed that they raise no objections to the baseline calculations of the site. Furthermore, they have confirmed that sufficient surveys have been carried out to determine the outline application in regards to protected species. They added that method statements based on the mitigation within the Ecology Impact Assessment ("EcIA") including its Appendix for but not limited to badgers, reptiles, nesting birds, non-licensable mitigation for bats and great crested newts as well as standard best practice measures to protect commuting and foraging mammals such as badgers and hedgehogs should be submitted for approval to the LPA. Herts Ecology advised that these are best demonstrated within an ecological section of a Construction Environmental Management Plan which would be secured by condition.

9.20.6 With regard to enhancement measures, the EcIA notes that Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculations will be undertaken once design plans have been finalised, however, the BNG Report concludes that to ensure this development achieves a net gain in biodiversity, the loss of habitat units and trading down will be addressed through off-site habitat creation and/or enhancement measures.

9.20.7 The EcIA also recommends that integrated bird and bat boxes and hedgehog highways be incorporated into the proposed development.

9.20.8 The recommendations for species enhancements are considered necessary to be compliant with the provisions of the NPPF.

9.20.9 In summary, Herts Ecology recommend the proposed development is acceptable in accordance with Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies document (adopted 2013) and NPPF (2026).

9.21 Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain

9.21.1 Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sets out that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the 'biodiversity gain condition' requiring development to achieve a net gain of 10% of biodiversity value.

9.21.2 This application is subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain. A biodiversity metric and biodiversity net gain assessment have been submitted.

9.21.3 The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment shows that the proposed development would result in a net loss of -10.66 Area Habitat Biodiversity Units (-42.19%) and a net gain of +0.4 Linear Biodiversity Units (+23.29%).

9.21.4 Herts Ecology have advised that as a net loss has been shown, and the trading rules have not been met, in line with government guidance it would generally be inappropriate for concerns about the ability to discharge the condition to be used as a reason to refuse an application. However, the applicant are aware that the general biodiversity condition is a pre-commencement condition they will need to address the condition at post-determination of the application.

9.21.5 However, Herts Ecology have confirmed that the proposed enhancements on-site - the creation of 'good' condition 'Other Neutral Grassland and Mixed Scrub' and the planting of 47 new trees - would be considered 'significant' and therefore would need to be legally secured for 30 years.

9.21.6 At the biodiversity gain plan stage an updated metric will need to be submitted showing how a net gain can be delivered. This could be either by the provision of further onsite non-significant enhancements, onsite enhancements that can be secured at the post determination stage, or by the use of an off-site location or by purchase of third-party biodiversity units from a habitat bank. As a last resort if an off-site location or suitable units to purchase cannot be found Statutory Biodiversity Credits would need to be purchased. In this latter case the applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the LPA that all other options have been fully explored and that the BNG hierarchy has been followed. Given that BNG for this site is significant, Herts Ecology have recommended that a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) is secured by condition. This shall demonstrate how the habitat enhancement and creation, and subsequent target habitat conditions on-site will be created, enhanced, and monitored over 30 years following the completion of the capital works required to create them. Officers have calculated the monitoring fee to be £5,900.

9.21.7 In summary, officers consider that the development would secure a significant biodiversity net gain and would therefore be acceptable and in accordance with Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in this regard.

9.22 Safety & Security

9.22.1 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy advises that all development in Three Rivers will contribute to the sustainability of the District. This means taking into account the need to, for example promote buildings and public spaces that reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. Policy CP12 also requires that development proposals design out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour through the incorporation of appropriate measures to minimise the risk of crime and create safe and attractive places.

9.22.2 The Community Safety Intervention Officer has been consulted on the application and provided some initial suggestions and recommendations which will be considered at Reserved Matters stage.

9.23 Energy Efficiency

9.23.1 NPPF Policy CC2 states:

1. In order to contribute to climate change mitigation and the transition to net zero, development proposals should, where relevant to the proposal:

a. Accord with policies TR3 and TR4 so that sustainable patterns of movement are prioritised, opportunities are taken to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport, and infrastructure is provided to support the transition to zero-emission vehicles;

b. Support good access to facilities in order to limit the need to travel, whether through the development's location, through development densities which improve catchment populations for local services, or by incorporating community facilities and premises to support local employment opportunities;

9.23.2 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy requires the submission of an Energy and Sustainability Statement demonstrating the extent to which sustainability principles have been incorporated into the location, design, construction and future use of proposals and the expected carbon emissions.

9.23.3 Policy DM4 of the DMLDD requires applicants to demonstrate that development will produce 5% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L (2013) requirements having regard to feasibility and viability. This may be achieved through a combination of energy efficiency measures, incorporation of on-site low carbon and renewable technologies, connection to a local, decentralised, renewable or low carbon energy supply. The policy states that from 2016, applicants will be required to demonstrate that new residential development will be zero carbon. However, the Government has announced that it is not pursuing zero carbon, and the standard remains that development should produce 5% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L (2013) requirements having regard to feasibility and viability.

9.23.4 The application has been accompanied by an Energy and Sustainability Statement which details that the proposed development would provide a 63% carbon reduction which would exceed the 5% requirement to comply with Policy DM4. The strategy incorporates significant energy efficiency measures, including enhanced building fabric and passive design features, and is supported by low-carbon technologies such as Air Source Heat Pumps. Full details would be provided at reserved matters stage; however, the development is considered acceptable in respect of Policy DM4 of the Development Management Policies LDD and the NPPF.

9.24 Infrastructure Contributions

9.24.1 Policy CP8 of the Core Strategy requires development to make adequate contribution to infrastructure and services. The Three Rivers Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule sets out that the charge per sqm of residential development in this area is £120 (plus indexation).

9.24.2 In order to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms, a number of Heads of Term are required to be secured vis a S106 Agreement. These are set out in the relevant sections of the analysis above, however, are summarised in the table below.

Authority	Reason	Amount
HCC Highways	Evaluation and Support Fee for Travel Plan for 5 years post full occupation	£1,200 per annum (overall sum of £6000 and index-linked RPI March 2014)
HCC Growth & Infrastructure Unit	Secondary Education Contribution towards the delivery of the new secondary school and/or provision serving the development	£751,198 (which includes land costs of £14,835) index linked to BCIS 1Q2024 and BCIS Regional Factor*
HCC Growth & Infrastructure Unit	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Contribution towards new Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) special school places (WEST) and/or provision serving the development	£137,722 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024 and BCIS Regional Factor*
HCC Growth & Infrastructure Unit	Waste Service Transfer Station Contribution towards increasing capacity at Waterdale Transfer Station and/or provision serving the development	£9,920 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024*****

HCC Growth & Infrastructure Unit	HCC Monitoring Fees	These will be based on the number of triggers within each legal agreement with each distinct trigger point attracting a charge of £420 (adjusted for inflation against RPI Jan 2024).
ICB	To provide additional primary healthcare services arising from the proposed development	£155,496 indexed from the date of the planning permission
National Health Service	Mental Health costs	£31,519.56
National Health Service	Community Healthcare costs	£322,799.25
TRDC	BNG Monitoring Fee (30 years)	£7,580
TRDC	Affordable Housing	50% Affordable housing split including 31 social rented dwellings and 16 affordable rented/intermediate dwellings.
TRDC	Affordable Housing Monitoring Fee	£673
TRDC	Local Lane Play Area Enhancement	TBC and shall be reported to Members if known at time of the meeting

*****As this is an outline application, the contribution figure provided at this stage is indicative only, and a recalculation of contributions will be required at the reserved matters stage when the development mix is confirmed.

9.24.3 It is noted that the Ambulance Service have requested contributions to facilitate infrastructure as a direct result of the development. The LPA consider that this falls within the CIL provisions where a bid can be made via the relevant process rather than being tied to the planning permission.

9.24.4 The applicant is aware of the above contributions; however, the applicant is currently in disagreement with the requested contributions sought by the HCC Growth and Infrastructure Unit (HCC GIU) referring to the Council's Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (August 2025) within which it states that the Education and Healthcare Facilities will be covered by CIL contributions. As such, the applicant contends that the council has clearly set out that Education & Healthcare Facilities should be sought through CIL. The applicant therefore consider the Council should not be requesting both monies from CIL as well as other contributions which cover Education & Healthcare Facilities as part of S.106 agreement. The applicant is currently engaging with the HCC Growth and Infrastructure Unit on the financial contributions sought and Members will be updated verbally at the meeting.

9.25 <u>Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development and Planning Balances</u>

9.25.1 Although the NPPF maintains a presumption in favour of sustainable development, the previous Paragraph 11 has been replaced. Section 4 of the NPPF states that the objective of the policies in this chapter is to meet development needs through sustainable patterns of development, including maximising the potential for growth on suitable land within settlements.

9.25.2 The application site falls both within and outside the settlement boundary of Abbots Langley, but it is only the access that falls within the settlement. In any event, Policy S3(2) states the following:

'Where a development proposal falls partly within and partly outside a settlement, policies S4 and S5 should be applied to the relevant parts which are inside or outside of the settlement boundary (as appropriate), before coming to an overall view on the proposal.'

9.25.3 In applying Policy S4, development proposals should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assess against the national decision-making policies in the Framework. Having regard to S4(2) it is not considered that the development proposal would have a substantial adverse impact in relation to those listed at S4(2)a)-c).

9.25.4 NPPF Policy S5 'Principle of development outside settlements' applies to the application site outside the settlement. As the development is considered to represent appropriate development within the Green Belt NPPF Policy S5.5 is applicable which states:

'This policy does not apply to development proposals in the Green Belt or on land designated as Local Green Space, which should instead be determined in accordance with policies HC8, GB6, GB7 and/or GB8 (as appropriate). However, where development would not be inappropriate in these locations (through the application of policies HC8 and GB7), proposals should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework, and applying paragraph 2 of this policy.'

9.25.5 NPPF Policy S5.2 states:

'In applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.'

9.25.6 The Council can only demonstrate a 1.2 year housing land supply and only has a 45% housing delivery test score. As a result, there is an evidenced unmet need for housing including affordable housing within the District. In respect of Policy S5 it has been identified that the proposed development would result in a low level of harm to the setting of the Grade II Listed Building. Heritage assets are an asset of particular importance. Although this harm would weigh against the proposal in the balancing exercise, as identified within Section 7.6 of this report, it is not considered that this identified level of harm would provide a reason to refuse the development and would not fail to comply with the national decision-making policies as set out in chapter 20 of the NPPF.

9.25.7 In accordance with NPPF Policy S5.(2) an assessment should be made as to whether the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be substantially outweighed by adverse effects.

9.25.8 The planning application consideration is assessed (both harms and benefits) against the following weightings: substantial, significant, moderate and no weight.

9.25.9 With regard to any adverse effects the proposed development would result in low level harm to the setting of a Grade II Listed Building and locally listed buildings. In accordance with Section 66 of The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 considerations are as follows:

'special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess'.

9.25.10 The NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation and any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight. The weight attached to the level of identified harm is a planning judgement.

9.25.11 In light of the policy and legislative context of the weight that should be attributed to the protection of heritage assets, significant weight would be attributed to the low level harm to the setting of the Grade II Listed building and locally listed buildings.

Benefits of the Scheme

9.25.12 Provision of Housing – The delivery of 93 homes will make a significant contribution to the Council's identified shortfall in housing delivery. Considering the 1.2-year housing land supply and the council's housing delivery test score there is a significant need for housing substantial weight is attributed to the delivery of 46 market houses. In accordance with NPPF Policy HO7 Substantial weight is attributed to the delivery of 2, 3 and 4 bed market houses. As such it is considered by officers that the need for housing within Three Rivers should be afforded **significant weight** in the decision-making process.

9.25.13 The need for Affordable Housing - In addition, the proposed development would also deliver 50% affordable housing. There is a commitment from the applicant that the tenure mix of 65% social and affordable rent and 35% intermediate ownership. Whilst this does not strictly comply with Policy CP4 there is a pressing need for affordable housing within the District. Whilst the housing mix has not yet been confirmed, it is considered that the proposal would still deliver a range of housing types across all tenures, with the Housing Officer being supportive in principle of the proposal. As such it is considered by officers that the need for affordable housing within Three Rivers should be afforded **significant weight** in the decision-making process.

9.25.14 Compliance with the Golden Rules - It is also emphasised that the development would comply with the 'Golden Rules'. Policy GB8 of the NPPF sets out that 'a development which complies with the Golden Rules should be given **significant weight** in favour of the grant of permission'.

9.25.15 Infrastructure – The proposed development will make contributions to infrastructure provisions which would be as a direct result of the proposed development as such **no weight** is attributed to the provision of contributions towards infrastructure provisions.

9.25.16 Sustainable development - The site is in a sustainable location, policies encourage the provision of development in sustainable locations as such **no weight** is attributed to the sustainable location of the site as this is considered to be compliant with the sustainability policies set out in the Development Plan and NPPF.

9.25.17 However, the proposal would include contributions to enhance existing bus services and will make improvements to existing bus stop which would be of a benefit to existing and future occupants. **Moderate weight** will be attributed to these contributions to improve the existing bus services that would also benefit other residents.

9.25.18 Energy Efficient Development - The energy efficiency of the proposed development which is shown to result in a 59.5% carbon reduction which would exceed the 5% requirement to comply with Policy DM4. This would assist in the council's aim to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045 for the District. It is officers view that this should be afforded **moderate weight**.

9.25.19 Economic Benefits - Officers acknowledge that the development would generate economic benefits both short term during the construction phase and during the lifetime of the scheme

as it would create investment locally. It is officers view that this should be afforded **moderate weight**.

9.26 Conclusion

9.26.1 Whilst officers consider the site Grey Belt and accords with clauses (a) – (d) of Policy GB8 of the NPPF, having regard to the above, it is the view of officers that the benefits of approving development are not substantially outweighed by the adverse effects. Thus, in accordance with NPPF Policy S5.5 the development should be approved.

9.26.2 Notwithstanding the above, if Members reached an alternative view that the site was not grey belt and the proposed development constituted inappropriate development in the Green Belt, officers consider that there are material considerations which amount to very special circumstances which outweigh the harm caused to the Green Belt and any other harm.

Benefits	Harms
• Deliver 93 residential dwellings • Delivery of 50% affordable housing • Compliance with the 'The Golden Rules' • Provision of 15% of new public open space and enhancement to Love Lane play area • Local highway improvements • Short and long-term economic benefits • Energy efficient development	• Impact on setting of heritage assets • Not fully policy in accordance with Policy CP4 (65%-35% tenure split)

9.27 Referral to Secretary of State

9.27.1 The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2024 requires Local Planning Authorities to consult the Secretary of State before granting planning permission for certain types of development. The purpose of the Direction is to give the Secretary of State an opportunity to consider using the power to call in an application under section 77 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. If a planning application is called in, the decision on whether or not to grant planning permission will be taken by the Secretary of State.

9.27.2 Applications required to be referred to the Secretary of State include inappropriate developments in the Green Belt that by reason of their scale or nature or location would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt. Whilst officers consider the site to be Grey Belt and therefore not inappropriate in the Green Belt, in the event that Members conclude that the development subject of this application is acceptable although contrary to the Development Plan, or that very special circumstances exist which are considered to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt by inappropriateness and any other harm, it would be necessary for the LPA to consult the Secretary of State prior to a decision being issued.

10 Recommendation

10.1.1 That authority is delegated to the Associate Director of Planning and Regulatory Services to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a S106 agreement securing the Heads of Terms (set out in 9.24 of the report) and planning conditions (set out at section 10.1.2) AND to make any minor amendments necessary to the Heads of Terms and planning conditions and to grant planning permission subject to those amendments.

10.1.2 Conditions:

C1 Time Limit – Reserved Matters (TRDC)

An application for approval of the reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

C2 Reserved Matters Details (TRDC)

Details of the appearance, landscaping, layout, scale and internal access (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any development begins and the development shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: To prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions, to enable the Local Planning Authority to review the suitability of the development in the light of altered circumstances and to comply with the provisions of Section 92(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act.

C3 Time Limit – Commencement (TRDC)

The development hereby permitted shall commence before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

C4 Parameter Plan (TRDC)

The reserved matters application(s) pursuant to this permission shall be made in general accordance with the approved plan Parameter Plan – (TRDC 001).

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the proper interests of planning in accordance with Policies PSP2, CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP8, CP9, CP10, CP11 and CP12of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policies DM1, DM2, DM3, DM4, DM6, DM8, DM10, DM11, DM13 and Appendices 2 and 5 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013), the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan and the NPPF (2026).

Prior to/or in conjunction with Reserved Matters application(s)

C5 Surface Water Drainage (Lead Local Flood Authority)

Prior to or in conjunction with the submission of each reserved matters application, in accordance with the submitted FRA and Drainage Strategy (Flood Risk Assessment, Ref: 1140-FRA-01, November 2025) and drawing number 1140-FRA03 (Proposed Drainage Strategy, REV D), detailed designs of a surface water drainage scheme incorporating the following measures shall be submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme will be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development. The scheme shall address the following matters:

i. Detailed infiltration testing in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or equivalent) along the length and proposed depth of the proposed infiltration feature/s.
ii. Provision of surface water attenuation storage, sized and designed to accommodate the volume of water generated in all rainfall events up to and including the critical storm duration for the 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) and 1% AEP (1 in 100) rainfall events (both including allowances for climate change).
iii. Detailed designs, modelling calculations and plans of the of the drainage conveyance network in the:

- 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) critical rainfall event plus climate change to show no flooding outside the drainage features on any part of the site.

- 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) critical rainfall plus climate change event to show, if any, the depth, volume and storage location of any flooding outside the drainage features, ensuring that flooding does not occur in any part of a building or any utility plant susceptible to water (e.g. pumping station or electricity substation) within the development. It will also show that no runoff during this event will leave the site uncontrolled.

iv. The design of the infiltration basin will incorporate an emergency spillway and any drainage structures include appropriate freeboard allowances. Plans to be submitted showing the routes for the management of exceedance surface water flow routes that minimise the risk to people and property during rainfall events in excess of 1% AEP (1 in 100) rainfall event plus climate change allowance.

v. Finished ground floor levels of properties are a minimum of 300mm above expected flood levels of all sources of flooding (including the ordinary watercourses, SuDS features and within any proposed drainage scheme) or 150mm above ground level, whichever is the more precautionary.

vi. Details of how all surface water management features to be designed in accordance with The SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753, 2015), including appropriate treatment stages for water quality prior to discharge.

vii. A maintenance and management plan detailing the activities required and details of who will adopt and maintain the all the surface water drainage features for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the construction of the site does not result in any flooding both on and off site and that all Surface water Drainage features are adequately protected to meet the requirements of Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

Pre-commencement conditions

C6 Internal Road Layout & Visibility (HCC Highway Authority)

No development shall commence until full details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to illustrate the following:

a. Main internal access roads with a carriageway width of 5.5m and 2m wide pedestrian footways and designed to support a maximum 20mph speed limit and necessary visibility splays at all junctions. Any shared surface areas within the site would only be acceptable to serve up to 25 dwellings;
b. Visibility splays of 2.4m by 25m illustrated on a scaled plan at any junctions / vehicles accesses within the site.
c. The link between the site and public footpath Abbots Langley 029 to be provided at a width of a minimum of 2m.
d. Layout and dimensions of all parking spaces and associated manoeuvring areas designed in accordance with HCC's Place & Movement Planning and Design Guidance (PMPDG), Part 4, Chapter 6.
e. Turning areas and swept path analysis to illustrate that the largest anticipated vehicles to use site (e.g. refuse vehicle) would be able to safely access the site, turn around on site and egress to the highway network in forward gear.
f. Provision for an on-site refuse/recycling store(s) within 30m of each dwelling and 25m of any collection point;
g. Turning areas and swept path analysis to illustrate that a fire tender (at least 8.1m in length/ 2.9m in width for a standard fire tender and 10.4m in length / 2.9m in width for an aerial ladder appliance) would be able to safely access the site, turn around on site and egress to the highway network in forward gear. The swept path would need to illustrate that a fire tender would be able to get to within 45m of all parts of the footprint of any dwellings / community

buildings and be able to turn around and egress the site in forward gear, whilst also not having to reverse more than 20m. This is to ensure that the proposals are in accordance with MfS and Building Regulations 2010: Fire Safety Approved Document B Vol 1 – Dwellinghouses (and subsequent updates).

Reason: In the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies CP1, CP10 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and the NPPF (2026).

C7 Construction Management Plan (HCC Highway Authority)

No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan: The Construction Management Plan shall include details of:

a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
b. Access arrangements to the site;
c. Traffic management requirements
d. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas);
e. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
f. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
g. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste);
h. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
i. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and any temporary access to the public highway;

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition in order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies CP10 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C8 Dust Management Plan (TRDC)

Prior to the commencement of development, a Dust Management Plan shall be submitted and agreed, in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The Dust Management Plan shall include best practicable means to be incorporated to minimise dust caused by earthworks and construction operations and to prevent the emission of dust from the site. The approved Dust Management Plan shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of neighbouring dwellings in accordance with Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

C9 Preliminary Risk Assessment (TRDC - Environmental Health Officer)

Prior to the commencement of development approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), the following components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

i) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:

- all previous uses
- potential contaminants associated with those uses
- a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors
- potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.

ii) A site investigation scheme, based on (i) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

iii) The site investigation results and the detailed risk assessment (ii) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

iv) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in (iii) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. Any changes to these components require the express consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C10 Intrusive Ground Investigation (Affinity Water)

Prior to the commencement of the development, no works involving excavations (e.g. for foundations (e.g. piling), drainage (e.g. infiltration), geothermal system etc.) shall be carried until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Affinity Water:

- An Intrusive Ground Investigation to identify the current state of the site and appropriate techniques to avoid displacing any shallow contamination to a greater depth.
- A Remediation Strategy/Report if found to be needed following the results of the intrusive investigation detailing how contamination (if found) will be dealt with. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved with a robust pre and post monitoring plan to determine its effectiveness.
- A Risk Assessment identifying both the aquifer and the abstraction point(s) as potential receptor(s) of contamination including turbidity generation from groundworks.
- A Foundations Works Method Statement and Risk Assessment detailing the depth and type of excavations (e.g. piling) to be undertaken including mitigation measures (e.g. turbidity monitoring, appropriate piling design, off site monitoring boreholes etc.) to prevent or minimise any potential migration of pollutants including turbidity or existing contaminants such as hydrocarbons to public water supply. Any excavations must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved method statement.
- Acknowledgement of the need to notify Affinity Water of excavation works 15 days before commencement in order to implement enhanced monitoring at the public water supply abstraction and to plan for potential interruption of service with regards to water supply

Reason: To ensure that the development does not impact public water supply in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C11 Surface Water Drainage (Affinity Water)

Prior to the commencement of development, no works shall be carried out until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Affinity Water:

- A Surface Water Drainage Scheme demonstrating appropriate use of sustainable urban drainage systems that prevent the mobilisation of any contaminants ensuring protection of surface and groundwater.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not impact public water supply in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C12 Interim/Temporary Drainage (Lead Local Flood Authority)

Development shall not commence until details and a method statement for interim and temporary drainage measures during the demolition and construction phases have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This information shall provide full details of who will be responsible for maintaining such temporary systems and demonstrate how the site will be drained to ensure there is no increase in the off-site flows, nor any pollution, debris and sediment to any receiving watercourse or sewer system. The site works and construction phase shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with approved method statement, unless alternative measures have been subsequently approved by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent flooding and pollution off site to meet the requirements of Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

C13 Construction Environmental Management Plan (Herts Ecology)

No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): Biodiversity has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP: Biodiversity shall include but not necessarily be limited to, the following.

1. A review of any ecological impacts and should be informed by the submitted ecological report (Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) by ACD Environment Ltd (report date 18/09/2025).
2. Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
3. Identification of ‘biodiversity protection zones’.
4. A set of method statements outlining practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction.
5. The location and timings of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features. (e.g. daylight working hours only starting one hour after sunrise and ceasing one hour before sunset).
6. Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs, including advanced installation and maintenance during the construction period;
7. The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
8. Responsible persons and lines of communication.
9. The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure sensible working practices which protect ecology on and adjacent to this site in accordance with Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C14 Biodiversity Species Enhancement Plan (Herts Ecology)

Prior to the commencement of development, a Biodiversity Species Enhancement Plan for Protected and Priority Species shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The Plan should be informed by section 8.2 of the ecology report by ACD Environmental, 18/09/2025. With the exception that the sparrow or starling terraces are replaced by universal swift bricks. Bat roosting features and Swift Bricks should be Integrated (built "into" rather than "onto" buildings). Features should be installed in a ratio of one for every two buildings and located according to ecological best practice.

The scheme/ plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following details:

a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures
b) Description, design or specification of the type of feature(s) or measure(s) to be undertaken.
c) Detailed designs to achieve stated objectives.
d) Materials and construction to ensure long lifespan of the feature/measure
e) Proposed Locations shown by suitable maps and plans and where appropriate the elevations of the features or measures to be installed or undertaken.
f) When the features or measures will be installed within the construction, occupation, or phase of the development,
g) Persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures
h) Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant)

Thereafter, the biodiversity enhancement measures shall be carried out and maintained for their designed purpose in accordance with the approved details including timescales and shall be retained as such thereafter.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to protect and enhance ecology on and adjacent to this site in accordance with Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

C15 Site Waste Management Plan (HCC Waste & Minerals Team)

No development shall take place until a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) for the site has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in consultation with the Waste Planning Authority. The SWMP should aim to reduce the amount of waste produced on site and should contain information including estimated types and quantities of waste to arise from construction and waste management actions for each waste type. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved SWMP.

Reason: To promote the sustainable management of waste arisings and contribution towards resource efficiency, in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

C16 Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (Herts Ecology)

The development shall not commence until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) aligning with the HMMP template produced by DEFRA and prepared in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The HMMP shall include:

1. A non-technical summary;
2. The roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;

3. The planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan;
4. The management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the approved Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
5. The monitoring methodology and frequency in respect of the created or enhanced habitat to be submitted to the local planning authority.

The created and/or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP.

Reason: This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that the net gain for biodiversity on site is delivered, maintained and managed in the interests of local biodiversity in accordance Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and for the purposes of para 9(2) and 9(3) of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Prior to any works above slab level

C17 Off-site Highway Improvements (HCC Highway Authority)

A. Notwithstanding the details indicated on the submitted drawings no on-site works above slab level shall commence until a detailed scheme for the necessary offsite highway improvement works, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. These works shall include:

- Widening of the footway as indicated on drawing 1140-TA10A and resurfacing of this length of footway. New pedestrian dropped kerbs and tactile / blister paving on the footway on either side of Dairy Way and relocation of the bollards as necessary to facilitate safe access.
- Easy access kassel kerbing and Real Time Information (RTI) screen for the northbound stop /west side of Bedmond Road;

B: Highway Improvements – Offsite (Implementation / Construction)
Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the offsite highway improvement works referred to in Part A of this condition shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and amenity and in accordance with Policies CP10 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

Prior to Occupation

C18 Travel Plan (HCC Highway Authority)

Prior to the first occupation of any part of the development hereby permitted a detailed Travel Plan for the site, based upon the Hertfordshire Council document Hertfordshire's Travel Plan Guidance, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Travel Plan shall be implemented at all times.

Reason: To ensure that sustainable travel options associated with the development are promoted and maximised to be in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP10 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011).

C19 Foul Water Drainage (Thames Water)

No development shall be occupied until a foul water infrastructure strategy has been submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water. The strategy shall demonstrate that the development would not have an unacceptable impact on the capacity or operation of the relevant sewage treatment infrastructure. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved strategy.

Reason: In order to ensure that sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents associated with foul drainage are prevented, to comply with Policies Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C20 Sewage Works Upgrades (Thames Water)

No part of the development shall be first occupied until confirmation has been provided that either: all sewage works upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water to allow development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan.

Reason: Sewage Treatment Upgrades are likely to be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any upgrade works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C21 Drainage Maintenance & Management (Lead Local Flood Authority)

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity. The Local Planning Authority shall be granted access to inspect the sustainable drainage scheme for the lifetime of the development. The details of the scheme to be submitted for approval shall include:

i. a timetable for its implementation.
ii. details of SuDS feature and connecting drainage structures and maintenance requirement for each aspect including a drawing showing where they are located.
iii. a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. This will include the name and contact details of any appointed management company.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C22 Verification Report (Lead Local Flood Authority)

Prior to first use of each phase of the development a detailed verification report, (appended with substantiating evidence demonstrating the approved construction details and specifications have been implemented in accordance with the surface

water drainage scheme), has been submitted to and approved (in writing) by the Local Planning Authority. The verification report shall include a full set of "as built" drawings plus photographs of excavations (including soil profiles/horizons), any installation of any surface water drainage structures and control mechanisms.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C23 Remediation Scheme (TRDC – Environmental Health Officer)

Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme and prior to the first use or occupation of the development, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced together with any necessary monitoring and maintenance programme and copies of any waste transfer notes relating to exported and imported soils shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved monitoring and maintenance programme shall be implemented.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors in accordance with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

Other

C24 Unexpected Contamination (Affinity Water)

If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site, then no further development shall be carried out until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Affinity Water:

- A Remediation Strategy/Report detailing how contamination will be dealt with. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved with a robust pre and post monitoring plan to determine its effectiveness.

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to unacceptable concentrations of pollution posing a risk to public water supply from previously unidentified contamination sources at the development site and to prevent deterioration of groundwater and/or surface water in accordance with Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

C25 Biodiversity Net Gain Plan (TRDC / Herts Ecology)

The Biodiversity Gain Plan shall be prepared in accordance with the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment dated 7th November 2025

Reason: This is to ensure that the biodiversity and ecological information submitted with the planning application is realised through the Biodiversity Gain Plan, in the interests of local biodiversity and to ensure biodiversity net gain in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

C26 Notification that Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan has been implemented (TRDC)

Notice in writing shall be given to the Local Planning Authority when the agreed Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan ("the HMMP") as secured by Condition 16, has been implemented.

Reason: This is to ensure that the Local Planning Authority have knowledge when the habitat enhancement and creation works have been implemented to enable effective monitoring in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

C27 Compliance – Maintenance of the Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (TRDC)

The created and / or enhanced habitat specified in the approved HMMP (as secured by Condition 16), shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP for 30 years from the date of first operation of the development.

Reason: To ensure that the created and enhanced habitat is maintained for 30 years from the first operation of the development and can be monitored and enforced by the Local Planning Authority, in accordance with Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and for the purposes of para 9(2) and 9(3) of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

C28 Flood Risk Assessment (Lead Local Flood Authority)

All development shall be constructed in accordance with the submitted and approved Flood Risk Assessment (Ref: 1140-FRA-01, November 2025), this includes all new residential dwellings to have a finished floor level raised a minimum of 300mm above any design flood level and 150mm above the surrounding proposed ground level unless otherwise first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed and not increased in accordance with Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and the NPPF (2026).

10.2 Informatives:

I1 Standard Advice: With regard to implementing this permission, the applicant is advised as follows:

All relevant planning conditions must be discharged prior to the commencement of work. Requests to discharge conditions must be made by formal application which includes a fee.

There may be a requirement for the approved development to comply with the Building Regulations. Please contact Hertfordshire Building Control (HBC) on 01438 879990 or at buildingcontrol@hertfordshirebc.co.uk who will be happy to advise you on building control matters and will protect your interests throughout your build project by leading the compliance process. Further information is available at www.hertfordshirebc.co.uk.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - Your development may be liable for CIL payments and you are advised to contact the CIL Officer for clarification with regard to this (cil@threerivers.gov.uk). If your development is CIL liable, even if you have been granted exemption from the levy, please be advised that before commencement of any works It is a requirement under Regulation 67 of The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (As Amended) that CIL form 6 (Commencement Notice) must be completed, returned and acknowledged by Three Rivers District Council before building works start. Failure to do so will mean you lose the right to payment by instalments (where applicable), and a surcharge will be imposed. However, please

note that a Commencement Notice is not required for residential extensions IF relief has been granted.

Following the grant of planning permission by the Local Planning Authority it is accepted that new issues may arise post determination, which require modification of the approved plans. Please note that regardless of the reason for these changes, where these modifications are fundamental or substantial, a new planning application will need to be submitted. Where less substantial changes are proposed, the following options are available to applicants:

(a) Making a Non-Material Amendment

(b) Amending the conditions attached to the planning permission, including seeking to make minor material amendments (otherwise known as a section 73 application).

It is important that any modifications to a planning permission are formalised before works commence otherwise your planning permission may be unlawful and therefore could be subject to enforcement action. In addition, please be aware that changes to a development previously granted by the LPA may affect any previous Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) owed or exemption granted by the Council. If you are in any doubt whether the new/amended development is now liable for CIL you are advised to contact the Community Infrastructure Levy Officer (01923 776611) for clarification. Information regarding CIL can be found on the Three Rivers website (https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/community-infrastructure-levy).

Care should be taken during the building works hereby approved to ensure no damage occurs to the verge or footpaths during construction. Vehicles delivering materials to this development shall not override or cause damage to the public footway. Any damage will require to be made good to the satisfaction of the Council and at the applicant's expense.

Where possible, energy saving and water harvesting measures should be incorporated. Any external changes to the building which may be subsequently required should be discussed with the Council's Development Management Section prior to the commencement of work. Further information on how to incorporate changes to reduce your energy and water use is available at: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/environment-climate-emergency/home-energy-efficiency-sustainable-living#Greening%20your%20home.

I2 Positive & Proactive: The Local Planning Authority has been positive and proactive in its consideration of this planning application, in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The development maintains/improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the District.

I3 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG): The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:

a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Three Rivers District Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangement which mean that the biodiversity gain conditions does not always apply..

Based on the information available, this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun

because the following statutory exemption or transitional arrangement is considered to apply.

The planning permission relates to development to which section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (planning permission for development already carried out applies).

Where the local planning authority considers that the permission falls within paragraph 19 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the permission which has been granted has the effect of requiring or permitting the development to proceed in phases. The modifications in respect of the biodiversity gain condition which are set out in Part 2 of the Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations 2024 apply.

Biodiversity gain plans are required to be submitted to, and approved by, the planning authority before development may be begun, and, if subject to phased development, before each phase of development may be begun.

If the onsite habitat includes irreplaceable habitat (within the meaning of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024) there are additional requirements for the content and approval of Biodiversity Gain Plans. The Biodiversity Gain Plan must include, in addition to information about steps taken or to be taken to minimise any adverse effect of the development on the habitat, information on arrangements for compensation for any impact the development has on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat.

The planning authority can only approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if satisfied that the adverse effect of the development on the biodiversity of the irreplaceable habitat is minimised and appropriate arrangements have been made for the purpose of compensating for any impact which do not include the use of biodiversity credits.

More information can be found in the Planning Practice Guidance online at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain.

I4 Hours of Work: The applicant is reminded that the Control of Pollution Act 1974 allows local authorities to restrict construction activity (where work is audible at the site boundary). In Three Rivers such work audible at the site boundary, including deliveries to the site and running of equipment such as generators, should be restricted to 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday, 0900 to 1300 on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

I5 Storage of materials: The applicant is advised that the storage of materials associated with the construction of this development should be provided within the site on land which is not public highway, and the use of such areas must not interfere with the public highway. If this is not possible, authorisation should be sought from the Highway Authority before construction works commence.

Further information is available via the County Council website at: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

I6 Obstruction of highway: It is an offence under section 137 of the Highways Act 1980 for any person, without lawful authority or excuse, in any way to wilfully obstruct the free passage along a highway or public right of way. If this development is likely to result in the public highway or public right of way network becoming routinely blocked (fully or partly) the applicant must contact the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements before construction works commence. Further information is available via the County Council website at: *https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/business-licences/business-licences.aspx* or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

I7 Debris and deposits on the highway: It is an offence under section 148 of the Highways Act 1980 to deposit compost, dung or other material for dressing land, or any rubbish on a made-up carriageway, or any or other debris on a highway to the interruption of any highway user. Section 149 of the same Act gives the Highway Authority powers to remove such material at the expense of the party responsible. Therefore, best practical means shall be taken at all times to ensure that all vehicles leaving the site during construction of the development and use thereafter are in a condition such as not to emit dust or deposit mud, slurry or other debris on the highway. Further information is available by telephoning 0300 1234047.

I8 Avoidance of surface water discharge onto the highway: The applicant is advised that the Highway Authority has powers under section 163 of the Highways Act 1980, to take appropriate steps where deemed necessary (serving notice to the occupier of premises adjoining a highway) to prevent water from the roof or other part of the premises falling upon persons using the highway, or to prevent so far as is reasonably practicable, surface water from the premises flowing on to, or over the footway of the highway.

I9 Works within the highway (section 278): The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the County Council website at: *https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx* or by telephoning 0300 1234047.

I10 Construction Management Plan (CMP): The purpose of the CMP is to help developers minimise construction impacts and relates to all construction activity both on and off site that impacts on the wider environment. It is intended to be a live document whereby different stages will be completed and submitted for application as the development progresses. A completed and signed CMP must address the way in which any impacts associated with the proposed works, and any cumulative impacts of other nearby construction sites will be mitigated and managed. The level of detail required in a CMP will depend on the scale and nature of development.

The CMP would need to include elements of the Construction Logistics and Community Safety (CLOCS) standards as set out in our Construction Management template, a copy of which is available on the County Council's website at: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx.

I11 Ecology: In order to protect breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young, development should only be carried out during the period October to February inclusive. If this is not possible then a pre-development (i.e. no greater than 48 hours before clearance begins) search of the area should be made by a suitably experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, then works must be delayed until the birds have left the nest or professional ecological advice taken on how best to proceed.

I12 Ecology: If great crested newts, or evidence of them, are discovered during the course of works, work must stop immediately, and advice sought on how to proceed lawfully from an appropriately qualified and experienced Ecologist or Natural England to avoid an offence being committed.

I13 Ecology: To avoid the killing or injuring of wildlife during development, best practice should keep any areas of grass as short as possible and any longer, ruderal

vegetation should be cleared by hand. To avoid creating refugia that may be utilised by wildlife, materials should be carefully stored on-site on raised pallets and away from the boundary habitats. Any trenches on site should be covered at night or have ramps to ensure that any animals that enter can safely escape, and this is particularly important if excavations fill with water. Any open pipework with an outside diameter greater than 120mm must be covered at the end of each working day to prevent animals entering / becoming trapped.

I14 S106 Agreement: The applicant is reminded that this planning permission is subject to either a unilateral undertaking or an agreement made under the provisions of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It is extremely important that the applicant is aware of the stipulations, covenants and obligations set out within any legal agreements tied to the planning permission. This may include the requirement to notify the Council prior to commencement of the development (as defined within the legal agreement) if certain obligations are required to be paid, for example, an affordable housing contribution including indexation.

25/2197/OUT APPENDIX A – CONSULTEE COMMENTS

1.1.1 Abbots Langley Parish Council – Objection

Members refer the Planning Officer to the comments submitted by this Council on 20th August 2021 as part of the Local Plan Regulation 18 Preferred Policy Options and Sites for Potential Allocation Consultation. Specifically for site CFS6, Members still feel development of this land contravenes basic greenbelt principles because it leads to unrestricted open sprawl. For this reason, Members cannot support this application as it stands.

1.1.2 HCC - Minerals and Waste Policy Team – No objection subject to conditions

Minerals
In relation to minerals, the site falls entirely within the 'Sand and Gravel Belt' as identified in Hertfordshire County Council's adopted Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016. The Sand and Gravel Belt is a geological area that spans across the southern part of the county and contains the most concentrated deposits of sand and gravel throughout Hertfordshire.

British Geological Survey Data does identify that there could potentially be some sand/gravel deposits beneath the proposed development site.

Opportunistic extraction refers to cases where preparation of a site for built development, such as excavating the foundations and footings or landscaping works, may result in suitable material being uncovered that could be extracted and processed for use on site as part of the development.

The Minerals Planning Authority would like to encourage the opportunistic extraction and subsequent use of sand and gravel deposits within developments wherever possible. Opportunistic use of minerals will reduce the need to import sand and gravel to the site and make sustainable use of these valuable resources.

Waste
Government policy seeks to ensure that all planning authorities take responsibility for waste management. This is reflected in the County Council's adopted waste Development Plan Documents (DPDs). In particular, these documents seek to promote the sustainable management of waste in the county and encourage Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the potential for minimising waste generated by development.

The National Planning Policy for Waste (October 2014) sets out the following:

'When determining planning applications for non-waste development, local planning authorities should, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities, ensure that:

- *the likely impact of proposed, non- waste related development on existing waste management facilities, and on sites and areas allocated for waste management, is acceptable and does not prejudice the implementation of the waste hierarchy and/or the efficient operation of such facilities;*
- *new, non-waste development makes sufficient provision for waste management and promotes good design to secure the integration of waste management facilities with the rest of the development and, in less developed areas, with the local landscape. This includes providing adequate storage facilities at residential premises, for example by ensuring that there is*

sufficient and discrete provision for bins, to facilitate a high quality, comprehensive and frequent household collection service;

- *the handling of waste arising from the construction and operation of development maximises reuse/recovery opportunities, and minimises off-site disposal.'*

The supporting documents to this application make no reference to the adopted Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (2012). The policies in the adopted DPD (2012) that relate to this proposal, and which must be considered by the Local Planning Authority in determining the application, include Policy 1: Strategy for the Provision for Waste Management Facilities (namely the penultimate paragraph of the policy) and Policy 12: Sustainable Design, and Demolition.

Many of the policy requirements can be met through the imposition of planning conditions.

As a general point, built development should have regard to the overall infrastructure required to support it, including where appropriate a sufficient number of waste storage areas that should be integrated accordingly and facilitate the separate storage of recyclable wastes.

Waste Policy 12: Sustainable Design, Construction and Demolition requires all relevant construction projects to be supported by a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP). Section 8.10 of the Energy and Sustainability Statement notes that a SWMP will be prepared prior to commencement of the project. The county council welcomes this commitment.

The Waste Planning Authority would expect to see a SWMP prepared to support this application. The SWMP must be prepared and agreed in consultation with the Waste Planning Authority prior to commencement of the project. The SWMP must be implemented throughout the duration of the project, from initial site preparation works to final completion of the construction phase.

By preparing a SWMP prior to commencement, early decisions can be made relating to the management of waste arisings and building supplies made from recycled and secondary materials can be sourced, to help alleviate the demand for primary materials such as virgin sand and gravel. Early planning for waste arisings will help to establish what types of containers/skips are required for the project and when segregation would be best implemented for various waste streams. It will also help in determining the costs of removing waste from the site.

As a minimum, the SWMP should include the following:

Project and People

- *Identification of the client*
- *Identification of the Principal Contractor*
- *Identification of the person who drafted the SWMP*
- *Location of the site*
- *An estimated cost of the project*
- *Declaration that the client and contractor will comply with the requirements of Duty of care that materials will be handled efficiently and waste managed appropriately (Section 34 of Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regs 1991)*

Estimating Waste

- *A description of the types of waste that are expected to arise on site (recorded through the use of 6-digit European Waste Catalogue codes) and an estimated quantity for each of the types (in tonnes)*
- *Waste management actions for each waste type (i.e., will the waste be re-used or recycled (on-site or off-site?), recovered or disposed of)*

Space for Later Recordings

- *Space for the recording of actual figures against the estimated figures*
- *Space for the recording and identification of those responsible for removing the waste from site and details of the sites they will be taking it to*
- *Space to record explanations for any deviations from what has been set out in the SWMP, including explanations for differences in actual waste arisings compared to the estimates.*

As a SWMP has not been produced at the planning application stage, the Waste Planning Authority request the following pre-commencement condition be attached to any approved planning application:

***Condition:** No development shall take place until a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) for the site has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in consultation with the Waste Planning Authority. The SWMP should aim to reduce the amount of waste produced on site and should contain information including estimated types and quantities of waste to arise from construction and waste management actions for each waste type. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved SWMP.*

Reason: To promote the sustainable management of waste arisings and contribution towards resource efficiency, in accordance with Policy 12 of the Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2012).

1.1.3 HCC: Highway Authority – No objection, subject to conditions

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as Highway Authority (HA) does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the following conditions:

1. Outline Condition
No development shall commence until full details have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to illustrate the following:

a. Main internal access roads with a carriageway width of 5.5m and 2m wide pedestrian footways and designed to support a maximum 20mph speed limit and necessary visibility splays at all junctions. Any shared surface areas within the site would only be acceptable to serve up to 25 dwellings;
b. Visibility splays of 2.4m by 25m illustrated on a scaled plan at any junctions / vehicles accesses within the site.
c. The link between the site and public footpath Abbots Langley 029 to be provided at a width of a minimum of 2m.
d. Layout and dimensions of all parking spaces and associated manoeuvring areas designed in accordance with HCC's Place & Movement Planning and Design Guidance (PMPDG), Part 4, Chapter 6.

e. Turning areas and swept path analysis to illustrate that the largest anticipated vehicles to use site (e.g. refuse vehicle) would be able to safely access the site, turn around on site and egress to the highway network in forward gear.
f. Provision for an on-site refuse/recycling store(s) within 30m of each dwelling and 25m of any collection point;
g. Turning areas and swept path analysis to illustrate that a fire tender (at least 8.1m in length/ 2.9m in width for a standard fire tender and 10.4m in length / 2.9m in width for an aerial ladder appliance) would be able to safely access the site, turn around on site and egress to the highway network in forward gear. The swept path would need to illustrate that a fire tender would be able to get to within 45m of all parts of the footprint of any dwellings / community buildings and be able to turn around and egress the site in forward gear, whilst also not having to reverse more than 20m. This is to ensure that the proposals are in accordance with MfS and Building Regulations 2010: Fire Safety Approved Document B Vol 1 – Dwellinghouses (and subsequent updates).

Reason: To ensure suitable, safe and satisfactory planning and development of the site in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

2. A: Highway Improvements – Offsite (Design Approval)
Notwithstanding the details indicated on the submitted drawings no on-site works above slab level shall commence until a detailed scheme for the necessary offsite highway improvement works, have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. These works shall include:

- Widening of the footway as indicated on drawing 1140-TA10A and resurfacing of this length of footway. New pedestrian dropped kerbs and tactile / blister paving on the footway on either side of Dairy Way and relocation of the bollards as necessary to facilitate safe access.
- Easy access kassel kerbing and Real Time Information (RTI) screen for the northbound stop /west side of Bedmond Road;

B: Highway Improvements – Offsite (Implementation / Construction)
Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted the offsite highway improvement works referred to in Part A of this condition shall be completed in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure construction of a satisfactory development and that the highway improvement works are designed to an appropriate standard in the interest of highway safety and amenity and in accordance with Policy 5, 13 and 21 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

3. Construction Management Plan
No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the construction of the development shall only be carried out in accordance with the approved Plan. The Construction Management Plan shall include details of:

a. Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing;
b. Access arrangements to the site;
c. Traffic management requirements
d. Construction and storage compounds (including areas designated for car parking, loading / unloading and turning areas);
e. Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;

f. Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
g. Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste);
h. Provision of sufficient on-site parking prior to commencement of construction activities;
i. Post construction restoration/reinstatement of the working areas and any temporary access to the public highway;

Reason: In order to protect highway safety and the amenity of other users of the public highway and rights of way in accordance with Policies 5, 12, 17 and 22 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Informatives
HCC recommends inclusion of the following highway informative / advisory note (AN) to ensure that any works within the public highway are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Highway Act 1980:

Construction standards for works within the highway (s278 works): The applicant is advised that in order to comply with this permission it will be necessary for the developer of the site to enter into an agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority under Section 278 of the

Highways Act 1980 to ensure the satisfactory completion of the access and associated road improvements. The construction of such works must be undertaken to the satisfaction and specification of the Highway Authority, and by a contractor who is authorised to work in the public highway. Before works commence the applicant will need to apply to the Highway Authority to obtain their permission and requirements. Further information is available via the website https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx

AN) Roads that are to remain private: At the entrance of any new roads to remain private, the road name plate should indicate that it is a private road and the developer should put in place permanent arrangements for long-term maintenance.

AN) Estate road adoption (section 38): The applicant is advised that if it is the intention to request that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority adopt any of the highways included as part of this (and subsequent reserved matters) applications as maintainable at the public expense then details of the specification, layout and alignment, width and levels of the said highways, together with all the necessary highway and drainage arrangements, including run off calculations must be submitted to the Highway Authority. No development shall commence until the details have been approved in writing and an Agreement made under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 is in place.

The applicant is further advised that the County Council will only consider roads for adoption where a wider public benefit can be demonstrated. The extent of adoption as public highway must be clearly illustrated on a plan. Further information is available via the County Council's website at: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx

Planning Obligations / S106 Contributions

The following 106 contributions are sought:

A Travel Plan in accordance with the provisions as laid out in Hertfordshire County Council's Travel Plan Guidance, would be required to be in place from the first occupation/use until 5 years post full occupation. A £1,200 per annum (overall sum of £6000 and index-linked RPI March 2014) Evaluation and Support Fee would need to be secured via a Section 106 agreement towards supporting the implementation, processing and monitoring of the full travel plan including any engagement that may be needed along with the provision of Residential Travel Vouchers to each dwelling on site of £100 per house and £50 per flat.

TRDC has adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Therefore contributions towards strategic and local transport schemes / strand 2 contributions as outlined in HCC's South West Hertfordshire Growth & Transport Plan (2019) would be sought via CIL as appropriate.

TO NOTE:
A draft 106 agreement has been submitted as part of the application which makes some general reference to sustainable transport contributions. The draft makes reference to contributions that are out of date and superseded by a new toolkit used by HCC for obligations sought, a copy of which can be viewed at:

https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/freedom-of-information-and-council-data/open-data-statistics-about-hertfordshire/who-we-are-and-what-we-do/property/planning-obligations-guidance.aspx

Comments
The planning application is an outline application for 93 dwellings with associated works on land at Bedmond Road, Abbots Langley.

The site is included in Three Rivers District Council's (TRDC) draft local plan as housing allocation CF56. A Transport Statement (TS) has been submitted as part of the outline planning application. The site is located on the east side of Bedmond Road on the northern edge of Abbots Langley and just south of the M25. The site is accessed via Notley Court. Bedmond Road is designated as a classified C secondary distributor road, subject to a speed of 30mph and is highway maintainable at public expense. On HCC's Place and Movement Network, Bedmond Road is classed as P1/M2 (Inter-urban road). Notley Court is a private road and not highway maintainable at public expense.

1. Access

a. Highway Works

The proposals utilise the existing simple priority junction between Bedmond Road and Notley Court, which was constructed to support planning application 18/0223/FUL. The junction is made up of a 5.5m carriage width with 2m footways on either side. The provision is considered to be acceptable to support access to the existing and proposed dwellings and is in accordance with HCC's Place & Movement Planning and Design Guidance (PMPDG).

The off-site highway works included at this stage are shown on drawing number 1140-TA10 A (appendix F of the TS) - widening of the existing footway on the west side of Bedmond Road to 2m from opposite the site access junction to the junction of Bedmond Road with Dairy Way. HCC as HA would be supportive of the proposed widening as parts of the footway along this stretch are only 1.3m, less the necessary 2m with as laid out in PMPDG. In order for the overall proposals to be acceptable

from a highways perspective, a number of highway works would be necessary to be provided including:

- Widening of the footway as indicated on drawing 1140-TA10A and resurfacing of the this length of footway.

- New pedestrian dropped kerbs and tactile / blister paving on the footway on either side of Dairy Way and relocation of the bollards as necessary to facilitate safe access.

- Easy access kassel kerbing and Real Time Information (RTI) screen for the northbound stop /west side of Bedmond Road;

The proposed highways works are considered to be acceptable at this planning application stage of the proposals. The applicant would ultimately need to enter into a Section 278 Agreement with HCC as Highway Authority in relation to the technical approval of the design and implementation of the necessary works that would be needed on highway land. It would be recommended that a Stage One Road Safety Audit and Designer's Response (RSA1) is included as part of the original 278 application.

Please see the above conditions and informatives for more information in relation to applying for the 278.A footway is not currently proposed to the south of the site entrance on the east side of Bedmond Road (where there isn't currently a footway). Following consideration of the improvements proposed (and required) to the footway on the west side of Bedmond Road in addition to the pedestrian link to public footpath Abbots Langley 029, the provision for pedestrian accessibility to and from the site is considered to be sufficient.

b. Internal Site Road Layout Considerations
The TS states that the "geometry of the internal highway arrangement has been fixed so that it will comprise a 5.5m wide carriageway with 2m wide footways on either side of the carriageway", which is in accordance with HCC's PMPDG. HCC as HA would be supportive of the connection point onto the public footpath Abbots Langley 029, which would provide pedestrian access between the site and the existing footway and bus stop on the east side of Bedmond Road. The footpath link has currently proposed appears to be less than 2m. It would be recommended than the width be increased to a minimum of 2m to ensure accordance with the PMPDG.

Any pedestrians and cycling provisions within the site would need to be designed in accordance with Cycle Infrastructure Design: Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN1/20) and DfT's Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure (IM), 2021. It would be necessary for all pedestrian crossing points within the site (including when crossing any side road entrances) to provide at least pedestrian dropped kerbs or raised tables or continuous crossings where appropriate. This would also assist is encouraging lower vehicle speeds and adhere to the necessary 20mph design. Any detailed design should also avoid overlong vehicle crossovers – this is to ensure that pedestrians using any proposed footways do not have to cross in front of excessively long crossovers / dropped kerbs in the interest of pedestrian safety and accessibility.

The reserved matters details should also take into consideration than any shared surface areas are not currently considered acceptable for any developments (or part of developments) accessing more than 25 dwellings. Appropriate lighting and surfacing within shared surfaced areas would need to be provided to ensure that vehicles are clear that other users would also be using the space.

HCC as HA does not have any specific concerns in respect to access for service or emergency vehicles at this outline stage. As part of the reserved matters and once the detailed internal layout of the site has been finalised, swept path analysis for a refuse vehicle (12m in length) and for a fire tender (8.4m in length/ 2.9m in width for a standard fire tender and 10.1m in length / 2.9m in width for an aerial ladder appliance) would need to be provided to illustrate that such vehicles can safely access the site and turn around in forward gear. The analysis would also need to illustrate that a fire tender would be able to get to within 45m of all parts of the footprint of any dwellings, whilst also not having to reverse more than 20m. This is to ensure that the proposals are in accordance with MfS and Building Regulations 2010: Fire Safety Approved Document B Vol 1 – Dwellinghouses (and subsequent updates).

Any access and turning areas would need to be kept free of obstruction to ensure permanent availability and therefore consideration would need to be given to preventing vehicles parking on any turning areas and access routes. The collection method for waste collection would also need to be confirmed as acceptable by TRDC as refuse collection authority.

The Highway Authority would only agree to adopt any proposed internal vehicular access routes if they are considered or demonstrated to be of utility to the wider public. Active travel route(s) through the site may be considered for adoption but this would be dependent on the final detailed design of the site and how such a route would link with the surrounding highway network. Consideration in this respect would also need to be given that Notley Court is a private road and therefore any adoption of the new road would be dependent on this also being dedicated as highway (which would require dedication by the relevant landowner and any necessary upgrades that may be necessary to ensure that it has been constructed to an adoptable standard).

Notwithstanding the above points, the overall works would still need to be built to a design speed of 20mph and to adoptable standards to be in accordance with guidelines as documented in the P&MPDG. The developer would need to put in place a permanent arrangement for long term maintenance. At the entrance of the development, the road name plate would need to indicate that it is a private road to inform purchasers of their future maintenance liabilities. The proposed development would also need to make adequate provision for drainage on site to ensure that surface water is disposed of on site and does not discharge onto the highway network.

2. Parking Level and Design
The layout and dimensions of all vehicle and cycle parking spaces and associated manoeuvring areas of the development should be designed in accordance with HCC's PMPDG, Part 4, Chapter 6.

The width of the parking spaces should be 2.5m by 5m for a standard space and increased to 2.7m if there is any obstruction on one side or to 2.9m if there is an obstruction on both sides. Any proposed perpendicular parking spaces would need to be provided at a size of 6m by 2.5m to be in accordance with PMPDG.

The TS (4.3.1) states that "parking within the development will be provided in line with local standards". TRDC as the planning authority for the district would ultimately need to be satisfied with the overall proposed parking levels on site taking into account the use class, accessibility zone and the local area. Therefore it is recommended that TRDC are consulted separately in this respect.

HCC as HA would support an appropriate level and type of electric vehicle charging provision to ensure that the proposals are in accordance with LTP4, Policy 5h, which

states that “Ensure that any new parking provision in new developments provides facilities for electric charging of vehicles” and building regulations.

3. Trip Generation
A trip generation assessment has been included in section 4.4 the TS, the details of which have been based on trip rate information from the TRICS database and census data This approach and criteria used is considered to be acceptable by HCC as Highway Authority. Based on the TRICs database, the number of vehicular trips associated with the proposed development are estimated to be 54 two-way vehicle movements in the AM peak (0800-0900) and 53 two-way vehicle movements in the PM peak (1700-1800).

TO NOTE: the TS refers to “78 residential dwellings” in paragraph 4.4.3 of the TS, which presumably is an error. Nevertheless the trip rates themselves appear to have been calculated using the correct number of dwellings of 93.

HCC as HA has assessed and reviewed the generation from the proposals in the context of paragraph 116, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (update 2024), which states that:

“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network, following mitigation, would be severe, taking into account all reasonable future scenarios.” The above trip levels would not be deemed to be severe or have a highway safety issue when taking into account the location and surrounding road network.

4. Bus Services
The nearest northbound bus stop to the site is located approximately 240m from the site access with the nearest southbound bus stop approximately 340m away and therefore within the necessary walking distance of 400m.

The bus stops are currently served by services 20 and 320. Service 20 runs between the Holywell Estate in Watford and Hemel Hempstead and includes stops at Hemel Hempstead Railway Station and Watford Junction Railway Station. Service 20 provides a service with a frequency of between 3 per hour (Mon to Fri), 2 per hour (Sat) and hourly (Sun). The service is therefore considered to be sufficient to support the bus as a feasible form of sustainable travel for residents of the new site. A number of other more infrequent services also stop at the nearest bus stops, with H19 serving Love Lane (the northbound stop) and 329, KL80 and R9 serving Summerhouse Way (the southbound stop).

5. Travel Plan (TP) Planning Obligations
For a development of this size a full TP would need to be provided and secured via a Section 106 planning obligation to support the promotion and maximisation of sustainable travel options to and from the site and to ensure that the proposals are in accordance with Hertfordshire’s Local Transport Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Developer contributions of £6000 (index-linked RPI March 2014) are sought via a Section 106 Agreement towards supporting the implementation, processing and monitoring of a full travel plan including any engagement that may be needed along with the provision of Residential Travel Vouchers to each dwelling on site of £100 per house and £50 per flat. For further information please see the following link https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-

information/developmentmanagement/highways-development-management.aspx
OR by emailing travelplan@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

6. Conclusion
The acceptability of the overall proposals would be subject to the necessary additional details as outlined in the recommended conditions, planning obligations and above response - full details of which would need to be submitted and approved as part of subsequent reserved matters applications for the outline application. The applicant would also ultimately need to enter into a Section 278 Agreement with HCC to cover the technical approval of the design, construction and implementation of the necessary highway and access works. Therefore, HCC as Highway Authority would not wish to object to the granting of outline planning application, subject to the inclusion of the above planning conditions, obligations and informatives.

1.1.4 Community Safety Intervention Officer – Comments received

The layout should promote natural surveillance, with active frontages overlooking streets, parking areas, footpaths and communal spaces.

Avoid blank elevations, rear fencing onto public areas, and poorly overlooked alleyways which can facilitate ASB.

Communal amenity spaces should be clearly defined, well overlooked by surrounding dwellings, and designed to discourage loitering and nuisance behaviour.

Consider management arrangements for shared spaces to prevent misuse and long-term ASB issues.

Adequate, well-designed lighting should be provided throughout the site, particularly along pedestrian routes, parking areas, and communal spaces.

Parking areas should be well overlooked by nearby properties to reduce the risk of vehicle-related ASB and crime.

Landscaping should not create hiding places or obscure sightlines (e.g. overly dense shrubs or tall planting near paths and entrances).

Refuse and recycling areas should be secure, well located, and overlooked to prevent misuse and fly-tipping.

1.1.5 East of England Ambulance Service – Comments received

Thank you for consulting the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust (EEAST) on the above planning application. This letter sets out the impact of the proposed development on emergency ambulance services and the mitigation required to ensure that EEAST can continue to meet its statutory functions as population grows.

EEAST's request is entirely separate from any contribution sought by Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care System for primary care, community, mental health, or acute services.

Impact of the Development on Ambulance Services
*The proposed 93 dwelling development is expected to generate an additional **218 residents**, based on the local authority average of **2.4 persons per dwelling**. Using EEAST's established and standardised population-based activity model, this population uplift is forecast to generate **50 additional emergency calls per year**.*

*This represents an **4.3% increase in annual activity** arising from this development when compared to current incident levels in the WD50 area (1,185 incidents between 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025).*

This level of additional activity directly increases:

- *Pressure on the Watford Ambulance Hub, which serves this area*
- *Pressure on regional Emergency Operations Centres receiving and handling 999 calls*
- *Demand for frontline vehicles, vehicle preparation capacity, welfare facilities, and estate infrastructure needed to maintain operational safety and performance.*

Existing Capacity Constraints
Ambulance Hubs must provide sufficient space for vehicles, equipment, welfare areas, and clinical preparation, ensuring rapid deployment and compliance with CQC and national Make Ready standards (Lord Carter Review, 2018).

The Watford Ambulance Hub which would serve the development, currently operates from a constrained estate:

- ***Existing GIA**: 900m²*
- ***Modern Hub requirement**: 2,200m²*
- ***GIA Deficit**: 1,300m²*

Watford Hub provision needs to support approximately 40 Dual-Staffed Ambulances and 4 Rapid Response Vehicles, yet it currently accommodates only 16 vehicles. Increased population growth in the catchment area will further intensify this shortfall.

The proposed development therefore directly and measurably worsens existing capacity pressures, requiring capital investment to maintain safe, resilient, and compliant services.

Legal and Policy Basis for Mitigation
Under Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), a planning obligation may only be sought where it is:

- *Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms*
- *Directly related to the development*
- *Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development*
- *Paragraph 56 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms the same tests.*

The requested contribution meets all three tests.

Table 1 Capital Cost calculation of additional emergency ambulance health services arising from the development proposal

No of dwellings	*Infrastructure Cost**	*Total*
93	*£371*	*£88,353*

**calculation of £340 is based on 2.2 persons per dwelling and adjusted pro-rata depending on the expect number of persons per dwelling (2.4 for Three Rivers).*

Calculation is based per person using EEAST population (6.1m)/number of incidents in 2024/25 (1.4m) to give a per person incident rate 6.1m/1.4m= 0.23 incidents per person per annum

EEAST Capital Infrastructure Costs is based on occupancy of 2.2 persons per dwelling, adjusted pro-rata

Estates build per m2 (£213.50)
Cost of emergency ambulance vehicles (£126.50)

The capital required to create additional ambulance services to support the population arising from the proposed development is calculated to be ***£88,353*** *and are for the impact of this development only and will be used to support:*

- *Relocation, expansion/installation of EV charging for the existing Watford Ambulance Hub to meet the increased local demand arising from this housing development.*

For clarity, EEAST is seeking capital infrastructure mitigation, not revenue funding. The High Court in R (University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust) v Harborough DC [2023] EWHC 263 (Admin) dealt only with requests for revenue funding to address an alleged short term NHS funding lag, and the ***judgment expressly states*** *that it does* ***not apply to capital or infrastructure contributions.***

EEAST, like all NHS Trusts, is subject to a strict Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) set by HM Treasury. CDEL restricts annual capital investment and is already fully committed to essential fleet replacement, maintenance backlog, and statutory compliance. Population driven capital expansion is not funded through CDEL, nor through NHS England revenue allocations.

Section 106/CIL funding is therefore the only mechanism available to mitigate the capital infrastructure impacts arising from this development, ensuring that ambulance services can maintain safe operational capacity.

Defibrillators
EEAST would request the Council ensure via a s106 contribution sufficient defibrillators are provided for the new community. This should include the cost of the device, an outdoor rated heated cabinet and the associated consumables, as well as the ongoing maintenance costs for a period of 10-years (circa £10,500 per device). The cabinet needs to be located where there is electrical power and sufficient footfall to provide benefits to the new community. Research indicates 800 meters is the maximum distance to fetch a defibrillator. The s106 could be allocated either to the local parish council or to EEAST.

Comments on Development Proposal
EEAST would request the developer considers the following Health & Wellbeing and Scheme Design Measures as they support physical, mental health and wellbeing and help develop community cohesion:

Health and Wellbeing Scheme Design Measures
EEAST would request the developer which should consider the impact all health organisations including primary care, acute, mental health, community and emergency ambulance services.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic more people are likely to work from home for at least part of the week, the room size and layout should be sufficient to facilitate at least one person working from home in a suitable environment as this supports both physical and mental health and well-being. Access to fresh air is also recommended.

Developers' inclusion of community gardens, allotments, orchards, meadow flower and woodland planting areas. Balconies, roof gardens and terraces also provide green space opportunities in apartment buildings. Consideration of all senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) should be addressed by the developer in the planting plan and use of local flora and fauna and wildlife corridor connection.

In central open space developers should establish of seating in open spaces and along walkways to provide the opportunity for residents to meet and supports those who have limited mobility to rest and enjoy the surrounding green space.

Ideally EEAST recommends Passivhaus/BREEAM Excellent standard is used for all housing and where appropriate, commercial buildings. This would also support the council in delivering their sustainability/green plans. As a minimum EEAST recommends the proposed 40% affordable/social housing are built to Passivhaus or BREEAM Excellent standards, as this would provide significantly long-term environmental savings for residents who are more likely to be from the most deprived backgrounds or have limited disposable income.

Flood Assessments
EEAST notes the site is within Flood Zone 1.

Flooding significantly affects residents physical and mental health in both the short and long term. Developers to utilise the catchment of clean/grey water to include underground storage tanks or multiple water butts (ie garage and house) to help reduce the risk of localised flooding post development. There is the potential for residents to reuse water for gardens, car washing and in community gardens instead of entering main sewers.

The use of sustainable urban drainage through permeable paving in driveways and parking areas to accommodate surface water run-off is welcomed and should be suitable for use by wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs.

Transport, Design and Access
Cycle parking should allow for different types of cycles (eg trike, electric bike or mobility scooter) to be stored, covered, secure and well lit.

Blue light emergency services would request developers support the Vision Zero/Safe System approach to design out road accidents for vehicle occupants, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians by utilising clear lines of sight, use of appropriate street/road lighting, use the of village gateways on approach to the junctions/roundabout and other opportunities to support speed reduction. Clear lines of sight are retained close to properties and walkways to support the reduction and fear of crime whilst also minimising the impact of artificial light.

We hope the Council and developer find the information included in this letter of value.

1.1.6 Local Plans – Comments received

The proposal relates to the development of up to 93 residential dwellings, associated access and landscaping. The majority of the application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt (with the exception of the access road off Bedmond Road).

The application site has not been allocated as a housing site by the Site Allocations Local Development Document (2014) and as such is not currently identified as part of the district's housing supply. The site should therefore be considered as a windfall

site. Policy CP2 of the adopted Core Strategy (adopted 2011) states that applications for windfall sites will be considered on a case by case basis having regard to:

i. *the location of the proposed development, taking into account the Spatial Strategy*
ii. *the sustainability of the development and its contribution to meeting local housing needs*
iii. *infrastructure requirements and the impact on the delivery of allocated housing sites*
iv. *monitoring information relating to housing supply and the Three Rivers housing target.*

The majority of the site is not within a defined settlement, although the access road to the north of Notley Court is located within the settlement boundary of Abbots Langley. Similarly, the majority of the site is not previously developed land, with the exception of the access to the north of Notley Court. The development would result in the net gain of up to 93 new dwellings. The council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land as required by the NPPF and currently has a 1.7-year housing land supply. The delivery of up to 93 dwellings would make a significant and positive contribution to much needed housing provision within the district. Additionally, there has been an undersupply of affordable housing within the district throughout the plan period and as such there is a pressing need for the delivery of affordable housing. The submitted planning statement sets out that 50% of the dwellings would be affordable housing, which would make a significant and positive contribution to the affordable housing need within the district.

The application site is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 153 further sets out that 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 states that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless certain exceptions apply. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF sets out the following exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt:

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), including buildings, 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 (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.*

h) *Other forms of development provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*
    i. *mineral extraction;*
    ii. *engineering operations;*
    iii. *local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location;*
    iv. *the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction;*
    v. *material changes in the use of land (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and*
    vi. *development, including buildings, brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.*

Additionally, paragraph 155 of the NPPF sets out that the development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

a) *The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;*
b) *There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;*
c) *The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and*
d) *Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157*

Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy states that 'there will be general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, or which would conflict with the purpose of including land within it'.

The council is undertaking a Stage 4 Green Belt Review, which has not yet been formally published. As part of the review, there will be an assessment as to whether edge of settlement Green Belt parcels are "provisional grey belt". It must be noted that the assessment of grey belt is a planning judgement, with each case assessed under its own merits, whereby planning officers may have a different outcome to the Green Belt Review.

Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that the Council will require housing proposals to take into account the range of housing needs, in terms of size and type of dwellings as identified by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). The most recent version of the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LNHA) was finalised in 2024 and is the most recent update to the SHMA. The recommended mix for Three Rivers in terms of market housing, affordable home ownership and social/affordable rented housing identified in the LNHA is shown below:

	1-bed	**2-bed**	**3-bed**	**4+ bed**
Market Housing	4%	21%	42%	32%
Affordable Housing Ownership	19%	39%	30%	13%
Social/Affordable Rented Housing	20%	32%	35%	12%

It must be noted that Policy CP3 recognises that a proposed housing mix may need to be adjusted for specific schemes to take account of market information and specific site factors; where adjustment to the proportions is sought, applications should explain how relevant factors have contributed to the mix of housing proposed.

Policy CP4 of the Core Strategy requires 45% of all new housing to be provided as Affordable Housing, unless it can be clearly demonstrated with financial evidence that this is not viable. Policy CP4 sets out that the Council will "as a guide, seek 70% of the affordable housing provided to be social rented and 30% to be intermediate".

Whilst not located within a conservation area, the site is located relatively close to Listed Buildings (to the south and west of the site). Paragraph 215 of the NPPF sets out that "where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use". Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies Local Development Document sets out that "applications will only be supported where they sustain, conserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, character and setting of the asset itself and the surrounding historic environment".

It must be noted that on 27th January 2026, Full Council agreed to publish the emerging Local Plan for Regulation 19 Consultation. At the time of writing, the emerging Plan has not been published for the Regulation 19 consultation, with this scheduled to take place in February 2026. The site is allocated for housing (housing allocation policy H8) within the Regulation 19 version of the emerging Plan. Once published, weight should be given to this housing allocation within the emerging Local Plan.

1.1.7 Thames Water – Comments received

Waste Comments:
With the information provided, Thames Water has been unable to determine the Foul water infrastructure needs of this application. Thames Water has contacted the developer in an attempt to obtain this information and agree a position for FOUL WATER drainage, but have been unable to do so in the time available and as such, Thames Water request that the following condition be added to any planning permission.

"No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either:-
1. Foul water Capacity exists off site to serve the development, or

2. A development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed, no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan, or

3. All Foul water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed.

Reason - Network reinforcement works may be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any reinforcement works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents. The developer can request information to support the discharge of this condition by visiting the Thames Water website at www.thameswater.co.uk/preplanning. Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Planning Department (e-mail: devcon.team@thameswater.co.uk) prior to the planning application approval.

Following initial investigations, Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this

development proposal. As such Thames Water request the following condition be added to any planning permission.

"No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either:- all sewage works upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or - a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water to allow development to be occupied. Where a development and infrastructure phasing plan is agreed no occupation shall take place other than in accordance with the agreed development and infrastructure phasing plan.

Reason – Sewage Treatment Upgrades are likely to be required to accommodate the proposed development. Any upgrade works identified will be necessary in order to avoid sewage flooding and/or potential pollution incidents. Should the Local Planning Authority consider the above recommendation inappropriate or are unable to include it in the decision notice, it is important that the Local Planning Authority liaises with Thames Water Development Planning Department (e-mail: devcon.team@thameswater.co.uk) prior to the planning application approval.

The foul water network in this catchment is impacted by high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. Care must be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. Whilst design and construction guidance for sewers allows for an element of infiltration, we would expect in high risk areas such as this that additional precautions are taken to minimise infiltration; this should be in the form of the installation of leak tight liners within sewers and resin injection to seal chambers. This will help to mitigate the risk of flooding in the vicinity of the development (e.g. reduce property flood risk and travel disruption in the locality) and also help to reduce the risk of pollutions in the wider environment, particularly considering the impact of climate change. In the longer term, Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering public sewer networks.

The surface water network in this catchment is impacted by high infiltration flows during certain groundwater conditions. Care must be taken when designing new networks to ensure they don't surcharge and cause flooding. Whilst design and construction guidance for sewers allows for an element of infiltration, we would expect in high-risk areas such as this that additional precautions are taken to minimise infiltration; this should be in the form of the installation of leak tight liners within sewers and resin injection to seal chambers. This will help to mitigate the risk of flooding in the vicinity of the development (e.g. reduce property flood risk and travel disruption in the locality) and also help to reduce the risk of pollutions in the wider environment, particularly considering the impact of climate change. Developers must liaise with the LLFA to agree an appropriate sustainable surface water strategy following the sequential approach before considering connection to the public sewer network. This must also ensure that the design of any SUDS or surface water management solution conveys exceedance flows away from public sewer networks. In the longer term, Thames Water, along with other partners, are working on a strategy to reduce groundwater entering public sewer networks.

We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures will be undertaken to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Groundwater discharges typically result from construction site dewatering, deep excavations, basement infiltration, borehole installation, testing and site remediation. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. Should the Local Planning Authority be minded to

approve the planning application, Thames Water would like the following informative attached to the planning permission: "A Groundwater Risk Management Permit from Thames Water will be required for discharging groundwater into a public sewer. Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the Water Industry Act 1991. We would expect the developer to demonstrate what measures he will undertake to minimise groundwater discharges into the public sewer. Permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 020 3577 9483 or by emailing trade.effluent@thameswater.co.uk. Application forms should be completed online via www.thameswater.co.uk. Please refer to the Wholesale; Business customers; Groundwater discharges section.

The application indicates that SURFACE WATER will NOT be discharged to the public network and as such Thames Water has no objection, however approval should be sought from the Lead Local Flood Authority. Should the applicant subsequently seek a connection to discharge surface water into the public network in the future then we would consider this to be a material change to the proposal, which would require an amendment to the application at which point we would need to review our position.

Water Comments:
Water Comments: The applicant is advised that their development boundary falls within a Source Protection Zone for groundwater abstraction. These zones may be at particular risk from polluting activities on or below the land surface. To prevent pollution, the Environment Agency and Thames Water (or other local water undertaker) will use a tiered, risk-based approach to regulate activities that may impact groundwater resources. The applicant is encouraged to read the Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection (available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/groundwater-protection-position-statements) and may wish to discuss the implication for their development with a suitably qualified environmental consultant.

With regard to water supply, this comes within the area covered by the Affinity Water Company. For your information the address to write to is - Affinity Water Company The Hub, Tamblin Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9EZ - Tel - 0845 782 3333.

Supplementary Comments:
For Thames Water to determine whether the existing sewer network has sufficient spare capacity to receive the increased flows from the proposed development, a drainage strategy must be submitted detailing the foul water strategy. Details of any proposed connection points or alterations to the public system, including calculated discharge rates (pre and post development) must be included in the drainage strategy.

1.1.8 Environmental Health Officer – No objection, subject to conditions

The Air Quality report, AQ14971 2025/11/07 as submitted demonstrated that the residents/occupants are not expected to be exposed to any pollutants in excess of the National Air Quality Objectives and as such we would have no objections. The report does highlight that during the construction phase of the Proposed Development there is the potential for air quality impacts as a result of fugitive dust emissions from the site. These were assessed in accordance with the IAQM methodology. Assuming good practice dust control measures are implemented, the residual potential air quality impacts from dust generated by earthworks and construction and trackout activities was predicted to be not significant. I would advise

consultation with TRDC Env Health to consider adding conditions if suitable to mitigate construction phase emissions and potential nuisance.

Based on the scale of the development, the standard contaminated land condition is recommended on this and ***any subsequent applications*** *for the site.*

1. Prior to the commencement of development approved by this planning permission (or such other date or stage in development as may be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority), the following components of a scheme to deal with the risks associated with contamination of the site shall each be submitted to and approved, in writing, by the local planning authority:

i) A preliminary risk assessment which has identified:

- *all previous uses*
- *potential contaminants associated with those uses*
- *a conceptual model of the site indicating sources, pathways and receptors*
- *potentially unacceptable risks arising from contamination at the site.*

ii) A site investigation scheme, based on (i) to provide information for a detailed assessment of the risk to all receptors that may be affected, including those off site.

iii) The site investigation results and the detailed risk assessment (ii) and, based on these, an options appraisal and remediation strategy giving full details of the remediation measures required and how they are to be undertaken.

iv) A verification plan providing details of the data that will be collected in order to demonstrate that the works set out in (iii) are complete and identifying any requirements for longer term monitoring of pollutant linkages, maintenance and arrangements for contingency action. Any changes to these components require the express consent of the local planning authority. The scheme shall be implemented as approved.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

2. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme and prior to the first use or occupation of the development, a verification report that demonstrates the effectiveness of the remediation carried out must be produced together with any necessary monitoring and maintenance programme and copies of any waste transfer notes relating to exported and imported soils shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. The approved monitoring and maintenance programme shall be implemented.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

The above must be undertaken in accordance with the Environment Agency's 'Land contamination risk management (LCRM)' guidance, available online at

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-contamination-risk-management-lcrm.

3. Reporting of Unexpected Contamination: In the event that contamination is found at any time when carrying out the approved development that was not previously identified it must be reported in writing immediately to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of condition 1, and where remediation is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared in accordance with the requirements of condition 1, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority. Following completion of measures identified in the approved remediation scheme a verification report must be prepared, which is subject to the approval in writing of the Local Planning Authority in accordance with condition 1.

Reason: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

1.1.9 HCC – Growth and Infrastructure Unit – Comments received

I am writing in respect of planning obligations sought towards non-transport services to minimise the impact of development on Hertfordshire County Council Services for the local community. Based on the information to date for the development of xxx dwellings we would seek financial contributions towards the following projects:

PLEASE NOTE; If the tenure or mix of dwellings changes, please notify us immediately as this may alter the contributions sought

Secondary Education Contribution *towards the delivery of a new secondary school and/or provision serving the development (£751,198 (which includes land costs of £14,835) index linked to BCIS 1Q2024 and BCIS Regional Factor)*

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) *Contribution towards new Severe Learning Difficulty (SLD) special school places (WEST) and/or provision serving the development (£137,722 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024 and BCIS Regional Factor)*

Waste Service Transfer Station Contribution *towards the increasing capacity at Waterdale Transfer Station and/or provision serving the development (£9,920 index linked to BCIS 1Q2024)*

Monitoring Fees *– HCC will charge monitoring fees. These will be based on the number of triggers within each legal agreement with each distinct trigger point attracting a charge of £420 (adjusted for inflation against RPI January 2024). For further information on monitoring fees please see section 5.5 of the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions.*

The CIL Regulations discourage the use of formulae to calculate contributions; however, the County Council is not able to adopt a CIL charge itself. Accordingly, in areas where a CIL charge has not been introduced to date, planning obligations in their restricted form are the only route to address the impact of a development. In instances where a development is not large enough to require on site provision but is large enough to generate an impact on a particular service, an evidenced mechanism is needed to form the basis of any planning obligation sought. HCC views

the calculations and figures set out within the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions as an appropriate methodology for the obligations sought in this instance.

The county council methodology provides the certainty of identified contribution figures based on either a known or estimated dwelling mix, the latter of which might be agreed with the local planning authority based on expected types and tenures set out as part of the local plan evidence base. This ensures the contributions are appropriate to the development and thereby meet the third test of Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (amended 2019): "fairly and reasonably relates in scale and kind to the development".

OUTLINE ONLY: Outline applications will require the ability for an applicant to recalculate contributions at the point of a reserved matters application and as such a calculation Table will be provided as part of the S106 drafting process. This approach provides the certainty of identified contribution figures with the flexibility for an applicant/developer to amend the dwelling mix at a later stage and the financial contribution to be calculated accordingly.

Please note that current service information for the local area may change over time and projects to improve capacity may evolve. This may potentially mean a contribution towards other services could be required at the time any application is received in respect of this site.

Justification
The above figures have been calculated using the amounts and approach set out within the Guide to Developer Infrastructure Contributions Hertfordshire County Council's requirements) document, which was approved by Hertfordshire County Council's Cabinet 12 July 2021 and is available via the following link: Planning obligations and developer infrastructure contributions | Hertfordshire County Council In respect of Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (amended 2019), the planning obligations sought from this proposal are:

(i) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
Recognition that contributions should be made to mitigate the impact of development are set out in planning related policy documents. The NPPF states "Local planning authorities should consider whether otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the use of conditions or planning obligations." Conditions cannot be used cover the payment of financial contributions to mitigate the impact of a development The NPPG states "No payment of money or other consideration can be positively required when granting planning permission."

The development plan background supports the provision of planning contributions. The provision of community facilities is a matter that is relevant to planning. The contributions sought will ensure that additional needs brought on by the development are met.

(ii) Directly related to the development.
The occupiers of new residential developments will have an additional impact upon local services. The financial contributions sought towards the above services are based on the size, type and tenure of the individual dwellings comprising this development following consultation with the Service providers and will only be used

towards services and facilities serving the locality of the proposed development and therefore, for the benefit of the development's occupants.

(iii) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.
The above financial contributions have been calculated according to the size, type and tenure of each individual dwelling comprising the proposed development (based on the person yield).

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:
Consult the Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Water Officer directly at water@hertfordshire.gov.uk, who may request the provision of fire hydrants through a planning condition.

1.1.10 Conservation Officer – Objection

Outline application: Erection of up to 93 dwellings with associated access, parking, amenity space and landscaping (Appearance, Layout, Landscaping and Scale as reserved matters)

The Site consists of open fields, most recently used in connection with an equestrian centre on Bedmond Road. There is a gated vehicular access to the Site via Notley Court.

The proposal has the potential to impact the following heritage assets:

The Grade II listed Mansion Farmhouse (List Entry Number 1348213) built in the middle to late seventeenth century, with extensions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is finished in red brick with some timber framing. The farmhouse was converted into several separate residential units in the 1980's, as were the outbuildings, which are considered curtilage listed and are just north of the farmhouse.

The Grade II listed Tithe Barn (List Entry Number: 1100908) is an aisled barn with a timber frame with origins in the fifteenth century, with seventeenth century alterations to the west of the Site. It was formerly part of Parsonage Farm which occupied a land holding to the west.*

Former Ovaltine Dairy Farm buildings are included on the Three Rivers list of Locally Important Buildings. They date from the 1920/1930's and were used to supply goods to the Ovaltine Factory. They are built in a mock Tudor style with characteristics designed to imitate the farm King Louis XVI bought for Marie Antoinette. They have local historic and architectural interest.

The proposal comprises an outline application for a major residential scheme, to be accessed from Bedmond Road. The indicative layout shows housing along a single street with three apartment blocks at a height of three storeys including one to the rear of Notley Court.

The Site would be a short distance to the northeast of the farm complex at Mansion Farm, with part of the red line abutting houses in the converted barn. The character of the barn and farm buildings have been altered to some extent due to sub-division and extensions. However, they are still recognisable as a historic farm complex. 1841 Tithe apportionments indicate the Site was part of Mansion Farm at that time. While the use has been altered, it was subsequently an open field in a rural use, located to the rear of the listed farm buildings. The Site makes a positive contribution as part of the historic semi-rural setting of the farm buildings. The setting of the farm buildings has been diminished by the new houses to the north at Notley Court, which increased the importance of the Site as part of its setting. In addition, it is acknowledged that

land immediately to the rear/west of the farm is part of a covered reservoir and will remain as an open field.

However, the proposal would further erode this semi-rural setting and result in less than substantial harm to the farm buildings in principle due to the fundamental change in land use. This is exacerbated by the indicative layout, which shows an apartment building near the southwestern edge of the development close to the historic farm outbuildings. This layout does not respond to the listed buildings or the rural edge location. On this basis, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed Mansion Farmhouse and curtilage listed outbuildings and would not be supported.

In relation to the Locally Important Buildings at Ovaltine Dairy Farm, they are across the road and there is no known functional association with the Site. However, the Site makes a positive contribution as part of their immediate rural setting. The proposal would be partly screened by Notley Court, but there is likely to be intervisibility with the Site, particularly with the taller buildings and would erode their rural setting. This would result in less than substantial harm to the non-designated heritage assets.

In relation to the Grade II listed Tithe Barn, due to its siting further south and set back from the road, and the screening from Notley Court, its setting does not extend to the Site, and the proposal is unlikely to result in harm to its significance.*

The proposal would not preserve the special interest of Mansion Farmhouse and outbuildings, contrary to Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Regarding the NPPF, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm as per paragraph 215 and this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, as per paragraph 212.

The proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Locally Important Buildings at Ovaltine Dairy Farm which are non-designated heritage assets. This harm should be considered in determining the application and a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as per NPPF paragraph 216.

1.1.11 HCC Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) – No objection

Thank you for consulting the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) on the above application. We have reviewed the submitted Flood Risk Assessment (Martin Andrews Consulting Ltd, Ref: 1140-FRA-01-A, 2025) together with the application form and supporting documentation.

The FRA confirms that the site lies within Flood Zone 1, at low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. The assessment also indicates the site is at very low risk of surface water flooding and not at significant risk from reservoirs, groundwater or sewer flooding.

The FRA sets out a drainage strategy based on infiltration, including the use of permeable paving, rain gardens and an infiltration basin discharging to deep borehole soakaways within the underlying chalk strata. Infiltration testing presented in the FRA indicates that deep infiltration is feasible and is the preferred drainage solution in accordance with the drainage hierarchy.

As this is an outline application and detailed drainage design has not yet been provided, the LLFA have no objection in principle, subject to the following planning

conditions to secure the detailed design, implementation and long-term management of the surface water drainage system. If the following conditions are not included, the development would be contrary to NPPF and Local Plan policies and we would object until such time that the details below are submitted for review.

Condition 1

All development shall be constructed in accordance with the submitted and approved Flood Risk Assessment (Ref: 1140-FRA-01, November 2025), this includes all new residential dwellings to have a finished floor level raised a minimum of 300mm above any design flood level and 150mm above the surrounding proposed ground level unless otherwise first approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Three Rivers District Council.

Condition 2

Prior to or in conjunction with the submission of each reserved matters application, in accordance with the submitted FRA and Drainage Strategy (Flood Risk Assessment, Ref: 1140-FRA-01, November 2025) and drawing number 1140-FRA03 (Proposed Drainage Strategy, REV D), detailed designs of a surface water drainage scheme incorporating the following measures shall be submitted to and agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme will be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development. The scheme shall address the following matters:

I. Detailed infiltration testing in accordance with BRE Digest 365 (or equivalent) along the length and proposed depth of the proposed infiltration feature/s.
II. Provision of surface water attenuation storage, sized and designed to accommodate the volume of water generated in all rainfall events up to and including the critical storm duration for the 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) and 1% AEP (1 in 100) rainfall events (both including allowances for climate change).
III. Detailed designs, modelling calculations and plans of the of the drainage conveyance network in the:

- 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) critical rainfall event plus climate change to show no flooding outside the drainage features on any part of the site.
- 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) critical rainfall plus climate change event to show, if any, the depth, volume and storage location of any flooding outside the drainage features, ensuring that flooding does not occur in any part of a building or any utility plant susceptible to water (e.g. pumping station or electricity substation) within the development. It will also show that no runoff during this event will leave the site uncontrolled.

IV. The design of the infiltration basin will incorporate an emergency spillway and any drainage structures include appropriate freeboard allowances. Plans to be submitted showing the routes for the management of exceedance surface water flow routes that minimise the risk to people and property during rainfall events in excess of 1% AEP (1 in 100) rainfall event plus climate change allowance.
V. Finished ground floor levels of properties are a minimum of 300mm above expected flood levels of all sources of flooding (including the ordinary watercourses, SuDS features and within any proposed drainage scheme) or 150mm above ground level, whichever is the more precautionary.

VI. Details of how all surface water management features to be designed in accordance with The SuDS Manual (CIRIA C753, 2015), including appropriate treatment stages for water quality prior to discharge.

VII. A maintenance and management plan detailing the activities required and details of who will adopt and maintain the all the surface water drainage features for the lifetime of the development.

Reason: To prevent flooding in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 173,175 and 180 by ensuring the satisfactory management of local sources of flooding surface water flow paths, storage and disposal of surface water from the site in a range of rainfall events and ensuring the SuDS proposed operates as designed for the lifetime of the development.

Condition 3
Development shall not commence until details and a method statement for interim and temporary drainage measures during the demolition and construction phases have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This information shall provide full details of who will be responsible for maintaining such temporary systems and demonstrate how the site will be drained to ensure there is no increase in the off-site flows, nor any pollution, debris and sediment to any receiving watercourse or sewer system. The site works and construction phase shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with approved method statement, unless alternative measures have been subsequently approved by the Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent flooding and pollution offsite in accordance with the NPPF.

Condition 4
The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity. The Local Planning Authority shall be granted access to inspect the sustainable drainage scheme for the lifetime of the development. The details of the scheme to be submitted for approval shall include:

I. a timetable for its implementation.
II. details of SuDS feature and connecting drainage structures and maintenance requirement for each aspect including a drawing showing where they are located.
III. a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. This will include the name and contact details of any appointed management company.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Three Rivers District Council.

Condition 5
Prior to first use of each phase of the development a detailed verification report, (appended with substantiating evidence demonstrating the approved construction details and specifications have been implemented in accordance with the surface

water drainage scheme), has been submitted to and approved (in writing) by the Local

Planning Authority. The verification report shall include a full set of "as built" drawings plus photographs of excavations (including soil profiles/horizons), any installation of any surface water drainage structures and control mechanisms.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Three Rivers District Council.

Informative:

Please note if, you the Local Planning Authority review the application and decide to grant planning permission, notify the us (the Lead Local Flood Authority), by email at FRMConsultations@hertfordshire.gov.uk.

1.1.12 Herts Ecology – Comment received, further information and/or amendments are required before the application can be determined.

Summary of advice:

- A copy of the IACPC countersigned by Natural England demonstrating agreement to join the GCN District Level Licensing Scheme must be submitted to the LPA prior to determination.
- The following elements to be secured by condition:
    - A CEMP: Biodiversity
    - Badger walkover
    - Vegetation Clearance Plan with particular reference to Reptiles
    - Pre-felling endoscope survey of the ash tree with a PRF-I
    - Lighting Strategy including dark corridors.
    - A Species Enhancement Plan.
- The submitted BNG report & Metric calculation shows that the proposed development will lead to a net loss in biodiversity and the BNG trading rules will not be met. In order to achieve the mandatory minimum of 10% net gain in biodiversity it is proposed to use a combination of on-site enhancements/habitat creation and off-site measures.
- The proposed enhancements are 'significant' and therefore will need to be secured by legal agreement for 30 years. An S106 agreement and HMMP will be required. This should ideally be settled prior to determination to avoid the possibility that the Biodiversity Gain Condition cannot subsequently be discharged.
- The off-site measures can be settled at the Biodiversity Gain Plan Stage.

Supporting documents:

I have made use of the following documents in providing this advice:

- Ecological Impact Assessment (ACD Environmental, 18/09/2025
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (ACD Environmental, 07/11/2025)
- Statutory Metric Calculation (Prue Hilditch, ACD Environmental, 07.11.25)
- Planning Statement (Directive Planning and Developments, March 2025)

Comments:

An Ecological Impact Assessment has been submitted in support of the application (ACD Environmental, 18/09/2025).

Protected Species

Sufficient surveys have been carried out to determine the outline application in regards of protected species. The EcIA includes specific recommendations that should be followed for protected species that I advise are secured by Condition.

To this effect, I advise method statements based on the mitigation within the ecology reports including its appendix for but not limited to badgers, reptiles, nesting birds, non-licensable mitigation for bats and great crested newts as well as standard best practice measures to protect commuting and foraging mammals such as badgers and hedgehogs should be submitted for approval to the LPA. These are best demonstrated within an ecological section of a Construction Environmental Management Plan, such as below or similar.

“No development shall take place (including demolition, ground works, vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): Biodiversity has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP: Biodiversity shall include but not necessarily be limited to, the following.

1. A review of any ecological impacts and should be informed by the submitted ecological report (Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) by ACD Environment Ltd (report date 18/09/2025).
2. Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities.
3. Identification of ‘biodiversity protection zones’.
4. A set of method statements outlining practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction.
5. The location and timings of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features. (e.g. daylight working hours only starting one hour after sunrise and ceasing one hour before sunset).
6. Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs, including advanced installation and maintenance during the construction period;
7. The times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works.
8. Responsible persons and lines of communication.
9. The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person.

The approved CEMP shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure sensible working practices which protect ecology on and adjacent to this site.

In addition, I have the following comments:

Great Crested Newts (GCN): The site contains habitat suitable to dispersing/sheltering GCN in their terrestrial phase, which will be impacted by the development. Five ponds were identified with 500m of the site. Of the 3 surveyed, the closest pond had confirmed presence of GCN. It can be reasonably assumed that the 2 non-surveyed ponds (which are both ~20m from the site boundary) may also support GCN.

The Planning Statement states that *"A District Level Licence for great crested newts will be obtained before clearance activities may begin."*

To join the District Level Licensing Scheme the applicant will be required to apply for an Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate (an IACPC) from Natural England. **A copy of the IACPC countersigned by Natural England must be submitted to the LPA prior to determination** to demonstrate agreement to join the scheme. If planning permission is not granted, reapplication to join the scheme is required with any subsequent revised development proposal.

Badger: I support the recommendation in the EcIA that prior to any vegetation clearance, a Badger walkover survey shall be carried out. I advise that details including an assessment of the impact of the proposed development and any appropriate mitigation measures to alleviate such impacts shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The location of any protective fencing (if required) around setts / commuting routes should be marked on a plan and also submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. All works shall then proceed in accordance with the approved scheme of mitigation.

Bats: The Planning Statement notes that *"a pre-felling endoscope will also be required on the ash tree identified as holding low bat roosting potential prior to removal."* Additionally, it is noted that *"a sensitive lighting scheme is to be followed during the construction and operational phases to reduce impacts of artificial lighting on potential commuting paths of bats and other nocturnal mammals."*

I advise that any lighting plans should be designed in consultation with a professional bat ecologist and developed at an early stage to ensure that the amenity, safety and ecological requirements of the lighting plan can be developed in conjunction. I advise that the lighting strategy is secured by condition.

Reptiles: Seven presence/absence survey visits for reptiles were undertaken between April and June 2025 which identified 1 juvenile and 1 sub-adult grass snake. This would suggest a breeding population on or adjacent the site. Whilst the surveys were carried out at an appropriate time of year, it is noted that the majority of the visits were carried out late morning after reptiles are likely to have dispersed and the latter two survey visits were undertaken in unsuitable temperatures of over 20oC, thus there is a likelihood that numbers have been underestimated. However, as the majority of the site comprises short sward grassland and most of the more suitable edge habitat is proposed to be retained, I consider the risk of negative impact is likely to be low. Nevertheless, I propose that an appropriate vegetation clearance strategy that will minimise the risk to reptiles, amphibians and small mammals is secured by condition.

Enhancements: The Ecological report includes recommendations for species enhancements I advise the installation of these will allow the application to be policy compliant with section187d of the NPPF and Local policy. I advise these are secured by the following Condition or similar:

"Prior to the commencement of development, a Biodiversity Species Enhancement Plan for Protected and Priority Species shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

The Plan should be informed by section 8.2 of the ecology report by ACD Environmental, 18/09/2025*. With the exception that the sparrow or starling terraces are replaced by universal swift bricks. Bat roosting features and Swift Bricks should be Integrated (built "into" rather than "onto" buildings). Features should be installed*

in a ratio of one for every two buildings and located according to ecological best practice.

The scheme/ plan shall include, but not be limited to, the following details:
a) Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed enhancement measures
b) Description, design or specification of the type of feature(s) or measure(s) to be undertaken.
c) Detailed designs to achieve stated objectives.
d) Materials and construction to ensure long lifespan of the feature/measure
e) Proposed Locations shown by suitable maps and plans and where appropriate the elevations of the features or measures to be installed or undertaken.
f) When the features or measures will be installed within the construction, occupation, or phase of the development,
g) Persons responsible for implementing the enhancement measures
h) Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance (where relevant)

Thereafter, the biodiversity enhancement measures shall be carried out and maintained for their designed purpose in accordance with the approved details including timescales and shall be retained as such thereafter."

Biodiversity Net Gain

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been submitted which shows that the proposed development would result in a net loss of -10.66 Area Habitat Biodiversity Units (-42.19%) and a net gain of +0.4 Linear Biodiversity Units (+23.29%).

A net loss has been shown, and the trading rules have not been met, in line with government guidance it would generally be inappropriate for concerns about the ability to discharge the condition to be used as a reason to refuse an application. However, the applicant should be made aware the general biodiversity condition is a pre commencement condition and that if the applicant chooses not to address these matters prior to determination they will need to do so at the post determination stage.

However, the proposed enhancements on-site - the creation of 'good' condition Other Neutral Grassland and Mixed Scrub and the planting of 47 new trees - would be considered 'significant' and therefore would need to be legally secured for 30 years.

If the applicant submits a gain plan at the post determination stage which includes significant onsite enhancement which cannot be secured through the planning process at that stage, it will not be possible for the gain plan to be discharged. In this case a new biodiversity gain plan would need to be submitted demonstrating a net gain using either an offsite solution or the use of biodiversity credits.

It is recommended that a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is submitted prior to determination to demonstrate that this habitat creation is achievable.

At the biodiversity gain plan stage an updated metric will need to be submitted showing how a net gain can be delivered. This could be either by the provision of further onsite non-significant enhancements, onsite enhancements that can be secured at the post determination stage, or by the use of an off-site location or by purchase of third-party biodiversity units from a habitat bank. As a last resort if an off-site location or suitable units to purchase cannot be found Statutory Biodiversity Credits would need to be purchased. In this latter case the applicant must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the LPA that all other options have been fully explored and that the BNG hierarchy has been followed.

Off-site BNG: Where an off-site solution is sought the spatial multiplier will need to be applied and, depending on the location of the provision, could require the purchase of more BU than is presently shown in the headline results. At the post determination stage the Off Site Gain summary tab should be checked to ensure that the spatial risk multiplier has been applied as this will not reflect in the headline results.

LNRS & Post Determination Strategic significance: Areas of the application site are covered by mapped measures within the strategy. If the application is approved, the Biodiversity Gain Plan and supporting metric should reflect high strategic significant values for any areas (1) that are shown in the published local strategy and (2) deliver the mapped measures for that area. Any post development habitat interventions that meet both of these criteria will achieve a biodiversity unit uplift.

1.1.13 Affinity Water – Initial Objection

Thank you for your notification of this planning application. These are referred to our team where our input on issues relating to groundwater impact may be required. For water supply, infrastructure protection and mains diversions please get in contact with our Developer Services Team via the "My Developments Portal" https://affinitywater.custhelp.com/ or aw_developerservices@custhelp.com at the earliest opportunity to avoid delays.

You should be aware that the proposed development site is located within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone 1 (SPZ1) which corresponds to our abstraction boreholes (BRIC) for public water supply.

We currently object to the application and require the submission of further information for our review, to allow us to assess the application in greater detail and, if we are able to remove our objection, provide informed condition requirements. This further information should include the following:

i. A Ground Investigation to identify the current state of the site and appropriate techniques for any on site works to avoid displacing any contamination to a greater depth, including the generation of turbidity.
ii. A Risk Assessment identifying both the aquifer and the abstraction point as potential receptors of contamination, including turbidity generation from groundworks and the use of deep bore soakaways.
iii. Proposals for the likely depth and type of excavations (e.g. piling) including mitigation measures (e.g. appropriate piling design, etc.) to prevent and/or minimise any potential migration of pollutants to public water supply.

This investigation and risk assessment is of particular importance due to the proposals for deep bore soakaways as the proposed method for surface water disposal in an SPZ1, as these are opening up potential pathways for pollutants into the aquifer. It will need to be demonstrated that this method has been appropriately risk assessed with, the aquifer and abstraction point included as receptors. Information from the ground investigation should be used for the assessment.

We need to ensure we have been provided with as much information as possible for our review, as issues arising from the development can cause critical abstractions to switch off resulting in the immediate need for water to be sourced from another location, which incurs significant costs and risks of loss of supply during periods of high demand.

At this time, it is our view that the development as proposed represents a risk to groundwater, however if our requests, set out above, have been addressed we may ask that appropriate conditions are imposed to protect the public water supply.

Informative
The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site, then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken. For further information we refer you to CIRIA Publication C532 "Control of water pollution from construction - guidance for consultants and contractors".

Being within a water stressed area, we expect that the development includes water efficient fixtures and fittings. Measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling help the environment by reducing pressure for abstractions. They also minimise potable water use by reducing the amount of potable water used for washing, cleaning and watering gardens. This in turn reduces the carbon emissions associated with treating this water to a standard suitable for drinking and will help in our efforts to get emissions down in the borough.

1.1.14 Affinity Water (Second Consultation) – Objection overcome, subject to conditions.

Following on from our response dated 04/02/2026 we have since been provided with a Hydrogeological risk assessment for our review and we are now prepared to remove our objection, provided that the following conditions are applied to the development:

Contamination through Ground Works:

If any works involving excavations are necessary, then the following condition needs to be implemented:

Condition 1
Prior to the commencement of the development, no works involving excavations (e.g. for foundations (e.g. piling), drainage (e.g. infiltration), geothermal system etc.) shall be carried until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Affinity Water:

- *An Intrusive Ground Investigation to identify the current state of the site and appropriate techniques to avoid displacing any shallow contamination to a greater depth.*
- *A Remediation Strategy/Report if found to be needed following the results of the intrusive investigation detailing how contamination (if found) will be dealt with. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved with a robust pre and post monitoring plan to determine its effectiveness.*
- *A Risk Assessment identifying both the aquifer and the abstraction point(s) as potential receptor(s) of contamination including turbidity generation from groundworks.*
- *A Foundations Works Method Statement and Risk Assessment detailing the depth and type of excavations (e.g. piling) to be undertaken including mitigation measures (e.g. turbidity monitoring, appropriate piling design, off site monitoring boreholes etc.) to prevent or minimise any potential migration of pollutants including turbidity or existing contaminants such as hydrocarbons to public water*

supply. Any excavations must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved method statement.

- *Acknowledgement of the need to notify Affinity Water of excavation works 15 days before commencement in order to implement enhanced monitoring at the public water supply abstraction and to plan for potential interruption of service with regards to water supply*

Reason: Excavation works such as piling have the potential to cause water quality failures due to elevated concentrations of contaminants through displacement to a greater depths and turbidity generation. Increased concentrations of contaminants, particularly turbidity, impacts the ability to treat water for public water supply.

Contamination during construction:

Construction works may exacerbate any known or previously unidentified contamination. If any pollution is found at the site, then works should cease immediately and appropriate monitoring and remediation will need to be undertaken to avoid any impact on water quality in the chalk aquifer.

Condition 2
If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site, then no further development shall be carried out until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Affinity Water:

- *A Remediation Strategy/Report detailing how contamination will be dealt with. The remediation strategy shall be implemented as approved with a robust pre and post monitoring plan to determine its effectiveness.*

Reason: To ensure that the development does not contribute to unacceptable concentrations of pollution posing a risk to public water supply from previously unidentified contamination sources at the development site and to prevent deterioration of groundwater and/or surface water.

Contamination through Surface Water Drainage:

Surface water drainage should use appropriate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems that prevent the mobilisation of any contaminants where a direct pathway to the aquifer is present. This should use appropriate techniques that prevent direct pathways into the aquifer and that ensure sufficient capacity is provided for all surface water to be dealt with on site, preventing consequential flooding elsewhere. Infiltration methods, particularly deep bore soakaways, within SPZ1 should be avoided, but if proposed should be accompanied by a risk assessment on the potential impact to the abstraction point, and an appropriate number and type of treatment stages proposed to mitigate the risk. If we are not satisfied with the submissions, we will withhold our condition discharge recommendation.

It should be noted that while in discussions with the developer's agent to overcome our objection, the agent has acknowledged shallower soakaway boreholes towards 15m could be feasible (subject to detailed design) to increase aquifer protection measures. It has been agreed that this will be explored via submissions for the following condition.

Condition 3

Prior to the commencement of development, no works shall be carried out until the following has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with Affinity Water:

- *A Surface Water Drainage Scheme demonstrating appropriate use of sustainable urban drainage systems that prevent the mobilisation of any contaminants ensuring protection of surface and groundwater.*

Reason: Surface water drainage can mobilise contaminants into the aquifer through infiltration in areas impacted by ground contamination. Surface water also has the potential to become contaminated and can enter the aquifer through open pathways, either created for drainage or moved towards existing open pathways where existing drainage has reached capacity. All have the potential to impact public water supply.

Issues arising from any of the above can cause critical abstractions to switch off resulting in the immediate need for water to be sourced from another location, which incurs significant costs and risks of loss of supply during periods of high demand.

Informative:
The construction works and operation of the proposed development site should be done in accordance with the relevant British Standards and Best Management Practices, thereby significantly reducing the groundwater pollution risk. It should be noted that the construction works may exacerbate any existing pollution. If any pollution is found at the site then the appropriate monitoring and remediation methods will need to be undertaken. For further information we refer you to CIRIA Publication C532 "Control of water pollution from construction - guidance for consultants and contractors".

Being within a water stressed area, we expect that the development includes water efficient fixtures and fittings. Measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling help the environment by reducing pressure for abstractions. They also minimise potable water use by reducing the amount of potable water used for washing, cleaning and watering gardens. This in turn reduces the carbon emissions associated with treating this water to a standard suitable for drinking and will help in our efforts to get emissions down in the borough.

Thank you for your consideration.

1.1.15 Herts County Council: Footpath Section – No comments received

1.1.16 Landscape Officer – Verbally raised no objection

1.1.17 National Grid – No response received.

1.1.18 National Health Service – Comments received

Thank you for consulting the Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board (HWE ICB) on the above-mentioned planning application.

Please accept this letter as the HWE ICB's position on primary healthcare capacity and need arising from this planning application and the health financial contribution sought if TRDC is minded to grant planning permission.

The HWE ICB became a statutory body on 1 July 2022 and is the health commissioner responsible for delivering joined up health and social health care to a population of c1.5m. in Hertfordshire and west Essex.

The HWE ICB works in partnership with health providers, local authorities, and other organisations to:

- improve the general health and wellbeing of Hertfordshire and west Essex residents and improve health care services in the area.
- tackle the inequalities which affect people's physical and mental health, such as their ability to get the health services they need, and the quality of those services help tackle health and wider inequalities.
- get the most out of local health and care services and make sure that they are good value for money.
- help the NHS support social and economic development in Hertfordshire and west Essex.

A strategic aim of the NHS HWE ICB is the improvement of primary, community and mental health care outside of hospitals. To achieve this, the NHS commissions a number of services from general practices in addition to their "core" activity. On the ground this means more joined up care, for example, primary and community healthcare hubs with co-ordinated multidisciplinary professionals/ teams. Therefore, a doctors' general practitioners' surgery may also include an ancillary pharmacy and ancillary facilities for treatments provided by general practitioners, nurses and other healthcare professionals to provide care to residents.

Primary Care Networks (PCNs)

Within the HWE ICB there are 35 PCNs across the 14 localities, each covering a population of between circa 27,000 and 68,000 patients. PCNs are expected to deliver services at scale for its registered population whilst working collaboratively with acute, community, voluntary and social care services to ensure an integrated approach to patient care.

Patients are at liberty to choose which GP practice to register with, providing they live within the practice boundary. However, most patients choose to register with the surgery closest and/or most easily accessible to their home for the following reasons: walking distance, quickest journey time, accessibility by public transport, parking provision.

Despite premises constraints GP Practices are not allowed to close their lists to new registrations without consultation with, and permission from the HWE ICB. Even when surgeries are significantly constrained, the NHS will seek to avoid a situation where a patient is denied access to their nearest GP surgery, with patient lists only closed in exceptional circumstances.

The HWE ICB keeps up to date PCN patient lists and closely monitors the current and future capacity of GP surgeries against Local Plan allocations/ housing trajectories.

The HWE ICB also ranks PCNs using existing premises data and known development data. This will identify and rank hotspots across the PCN patch where there is a need to explore projects to increase capacity, for example, by either re-configuring, extending or relocating GP practices to provide sufficient space to increase resources and clinical services to keep patient lists open.

Assessment of impact on existing Healthcare Provision

The HWE ICB has assessed the impact of the proposed development on existing primary health care provision in and around the vicinity of Abbots Langley. This scheme is expected to deliver 93 homes, which based on an average occupancy of 2.4 will create circa 223.2 new patients.

These new residents will impact on North Watford PCN, which is formed of 3 GP practices and has a combined patient list of 26,000 as of 1 January 2026.

To illustrate their current capacity, individually as well as collectively, we have included a small table below.

			Surgery level			Settlement level		PCN level	
Surgery Name	Settlement	PCN	Pt list - 01/01/2026	Patients per m2	Number of patients capacity/ constraint relative to 18 per m2	Number of patients capacity/ constraint	Total NIA capacity/ shortfall	Number of patients capacity/ constraint	Total NIA capacity/ shortfall
Vine House Health Centre	Abbots Langley	North Watford	10,531	18.5	-312	1,609	89	1,609	89
Sheepcot Medical Centre		North Watford	10,505	15.0	2,095				
Abbotswood Medical Centre		North Watford	4,989	18.7	-174				

*For the purposes of capacity assessment, we have adopted an alternative calculation to the NHS England "Principles of Best Practice" (referred to below) based on 18 patients per m2, which has regard to national GMS space guidelines but also considers opportunities for economies of scale.

This table demonstrates that two practices, Vine House and Abbotswood, are already operating above their optimal capacity, and their ability to accept additional patients is limited. The practice closest to the proposed development—Vine House Health Centre—has been seeking to relocate to new, purpose-built facilities for some time. However, due to a lack of suitable sites, these plans have not materialised, and the search for appropriate opportunities continues.

Cost calculation of additional primary care healthcare services arising from the development proposal

The financial contribution for health infrastructure that the HWE ICB is seeking, to mitigate the health impacts from this development has been calculated using a formula based on the number of units proposed and does not take into account any existing deficiencies or shortfalls in Abbots Langley, or other development proposals in the area.

The proposed development would deliver 93 dwellings, which based on an average occupancy of 2.4 occupants per dwelling will create circa **223.2 new patient registrations.**

223.2 new patient registrations/2000 = 0.1116 of a GP *GP based on ratio of 2,000 patients per 1 GP and 199m2 as set out in the NHS England "Premises Principles of Best Practice Part 1 Procurement & Development"

0.1116 x 199 m2 = 22.2084m2 of additional space required

22.2084m2 x £7,000* per m2 = £155,458.80(*Build cost; includes fit out and fees)

£155,458.80 / 93 = £1,671.60 per dwelling (rounded up to £1,672 per dwelling)

Total GMS monies requested: 93 x dwellings x £1,672 per dwelling = £155,496 (indexed from the date of the planning permission)

The HWE ICB requests that the GMS contribution that the HWE ICB is seeking, to mitigate the health impacts from this development is secured through a planning obligation attached to any grant of planning permission.

If planning permission is granted, the HWE ICB propose to focus the GMS contribution on a new premises solution for Vine House Health Centre, as explained above, or any other primary care provision serving the development.

It is also vital to consider the impact of new development, and the additional residents on community and mental healthcare, as occupiers of the development will also access a variety of healthcare. Based on recent cost impact forecasting calculations, the cost impact on community and mental healthcare is as follows:

Mental Health costs:

93 dwellings x £338.92 per dwelling = £31,519.56

Community Healthcare costs:

93 dwellings x £352.68 per dwelling = £32,799.25

Section 106 contributions towards these services support for the Abbots Langley area will be focused on the proposed integrated Health Hub at Watford Town Hall Quarter, which is planned to include reprovision of the Avenue Clinic (current building is to be demolished). Contributions would be allocated to the Community Services provider Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust and the Mental Health Services provider Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

The HWE ICB therefore requests that these additional sums are secured through a planning obligation attached to any grant of planning permission.

A trigger point of payment on occupancy of the 1st dwelling is requested. Please note, the developer contribution figure referred to in this response is a calculation only and that the final payment will be based on the actual dwelling unit mix and the inclusion of indexation

In respect of Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (amended 2019), the planning obligations sought from this proposal are:

i. ***Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms***. The provision of community facilities including health is a material planning consideration. As explained above, a financial contribution has been sought to mitigate the primary health service impacts arising from this development, by creating additional primary care premises capacity

ii. ***Directly related to the development.*** The new residents of the development will have an additional impact upon local health services. The financial contribution will be used towards additional facilities in the vicinity of the development. As such the contribution will be used for the benefit of the new residents.

iii. ***Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.*** The above financial contribution has been calculated based on 93 new dwellings and 223.2 new patients, to mitigate the primary health service impacts arising from this development.

With regards to the HWE ICB's own governance and scrutiny processes, please note:

- All projects are subject to Full Business Case approval by the HWE ICB and NHS England.

- A project identified and costed in response to the planning application may not meet the objectives of current strategies or could have significantly increased in cost, especially if there has been any significant time lapse from the date of the response to the date of implementation of the planning consent.

Subject to securing the healthcare developer contribution secured, as set out above, to mitigate the health service impacts arising from this development, the HWE ICB does not raise an objection to the proposed development.

This page is intentionally left blank





Above: View of site from rear of Notley Court site



Above: View of site with Notley Court development in the background



Above: View from south-west corner of site of converted stables and listed building of Mansion House Farm



Above: View north towards the adjacent data centre appeal site with M25 beyond.

PLANNING COMMITTEE – Thursday 19 November 2026

26/0849/FUL – Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site comprising 2no. Gypsy/Traveller pitches, each accommodating 2 caravans including no more than 1 static caravan/mobile home, together with the laying of hardstanding and construction of new access at Land at Long Spring, Sarratt Lane, Loudwater, Hertfordshire.

Parish: Sarratt Parish Council
Expiry of Statutory Period: 09.10.2026
Extension of time agreed: 27.11.2026

Ward: Chorleywood North and Sarratt
Case Officer: David Heighton

Recommendation: That planning permission be refused.

Development Type: Minor development - Gypsy and Traveller

Who made the request that the application be subject of the Gateway Test?	Triaged for a Gateway Test review at the request of the Head of Regulatory Services, being a Schedule 2 application, subject of a committee call-in received prior to the National Scheme of Delegation coming into effect
What were the reasons for the request?	This application had been called in by three members of the Planning Committee for the following reasons: That it is inappropriate development in the Green Belt; highways concerns - particularly the lack of sustainable transport links to/from the site and that the site also lies within the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area.
What was the outcome of the Gateway Test and reason?	The Nominated Officer and the Nominated Member agreed that the application should be referred to the committee for reasons that it is a site within the Green Belt and it raised social and environmental issues of significance to the local area.

To view all documents forming part of this application please go to the following website: https://www3.threerivers.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=TFLKBKQFL7A00

1. Relevant Planning and Enforcement History

1.1 22/0346/RSP: Retrospective: Erection of a timber fence on boundary and removal of earth bank to create access to Land to the East Side of Sarratt Lane – Withdrawn.

1.2 26/0048/COMP: Enforcement Investigation: Unauthorised tree works within woodland and erection of gate – A Temporary Stop Notice was initially served and followed by a Stop Notice and Enforcement Notice, served on 20.10.2026. In respect of trees, officers are continuing to investigate the incident with support from the council's legal team.

2. Description of Application Site

2.1 The application site relates to a parcel of land within Long Spring; a deciduous woodland located on the eastern side of Sarratt Lane in Loudwater. The application site comprises of an area of approximately 1,000 sqm whilst the wider woodland has a site area of 1.18Ha.

2.2 The application site is currently served by an unauthorised double swing timber gate with Sarratt Lane, sited immediately opposite Ladywood Close, a residential cul-de-sac. There are mature trees/vegetation within the site and on the boundary adjacent to Sarratt Lane forming part of the woodland.

2.3 The application site is located within the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area, Metropolitan Green Belt, the Long Spring and Upper Plantation Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and forms part of the mapped area of Priority Deciduous Woodland Habitat. The woodland is described as exhibiting characteristics associated with long-established ancient or semi-natural woodland.

2.4 To the west of the site, is a residential development at Ladywood Close with mature trees to the northern, eastern and southern boundaries of the application site.

2.5 All adjacent trees/those within the site are protected by virtue of their siting within the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area and Woodland Tree Preservation Order TPO141.

3. Description of Proposed Development

3.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the change of use of the land for the stationing of caravans for residential purposes for 2 gypsy pitches including no more than 2 static caravan/mobile homes, and the formation of hardstanding and creation of a new access.

3.2 A single Gypsy or Traveller pitch can include two stationed caravans, as defined by the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 and the Caravan Sites Act 1968, although only one of these can be a residential mobile home. This latter Act and the Social Landlords (Permissible Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2006 (Definition of Caravan) (Amendment) (England) Order 2006 defines a residential mobile home as being no larger than 20 metres in depth 6.8 metres in width and 3.05 metres internal height.

3.3 Two pitches are proposed in total, each pitch would comprise a static caravan and touring caravan, with the total provision across the site for four caravans. The static caravans would be approximately 12m in depth and 6m in width (to fall within the definition of a caravan).

3.4 A new access is also proposed which has, in part, been created and includes a set of unauthorised gates, which measure up to 7m in width with posts up to 2m in height, set back approximately 0.5m from the edge of the adjacent road. These gates are not shown on the submitted plans.

3.5 Within the site, the submitted plans indicate that a permeable hardstanding area and track would be laid from the access, approximately 65m into the site and would include the provision for four parking spaces and turning space for emergency and service vehicles.

3.6 To facilitate the development within the woodland 4 trees, labelled as T3, T8, T9 and T11 within the submitted Arboricultural Assessment would be removed. The proposal confirms that 3 replacement trees would be replanted.

4. Consultation

4.1 Statutory Consultation

4.1.1 Sarratt Parish Council: [Objection]

Sarratt Parish Council wish to strongly object to this planning application and would ask that the local planning authority refuse the application. We set out below our reasons for this position which we believe justifies the request to refuse. If the officers are minded to approve this application we request that it is called into the Planning Committee for further consideration.

Inappropriate development in the Green Belt
The proposed site at Long Spring is unsuitable as a traveller site under Policy H of the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS), paragraphs 25 – 27. Additionally the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt in accordance with paragraph 16 of the PPTS. The proposed site harms the openness of the Green Belt i.e. the site is currently devoid of any development or utilities infrastructure, and conflicts with the purposes of the Green Belt. No very special circumstances exist to allow such inappropriate development in the Green Belt (GB6 NPPF 2026). Furthermore, none of the exceptions in GB7 of the NPPF (August 2026) apply and the Green Belt boundaries can only be altered (NPPF 2026 GB3) in response to the plan-making process and not in response to a planning application.

The proposed site often floods in the autumn and winter months and so would contravene paragraph 14 of the PPTS which states that traveller sites should not be located in areas of high risk of flooding particularly given the particular vulnerability of caravans.

The site of the proposed development is in the Green Belt and forms part of Parcel LW5 in the Arup Stage 4 Green Belt Review. This review was adopted by the Council on 27th January 2026 as part of its evidence to the new Local Plan, when it decided to proceed to put the new Local Plan to Regulation 19 Consultation and subsequent submission. As such, this should be considered as the established position of the District Council with regard to the Green Belt status of the overall Parcel. The Review states that development of the LW5 Parcel would have a Significant Impact on the Green Belt under Purpose a) stating that "Loudwater is close enough to more contiguous urban development to the south to be considered to constitute part of the large built-up area extending out from Greater London. The parcel is open, largely undeveloped and has a strong sense of distinction from the urban edge by woodland within the south of the parcel. With the exception of Mickelfield Hall to the north, the parcel is predominantly uncontained. Therefore, development would be considered sprawl of the large built up area."

It is accepted that the relevant site only forms part of the overall parcel but, with the site having no defensible boundaries between it and the wider Parcel, it is reasonable to apply the same criteria to the site as the Parcel.

Alternatively, looking at the criteria for contribution to Green Belt Purpose a) for the site alone, it must be considered to make a Strong contribution to the Purpose as;
• it is free from existing development,
• lacks physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development,
• is adjacent to a large built-up area, and
• if developed would result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended 'finger' of development into the Green Belt).

As such, the site cannot be considered grey belt.

The proposed development is not within the categories of development given in GB7 1 of the 2026 NPPF. As the site is not grey belt, the terms of GB7 2 do not apply to the site. The site is not within reasonable walking distance of a well-connected station and therefore does not match the criteria of GB7 3. Taken together, this means that the site must be considered as inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

Heritage and conservation status
The proposed development is located within the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area. The Character Area Appraisal for the Conservation Area describes it as follows: "Loudwater is a wooded, undulating part of the Chess Valley with narrow lanes and leafy tracks. The original settlement of large, detached houses in spacious plots developed along the banks of the river, taking advantage of the breathtaking views across the valley. In some parts, very large Edwardian houses, each with many acres of land, have been replaced by several large, detached houses of character still on generous plots with trees and gardens all around them."

The Site makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area as one of the wooded areas surrounding the housing which contributes to the tranquil and semi-rural character of the Conservation Area.

The proposal would comprise a material change of use for two Gypsy/Traveller pitches, each accommodating two caravans and one static caravan/mobile home. It would also include the laying of hardstanding and construction of a new access.

The change of use would result in a major alteration and reduction in the positive woodland character of the Site, from purely open woodland to a residential character. The low density of development, set back from the road and retention of trees would mitigate the impact to some extent but there would still be a fundamental change in character. This would be harmful to the positive semi-rural character of the Site which contributes positively to the Conservation Area. Even the applicant, in their Heritage Statement, accepts that there would be an impact on the character and appearance of the area.

According to HE6.4 of the NPPF, "Where a development proposal would harm the significance of a designated heritage asset the effect on the asset and its significance should be weighed against any public benefits resulting from the proposal."

Regarding NPPF policy HE6.1: 'Proposals Affecting Designated Heritage Assets' when considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Regarding NPPF policy HE9: 'Conservation Areas' the proposal would not retain and conserve features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

The Council has recently commenced the Regulation 19 Consultation on a new Local Plan which contains sufficient provision of Gypsy & Traveller sites to accommodate the identified need for these sites. As the District has identified sufficient supply of pitches, there is no clear public need for the pitches nor is any other public benefit is asserted by the applicant for the development.

As there is no public benefit, there is no rationale to overcome the harm that would be caused by the development.

Sustainability of the site
The proposed site is not in a sustainable location. The site is 2.0 miles from Rickmansworth town centre and station, is 2.3 miles from Chorleywood town centre and station, 2 miles from Sarratt Village and services and 1 mile from the A404, where the nearest regular bus service can be found.

The site is accessed from Sarratt Lane, a relatively narrow road which is unlit and has no pavements for pedestrians. To access public transport and local shops, facilities and amenities would then require pedestrians and cyclists to use either Loudwater Lane or Solebridge Lane, both of which are narrow single-track lanes in places and which lack street lighting or pavements.

To access the site with a caravan would require the use of Sarratt Lane, Solesbridge Land and / or Loudwater Lane. None of these lanes are suitable for vehicles towing caravans, which will result in conflict with other road users, particularly as visibility along these roads tend to be very poor.

We note that Hertfordshire County Council, as the Highways Authority, has recommended that this planning application 26/0849/FUL be refused given the sustainable travel options to and from the site are "limited and not satisfactory" (HCC ref: TR/30133/2026 date 1st September 2026).

Local wildlife site and ancient woodland
The proposed site is a designated Local Wildlife Site and is therefore not suitable for development. In N6 1 c), the 2026 NPPF makes clear that "A site of local importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Local Nature Reserve or identified as a local wildlife site, local geological site or equivalent in the development plan, should only be supported if:
i. There would not be a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site; or
ii. The benefits of development in the location proposed clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation."

Development of a large proportion of the site into hardstanding and human occupation will undoubtedly have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site. As the District can now demonstrate, through its draft Local Plan, a sufficient supply of sites for the gypsy and traveller community, there are no obvious benefits that can outweigh the harm to the Local Wildlife Site. As such, in accordance with national policy, this application should not be supported.

The site is officially listed as being Ancient Woodland. N6 2 of the 2026 NPPF makes clear that "Irrespective of a site's status in nature conservation terms, development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists."

Significant damage has already been done to the site given the clearing of trees, not only by a previous owner of the land in 2022, but also in March 2026 which we understand is the subject of ongoing investigation by Three Rivers District Council.

There are no wholly exceptional circumstances, such as a nationally significant infrastructure project, proposed by this application and therefore, for this reason alone, the application should be refused.

4.1.2 Hertfordshire County Council: Highway Authority: [Objection]

Recommendation
Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

1) The potential to support and promote sustainable forms of travel to and from the site is limited and unsatisfactory. The proposals are therefore contrary to policy guidelines as outline in National Planning Policy Framework and Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 2018, specifically policy 1: Transport User Hierarchy and Policy 5 – Development Management 5a)

Comments

The development site is located on Sarratt Lane, an unclassified local access road considered highway maintainable at public expense and subject to a 30mph speed limit. On Hertfordshire County Council's Place and Movement network, Sarratt Lane is categorised as P1/M1 (e.g. Rural Lane).

The Highway Authority was consulted on a previous planning application nearby - 25/1294/FUL: Construction of 9no. residential dwellings (Use Class C3), with associated rerouting of public footpath, access, parking and landscaping works - to which a recommendation of refusal (for the same reason) was submitted.

The potential to promote and encourage sustainable forms of travel (including cycling, walking and public transport) to and from the proposed residential development is poor and limited.

The development site is located in Loudwater, a small private housing estate north of Rickmansworth. No public services, including shops or schools are located within Loudwater. Residents would therefore be expected to travel into Rickmansworth to reach regular services. The nearest bus stop - Harewood - is an approximate 1.6km walk from the site, the majority of this route contains no segregated footway and requires vulnerable network users to walk within the carriageway. Rickmansworth is the nearest train station and is a further 1.5km walk.

The NPPF (updated August 2026) TR3.1a states:
"So that development is located where it can support sustainable patterns of movement, enable good accessibility for different users and make the most of existing and proposed transport infrastructure, development proposals should reflect the following principles, taking into account the vision for the site, the type of development and its location: Development proposals... should limit the need to travel, particularly by private car, and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and users".

Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Policy 4, Policy 1 states:
"To support the creation of built environments that encourage greater and safer use of sustainable transport modes, the county council will in the design of any scheme and development of any transport strategy consider in the following order:
• Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel;
• Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists);
• Passenger transport user needs;
• Powered two wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs;
• Other motor vehicle user needs."

Policy 5 states:
"The county council will to work with development promoters and the district and borough councils to:
a) Ensure the location and design of proposals reflect the LTP Transport User Hierarchy and encourage movement by sustainable transport modes and reduced travel demand."

Conclusion
Following consideration of the above points, HCC as Highway Authority is therefore recommending that the application be refused. The sustainable travel options to and from the site are limited and not satisfactory.

4.1.2.1 Further details were requested with regards to the access and the following comments were received: [Access in principle considered acceptable but no information submitted to demonstrable that the access as proposed is safe / further trees required to be removed to make safe]

The Highway Authority (HA) has been notified that works have been undertaken to establish a vehicular access at the proposed location of this application. The HA continues to recommend refusal only in the case of sustainability but would caveat that should the Local Planning Authority be minded to approve the application we would recommend the imposition of the following condition:

COND1): Provision of Visibility Splays
Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted a visibility splay measuring 2.4m by 43m shall be provided to each side of the access where it meets the highway and such splays shall thereafter be retained at all times free from any obstruction between 600mm and 2m above the level of the adjacent highway carriageway.

Reason: To ensure that the level of visibility for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles is satisfactory in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policy 5 of Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan (adopted 2018).

Comments
We refer to the application 22/0346/RSP, whereby the Highway Authority recommended refusal due to the unachievable visibility at the proposed access point. That access point was to be sited at the same location as the access proposed in this application and the unauthorised access that has since been constructed.

No information has been provided within this application to demonstrate that these visibility splays are achievable, no speed or volume data has been provided either.

It is our contention that a vehicular access is possible at this location, but only after removing any vegetation or boundary features between 0.6m and 2m within a visibility splay of 2.4m x 43m. This splay would be congruent with Manual for Streets guidance on Stopping Sight Distances (See Table7.1) and in line with the posted 30mph speed limit. This would also be subject to approvals from relevant parties - those responsible for any protected trees and/or biodiversity issues that could be caused by removing vegetation to achieve the necessary visibility splay.

The unauthorised access is therefore unsafe as it has not achieved these visibility splays and no information has been provided to support a reduced visibility splay. These splays may also be unachievable when considering the damage to biodiversity.

Additionally, plans do not show any gates adjacent to the highway. Despite this being implemented in the unauthorised access which has been built. Should gates be proposed in the submitted plans we would request swept path plans that show a vehicle and horse box can enter the site as this is not evident at this time.

4.1.3 TRDC Local Plans Section: [Advisory comments]

The Regulation 19 Consultation on the Three Rivers District Council Local Plan 2026-2042 (Parts I and II) commenced on 31 July 2026. As such, weight can now be given to policies and allocations contained within the emerging Plan. However, in the context of the following consultee response, the currently adopted Development Plan will be primarily discussed.

Following its publication, the August 2026 version of the NPPF has superseded the former standalone Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) document.

Policy S5 of the NPPF (2026) relating to the principle of development outside of settlements sets out that "only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework:

1(g) Development which would address an evidenced unmet need for gypsy, traveller or travelling showpeople accommodation26, provided it meets the criteria in policy HO12".

Policy HO12 relating to Traveller sites sets out:

1. Development proposals for traveller sites should be located so that they:

a. Provide a settled base while recognising the extent to which traditional lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability and may also mean that locations not well-related to existing settlements may be appropriate; and

b. Enable access to frequently used services, such as education, welfare and health services, including ensuring that children can attend school on a regular basis.

2. When considering proposals for traveller sites, including for the purposes of considering need under policies S5 and GB7, local planning authorities should take into account the existing level of local provision and need for additional sites and other personal circumstances which may be relevant. Applications from any traveller should be considered and not just those with local connections.

3. Where development proposals require the permanent or temporary relocation of an authorised traveller site, an alternative site should be identified and provided. Suitable alternative sites should take into account the views of existing residents as well as existing family or community groupings where possible.

Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy (2011) sets out that when allocating sites or considering planning applications for sites for Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople, a criteria based approach will be used. The following criteria will be taken into account:

a) Avoid areas at risk from flooding
b) Avoid causing an adverse impact on areas of recognised wildlife, heritage or landscape importance, and on the openness of the Green Belt
c) Be in or near existing settlements with access by foot and/ or public transport to local services, including shops, schools and healthcare
d) Be well located to the highway network, with safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the site
e) Provide adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity
f) Provide adequate levels of privacy and residential amenities for occupiers and not be detrimental to the amenities of adjacent occupiers
g) The circumstances of the applicant and their need for pitches on the application site

Policy CP11 states that there will be a presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt, or which would conflict with the purpose of including land within it. Policy DM2 sets out "within the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances, approval will not be given for new buildings other than those specified in national policy and other relevant guidance".

The application site is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt. Policy GB6 (2) of the NPPF states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Policy GB6 (2) further sets out that 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. Policy GB7 sets out the categories of development that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Green Belt or be required to demonstrate very special circumstances.

The council has undertaken a Stage 4 Green Belt Review, which is available at https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-policy/new-local-plan#Evidence%20base. As part of the review, there has been an assessment as to whether edge of settlement Green Belt parcels are "provisional grey belt". It must be noted that the assessment of grey belt is a planning judgement, with each case assessed under its own merits, whereby planning officers may have a different outcome to the Green Belt Review. The Stage 4 Green Belt Review also identifies broad areas of "fundamental importance" within the Green Belt in Three Rivers, which is intended to provide evidence for any future "fundamentally undermine" test.

The Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025) identified a total need of 41 pitches for gypsy and traveller households from 2025-2041, including a need of 37 pitches arising from those households who meet the planning definition and a need of 4 pitches arising from households with undetermined. As such, it is clear that there is a demonstrable need for gypsy/traveller pitches within the district.

The Regulation 19 Consultation on the Three Rivers District Council Local Plan 2026-2042 (Parts I and II) commenced on 31 July 2026. As such, weight can now be given to policies and allocations contained within the emerging Plan. Further information can be found at https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-policy/new-local-plan#Regulation%2019%20Consultation

4.1.4 Herts Ecology – [Objection]

Following review of the submitted ecological and Arboricultural information including the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report, Biodiversity Metric, Woodland Condition Assessment and Arboricultural Assessment. The submitted information identifies that the application site is located within the Long Spring and Upper Plantation Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and forms part of the mapped area of Priority Deciduous Woodland Habitat. The woodland is described as exhibiting characteristics associated with long-established semi-natural woodland, including abundant bluebell ground flora. It should be noted that the survey date (26th February 2026) for the woodland is at a suboptimal time for botanical surveys and so it cannot be ruled out that notable floral species are under recorded. Historic Hertfordshire Habitat Survey information recorded 15 ancient woodland indicator species and concluded that the woodland met Wildlife Site criteria on the basis of its semi-natural canopy, woodland indicator flora and field evidence suggesting an ancient origin. Whilst the woodland is not included within the Ancient Woodland Inventory, historic ecological survey information described the woodland as ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland and recorded 15 ancient woodland indicator species. The woodland was considered to meet Wildlife Site criteria on the basis of its semi-natural canopy, woodland indicator flora and field evidence suggesting an ancient origin.

The ecological information submitted is considered sufficient to determine the application. However, following review of the submitted ecological information and a site inspection undertaken by Hertfordshire LEADS on 18 September 2026, we conclude that the woodland affected by the proposal should be considered ***Ancient Woodland and therefore irreplaceable habitat****, notwithstanding its omission from the Ancient Woodland Inventory.*

The proposed development would result in the direct loss and deterioration of ancient woodland, an irreplaceable habitat, together with harm to the Long Spring and Upper Plantation Local Wildlife Site and a 100% loss of on-site biodiversity units. The identified harm cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated. Planning permission should therefore be refused

Comments
Ancient Woodland / Irreplaceable Habitat

The application site is located within the Long Spring and Upper Plantation Local Wildlife Site and forms part of a wider parcel of Priority Deciduous Woodland habitat. The applicant's ecological assessment identifies the woodland as exhibiting characteristics consistent with ancient woodland, including abundant bluebell ground flora, whilst historic habitat survey information recorded at least fifteen ancient woodland indicator species and concluded that the woodland exhibited field evidence suggestive of an ancient origin.

Since submission of the application, a site visit has been undertaken by Hertfordshire LEADS to further assess the woodland habitat and determine whether it displays characteristics of ancient woodland. During this inspection, the woodland was found to comprise a semi-natural stand and the Long Spring area was observed to be enclosed by historic earth bunds upon which stood laid hornbeam boundaries. These features are highly indicative of historic woodland management and long-term woodland continuity and provide strong evidence in support of an ancient woodland origin.

There was also evidence of tree removal in the form of brash heaps and log stacks, some of this might have been associated with work carried out under a woodland grant scheme for the site which ran between February 2004 and February 2009. The clearance of sections of the hedgerow adjacent and to Sarrat Lane, which is shown as being still present in photos available on Google Street View (image capture 2024), however has taken place recently and appears to be associated with apparent access to the site associated with the present application.

We also note that the applicant's ecological survey was undertaken on 26 February 2026, outside the optimum survey season for woodland botanical assessment. Furthermore, the Hertfordshire LEADS site inspection was undertaken following a prolonged period of summer drought. Consequently, the woodland flora interest may have been under-recorded during both assessments. Despite these limitations, the Hertfordshire LEADS site inspection identified both Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta) and Wood Melick (Melica uniflora) within the application site, both recognised ancient woodland indicator species. Taken together with the historic record of fifteen ancient woodland indicator species, the semi-natural woodland structure and the presence of historic laid hornbeam boundaries on earth bunds, the evidence strongly indicates long-standing woodland continuity consistent with ancient woodland.

When considered collectively, the semi-natural character of the woodland, the presence of ancient woodland indicator species, the historic survey evidence, and the presence of historic woodland boundary features provide compelling evidence that the site is ancient woodland notwithstanding its absence from the Ancient Woodland Inventory. It is well recognised that the Ancient Woodland Inventory is not comprehensive and that omission from the Inventory does not demonstrate that ancient woodland is absent.

Accordingly, Hertfordshire LEADS considers that the woodland should be treated as ***Ancient Woodland and therefore irreplaceable habitat*** *for the purposes of planning determination.*

Designated Sites and Priority Habitats
The applicant's ecological assessment identifies the site as comprising woodland habitat of high ecological value in a County context. The woodland condition assessment concludes that the wider woodland habitat parcel is in Good condition, achieving 33 out of 39. The woodland is described as exhibiting characteristics associated with ancient woodland, including abundant bluebell ground flora. At least six veteran trees were identified within the woodland parcel.

Whilst the site comprises a woodland clearing, the submitted UKHab plan and Biodiversity Metric classify the entire application site as broadleaved woodland habitat in good condition

and forming part of the wider woodland parcel comprising the Long Spring and Upper Plantation Local Wildlife Site.

The ecological report acknowledges that the proposal would result in:
An unavoidable negative impact on the Local Wildlife Site.
An unavoidable impact on Priority Deciduous Woodland habitat.
Loss of habitat considered to be of high ecological value in a County context.
Significant residual ecological impacts at County level into the long term

The proposal comprises the introduction of residential development, hardstanding, access infrastructure and associated domestic activity within a woodland habitat of recognised ecological importance. The submitted information does not demonstrate that harm to the Local Wildlife Site or woodland habitat can be avoided and the applicant's ecological assessment concludes that significant residual effects would remain.

The National Planning Policy Framework states that development affecting a site of local importance for biodiversity, including a Local Wildlife Site, should only be supported where there would not be a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site, or where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation. The applicant's own ecological assessment concludes that the proposal would result in unavoidable adverse impacts to the Long Spring and Upper Plantation Local Wildlife Site and significant residual effects at County level. Consequently, the proposal fails to demonstrate compliance with this policy test.

<u>Protected Species</u>
The ecological report identifies the surrounding woodland as supporting habitat suitable for a range of protected and notable species including bats, nesting birds, reptiles and hedgehogs. The report acknowledges the presence of mature and veteran trees with bat roost features in the surrounding woodland and identifies the woodland as important bat foraging habitat.

Furthermore, the Arboricultural Assessment identifies Tree T3 as containing potential bat roost features and recommends further bat assessment prior to removal. Whilst T3 is classified as a Category U tree and unsuitable for long-term retention, its removal may nevertheless require consideration of impacts to roosting bats should the recommended further assessment identify bat use.

Whilst mitigation measures have been proposed, these do not overcome the fundamental issue of permanent habitat loss and degradation within ancient woodland and associated woodland habitats.

<u>Biodiversity Net Gain</u>
The submitted Biodiversity Metric confirms that the application site comprises broadleaved woodland habitat in good condition and predicts the complete loss of this habitat as a result of the proposed development. The metric demonstrates a baseline value of 1.173 habitat units and a net biodiversity change of -100%, with no on-site biodiversity retained and no secured off-site compensation proposals.

However, following review of the submitted information and the findings of the Hertfordshire LEADS site inspection, we consider the woodland should be treated as ***Ancient Woodland and therefore irreplaceable habitat****. As such, the impacts of the development cannot be appropriately considered through the application of the standard Biodiversity Metric alone.*

Government guidance is clear that irreplaceable habitats cannot be recreated, restored or replaced within a meaningful timescale due to their age, rarity, species diversity and ecological significance. Ancient woodland is specifically identified as irreplaceable habitat

for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain. Where development results in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitat, the standard 10% biodiversity gain objective does not apply to that habitat because its biodiversity value cannot simply be offset elsewhere. Instead, any impacts require a ***bespoke compensation strategy agreed with the Local Planning Authority*** *as part of the planning determination process.*

Government guidance advises that planning permission for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitat should only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Whilst the Biodiversity Net Gain framework provides for bespoke compensation where impacts to irreplaceable habitat are exceptionally permitted, such an approach is generally intended for those rare cases where development can be justified notwithstanding the harm. No evidence has been provided to demonstrate that wholly exceptional reasons exist in this case.

Consequently, whilst no bespoke compensation strategy has been submitted, we consider that the absence of such a strategy is not the principal issue. Rather, the fundamental concern is that the proposal would result in the direct loss and degradation of irreplaceable habitat and has not demonstrated the exceptional circumstances necessary for such harm to be considered acceptable.

Accordingly, Hertfordshire LEADS considers that the proposal conflicts with national policy relating to the protection of irreplaceable habitat and should be refused.

Conclusion
We consider that sufficient ecological information has been submitted to determine the application.

Evidence from historic ecological surveys, the applicant's own ecological assessment and the Hertfordshire LEADS site inspection indicates that the affected woodland should be considered ***Ancient Woodland and therefore irreplaceable habitat****. The absence of the site from the Ancient Woodland Inventory does not outweigh the substantial ecological and historical evidence indicating an ancient origin. The woodland displays multiple characteristics associated with ancient woodland, including a semi-natural woodland structure, the presence of numerous ancient woodland indicator species, and historic woodland boundary features comprising earth bunds and laid hornbeam boundaries.*

The submitted ecological survey was undertaken outside the optimum period for woodland botanical assessment. Furthermore, the subsequent Hertfordshire LEADS site inspection was undertaken following a prolonged period of summer drought. Both factors are likely to have constrained the recording of woodland ground flora. Despite these limitations, the Hertfordshire LEADS site inspection recorded both Bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta) and Wood Melick (Melica uniflora) within the application site, both recognised ancient woodland indicator species. These observations further support historic records identifying at least fifteen ancient woodland indicator species and reinforce the conclusion that the woodland is of ancient origin.

The proposed development would result in the direct loss and deterioration of part of this irreplaceable habitat through the construction of residential pitches, hardstanding and associated infrastructure.

Whilst the Biodiversity Net Gain framework provides a mechanism for agreeing bespoke compensation where impacts to irreplaceable habitat are exceptionally permitted, Government guidance is clear that such habitats cannot be adequately replaced through conventional biodiversity offsetting and that proposals resulting in their loss should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Any compensation strategy would need to be specifically agreed by the Local Planning Authority and would not alter the fact that ancient woodland is irreplaceable.

No wholly exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated that would justify the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitat. The harm identified cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated.

Accordingly, Hertfordshire LEADS objects to the proposal and recommends that planning permission is refused. The proposal would result in the loss and deterioration of Ancient Woodland, an irreplaceable habitat, and associated adverse impacts to the Long Spring and Upper Plantation Local Wildlife Site. No wholly exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated that would justify such harm and it has not been shown that the impacts can be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated.

4.1.5 TRDC Landscape Officer: [Objection]

Recommend: Refusal

The proposed site location is within the woodland area of Long Spring, which is protected by W1 of TPO141. The proposal seeks to remove 4x TPO trees and would house new hard standing within the RPAs of several others. The Arboricultural Impact Assessment is lacking data about the precise species types and condition of these trees, along with the potential RPA impacts. However, in any case, this development would result in deterioration of the protected woodland in contrast to development management policy DM6, and would increase the management pressures on the remainder of the trees to be retained.

Technical refusal – the supplied information does not meet the BS 5837 standard of tree surveys and impact assessments, as information is missing with respect to the species types, the condition of the trees, and the impact of the proposed development on their root protection areas (RPAs). As a result, there is insufficient information for the council to make a determination as informed by the proposal's treatment of the surrounding protected trees.

Refusal in principle – The land in question is protected by W1 of TPO141. As taken directly from UK government guidance: 'Orders covering a woodland protect the trees and saplings of whatever size within the identified area, including those planted or growing naturally after the Order was made. This is because the purpose of the Order is to safeguard the woodland as a whole, which depends on regeneration or new planting.'. This development seeks to install new structures and hard surfacing within the protected woodland area, including necessary tree removals, and which would prevent natural regeneration. Disrupting natural regeneration would damage the ecological function of the woodland and its landscape value would be deteriorated. This is in direct contrast with CP1 and CP12 of the core strategy which seek to protect natural environments and retain natural features, respectively. Development Management Policy 6 (DM6) also states that: 'Planning permission will be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration to protected woodland (including ancient woodland), protected trees (including aged or veteran trees) and hedgerows, unless conditions can be imposed to secure their protection.'.

The removal of 4 trees is proposed to facilitate the development, and the future living conditions for residents is likely precipitate additional tree removals in the future due to shading, bird mess, leaf litter, and fears over safety. Although it may be argued that the trees are protected by TPO, which allows future removals to be controlled by the Local Planning Authority, in refusing the application the LPA would be exercising those powers to protect trees with significant public amenity value.

The land in question is also designated Green Belt. CP5 of the core strategy seeks to avoid adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt when considering planning applications of this type i.e., Gypsy/Traveller sites.

4.1.6 TRDC Conservation Officer: [Objection]

The application is for Change of use of land to use as a residential caravan site comprising 2no. Gypsy/Traveller pitches, each accommodation 2 caravans including no more than 1 static caravan/mobile home, together with the laying of hardstanding and construction of new access.

The Site is in the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area, with a Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) adopted in 2010. This states: 'Loudwater is a wooded, undulating part of the Chess Valley with narrow lanes and leafy tracks. The original settlement of large, detached houses in spacious plots developed along the banks of the river, taking advantage of the breath-taking views across the valley. In some parts, very large Edwardian houses, each with many acres of land, have been replaced by several large, detached houses of character still on generous plots with trees and gardens all around them'.

The CAA emphasises the relationship between buildings and their associated plots and surrounding planting, which are as important as the buildings themselves and defines the character of the Conservation Area.

The application site is located within Sub-Area 3 – Sarratt Lane. The CAA does not explicitly refer to the Site but notes that Sarratt Lane moves "gently through densely wooded countryside and gardens". It highlights Sarratt Lane as a single-track lane with leafy canopies that will not have changed much in the last three hundred years. The Site has historically been a wooded area and has been shown as 'Long Spring' woodland in historic OS mapping. The Site makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area as one of the wooded areas surrounding the housing which contributes to the tranquil and semi-rural character of the Conservation Area.

The Site has recently been altered with installation of gates and some site clearance whereas previously it was enclosed by greenery.

The proposal would comprise a material change of use for two Gypsy/Traveller pitches, each accommodating two caravans and one static caravan/mobile home. It would also include the laying of hardstanding and construction of a new access.

A Heritage Statement has been submitted with the application. This has noted that the character of Sarratt Lane adjacent to Ladywood Close makes a less positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area than other parts of Sarratt Lane. This is due to the more open character and later suburban development of Ladywood Close, which differs from the Edwardian and mid-twentieth century homes elsewhere in the Conservation Area which contribute more positively in terms of character.

In relation to the proposal, the Heritage Statement emphasises the low-density nature of the proposal, set back from Sarratt Lane in an existing clearing, with protected trees retained, which would provide an end-stop to views along Ladywood Close. It concludes that the proposal would have little, if any effect on the Conservation Area and would protect its character and appearance.

The change of use would result in a major alteration and reduction in the positive woodland character of the Site, from purely open woodland to a residential character. The low density of development, set back from the road and retention of trees would mitigate the impact to some extent but there would still be a fundamental change in character. This would be harmful to the positive semi-rural character of the Site which contributes positively to the Conservation Area. This would be exacerbated by the new gate, access and hardstanding required for the development.

In addition, it is acknowledged that the houses on Ladywood Close are of less architectural interest than in more historic parts of the Conservation Area. However, in terms of their form

and architectural style, many have Arts and Crafts form and detailing: they are generally larger detached dwellings within external landscaping with steeply pitched roofs, front dormers and gables, exposed timber decorative elements, use of red brick and clay tiled roofs which are in keeping with local character.

Proposed elevations or images have not been provided, but based on the development description, the character of the proposed development would be different to the characteristic architectural interest found elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

However, the main concern is the fundamental change in character of the Site described above.

In regard to Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Regarding NPPF policy HE6.1: 'Proposals Affecting Designated Heritage Assets' when considering the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Regarding NPPF policy HE9: 'Conservation Areas' the proposal would not retain and conserve features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

4.1.7 Affinity Water: [No response received].

4.1.8 Thames Water: [No response received].

4.1.9 National Grid: [No response received].

4.2 **Public/Neighbour Consultation**

4.2.1 Site Notice: Posted: 28.08.2026 Expired: 19.09.2026.
Press Notice: Published: 28.08.2026 Expired: 19.09.2026.

4.2.2 Neighbours consulted: 28.

4.2.3 Responses received: 299 (299 objections)

4.2.4 Summary of response received:

- Inappropriate site for development
- Harm to character of the area
- Out of keeping for the area
- Heritage harm
- Harmful Green Belt impact
- Encroachment into the countryside
- Ancient or semi-natural woodland
- Local Wildlife Site
- Covered by TPO's
- Woodland loss - Trees felled, trees cleared
- Ecological harm - Natural Habitat lost
- Priority habitat deciduous woodland
- Abundant ancient woodland indicators
- 100% loss of on-site habitat
- Outer Loudwater Conservation Area
- Urbanisation of a tranquil and rural setting

- Narrow Lane, no footway or local amenities
- Highways Safety
- Sustainability of the location
- Highway capacity
- Lack of services infrastructure
- Poor visibility for access
- Drainage concerns

5. **Reason for Delay**

5.1 New planning committee procedure, gateway test required to be passed.

6. **Relevant Planning Policy, Guidance and Legislation**

Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise as set out within S38 (6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and S70 of Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

S72 of Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires LPAs to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The growth and Infrastructure Act achieved Royal Assent on 25 April 2013.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Habitat Regulations 1994 may also be relevant.

The Environment Act 2021.

6.1 <u>The Three Rivers Local Development Plan</u>

The application has been considered against the policies of the Local Plan, including the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), the Development Management Policies Local Development Document (adopted July 2013) and the Site Allocations Local Development Document (adopted November 2014) as well as government guidance. The policies of Three Rivers District Council reflect the content of the NPPF.

The Core Strategy was adopted on 17 October 2011 having been through a full public participation process and Examination in Public. Relevant policies include Policies CP1, CP5, CP9, CP10, CP11 and CP12.

The Development Management Policies Local Development Document (DMLDD) was adopted on 26 July 2013 after the Inspector concluded that it was sound following Examination in Public which took place in March 2013. Relevant policies include DM2, DM3, DM6, DM7, DM8, DM9, DM10 and DM13 and Appendix 5.

Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan (Referendum Version) (December 2025). Relevant policies include: Policy 2.

6.2 <u>Other Material Considerations</u>

In August 2026 the NPPF was updated. Relevant policies include: S3, S5, GB6, GB7, DP3, HO12 and HE6.

Three Rivers Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025).

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule (adopted February 2015).

Human Rights Act 1998.

Equalities Act 2010.

Housing Act 2004.

Children Act 2004.

7. Planning Analysis

7.1 Principle of Development

7.1.1 Core Strategy Policy CP5 states that in considering planning applications for sites for Gypsies or Travellers, a criteria-based approach will be used. Criteria include avoiding an adverse impact on the openness of the Green Belt, be located within or near to existing settlements with access to local services, provide adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity, provide adequate levels of privacy and the circumstances of the applicant and their need for pitches on the application site.

7.1.2 The Council's Planning Policy team (Local Plans) have confirmed that the most recent Three Rivers Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025) concluded that there is a need for 41 additional pitches, over the period 2025-2041, for Gypsy and Traveller households that meet the planning definition. It is recognised that traveller sites have been permitted since the assessment was published and these are set out in more detail below.

7.1.3 Having regard to Policy CP5, the site is not at risk of flooding. Impacts on Green Belt are assessed below. In respect of the need to be in or near existing settlements, the site is located on the edge of Loudwater which is not defined as a settlement in the Local Plan but is referred to as a small suburban settlement in the Emerging Local Plan. Notwithstanding, the site is located near to the settlements of Chorleywood, Sarratt and Rickmansworth. Other relevant matters to be considered by Policy CP5 such as access, adequate levels of on-site facilities and personal circumstances are considered below.

7.2 Impact on the Green Belt

7.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open and that the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that Green Belt serves five purposes:

- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- To assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

7.2.2 The NPPF at Policy GB6 sets out that local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness Policy GB6 goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. '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.

7.2.3 Policy GB7 of the NPPF sets out a number of categories of development which are not inappropriate in the Green Belt, and therefore should not be regarded as harmful to the Gren Belt or required to demonstrate very special circumstances. One such category includes GB7(f) which states that other forms of development, provided that the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is minimised, and there would not be a significant conflict with the Green Belt Purposes', such as:

i. mineral extraction and processing, engineering operations, and transport electricity network, water and telecommunications infrastructure required in a Green Belt location;
ii. Development brought forward under a Community Right to Build Order or Neighbourhood Development Order;
iii. **Material changes in the use of land** (such as changes of use for outdoor sport or recreation, or for cemeteries and burial grounds); and
iv. The provision of appropriate facilities (in connection with the existing use of land or a change of use), including buildings, for outdoor sport, outdoor recreation, cemeteries and burial grounds and allotments.

7.2.4 Policy CP5 of endorses support for gypsy provision but advises against development which harms the openness of the Green Belt. Officers also note that due to the make-up of the district, with a substantial percentage covered by the Green Belt designation, the majority of future proposals for gypsy traveller provision are likely to be within the Green Belt and thus will conflict with Policy CP5.

7.2.5 Core Strategy CP11 also sets out that there is a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Policy DM2 of the Development Management Policies document also advises that within the Green Belt, except in very special circumstances approval will not be given for new buildings other than those specified in national policy and other relevant guidance. Policy DM2 is silent in respect of change of uses.

7.2.6 The proposal involves the material change of use of the land to provide two gypsy/traveller pitches and new access. Harm to openness can take a number of forms; spatial, visual impacts and impacts arising from increased activity. The change of use would involve the introduction of four urbanising structures and a large extent of hardsurfacing, on a site which is at present void of any built form and is wholly wooded in character, with the exception of the unauthorised works. There is no other built form within the site and wider site, which would offset this perception and further increased activity and residential paraphernalia would result which would be notable in respect of a spatial and visible perspective.

7.2.7 The existing partially constructed access into the site and the erection of a new set of timber gates are also readily apparent given the extent of vegetation and trees that have been removed adjacent to the highway. This clearance around the site entrance has in turn allowed for an increased visibility into the site. When applied to the development proposal, there would be visibility of the proposed mobile homes, caravans and associated vehicles and paraphernalia, the latter of which could spread towards the highway resulting in both visual and spatial impacts to the openness of the Green Belt.

7.2.8 The material change of use would also involve the introduction of an area of hardstanding into the site from the highway. Given the nature of the hardstanding, there would be some spatial impact due to its expanse, which would impact the openness of the Green Belt. As above, there is an increased visibility of the land within the site, given the removal of the existing trees and soft landscaping. Furthermore, the expanse of hardstanding would result in an adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt and would result in

perceptible urbanisation, which would not be wholly mitigated by the existing trees and vegetation forming the woodland.

7.2.9 For the above reasons the development would cumulatively have both a spatial and visual impact on the openness of the Green Belt, the latter due to the removal of trees to the site boundaries and despite the proposed replacement of three trees, the visual impact would also be significant; given the existing site circumstances, free from development and considering the increase in activity. As such, the development would have a significant impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

7.2.10 In respect of Policy GB7 (f)(iii) for reasons stated above the impact on the openness of the Green Belt is significant and cannot be minimised. Further the development would also conflict with one of the purposes of the Green Belt, namely the encroachment into the countryside. On the basis that the impact on the openness is not minimised, the development would fail to accord with (f)(iii).

7.2.11 Notwithstanding the above, part (g) of Policy GB7 of the NPPF states that the development should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all of the following (i – iv) apply. It is considered that the change of use of the land would fall within 'development' in the Green Belt, which includes all other associated development which are intrinsically linked to the use of the land as residential:

i. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;
ii. There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed;
iii. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to Policy TR3 of this Framework; and
iv. In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with Policy GB8 (The Golden Rules).

7.2.12 For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, Annexe B of the NPPF defines 'grey belt' as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in Policy GB2. These are taken in turn below:

g) i. The development would utilise Grey Belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;

7.2.13 The Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) on Green Belt and Annex E of the NPPF sets out how Green Belt assessments should be applied.

a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;

7.2.14 In this regard the site is clearly demarked from the surrounding landscape and bound by established mature trees which form woodland and forms part of a relatively isolated and enclosed parcel of land. As part of the Council's Green Belt Stage 4 Review, the application site forms only a very small part of the wider parcel, LW5, which is considered to strongly contribute to purpose (a). However, when applied to the development site, it is considered that the woodland (as protected woodland) can restrict and contain development. It is also recognised that if developed, the development would be at odds with the prevailing pattern of development along Sarratt Lane, however given the extent of the site it is not considered that this would form 'an extended finger' of development in the Green Belt. It is considered that the site could be treated as being adjacent to a large built up area, with the development of Loudwater forming part of the contiguous area of Chorleywood and Rickmansworth. However, given the scale of the development, the fact

it is adjacent to a large built-up area and the physical features that can restrict and contain development, the development site would make a moderate or weak contribution to purpose a) and therefore meets this aspect.

b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;

7.2.15 The application site and development proposal represent relatively small-scale development with residential development within the vicinity along Sarratt Lane, which is clearly distinct. As such, the proposal would not contribute to the merging of neighbouring towns. As such, the development would not make a contribution to purposes b) and therefore meets this aspect.

d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;

7.2.16 The development is not within a historic town so would make no contribution to purpose d).

Summary of purposes and whether taken together the development would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together)

7.2.17 Overall, it is considered that the application site does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d). With regards to purpose (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; a conflict would occur given the development site is currently undeveloped, with the exception of the unauthorised gates. The development would not result in conflict with purposes (d) or (e). As a result, whilst recognising the conflict with purpose (c), the development would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt when taken together. As such, it is considered that the application site constitutes 'grey belt' land and would satisfy the first point of paragraph (g) of Policy GB7.

7.2.18 Nevertheless, in order to not be inappropriate development, the development must also meet the following criteria.

ii) There is an evidenced unmet need for the type of development proposed

7.2.19 Footnote 41 of the NPPF (2026) states with regard to (g)(ii) that in the case of traveller sites means the relevant local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable traveller sites.

7.2.20 As part of this application the Local Plans team confirmed that The Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025) identified a total need of 41 pitches for gypsy and traveller households from 2025-2041, including a need of 37 pitches arising from those households who meet the planning definition and a need of 4 pitches arising from households with undetermined. Further permissions have been granted since the need assessment, which include a net gain of 1 pitch at land south of Old House Lane and Keepers Cottages respectively, 4 pitches at land north of Toms Lane and 2 pitches at Harthall Lane. Despite this, it is clear that there is still an evidenced need for the type of development proposed (gypsy/traveller pitches) within the district. The development would therefore meet this aspect of GB7(g).

iii) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to Policy TR3 of this Framework.

7.2.21 Footnote 42 of the NPPF also sets out that in the case of development involving the provision of traveller sites, particular reference should be made to Policy HO12. Policy HO12 sets out that:

Traveller sites should be located so that they:

1. a) Provide a settled base while recognising the extent to which lifestyles (whereby some travellers live and work from the same location thereby omitting many travel to work journeys) can contribute to sustainability and may also mean that locations not well-related to existing settlements may be appropriate and

b) Enable access to frequently used services, such as education, welfare and heath services, including ensuring that children can attend school on a regular basis.

2. When considering proposals for traveller sites, including the purposes of considering need under policies S5 and GB7, local planning authorities should take into account the existing level of local provision and need for additional sites and other personal circumstances which may be relevant. Applications from any traveller should be considered and not just those local connections.

7.2.22 When taking into account Policy HO12, the site is located a short distance from services and facilities, including those in the closest settlements of Chorleywood, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth and Sarratt including shops, pubs, bus services and schools. It is considered that the site would provide a settled base, which would contribute to the sustainability of the wider area. It is acknowledged that this Policy states that it may also mean that locations not well-related to existing settlements may be appropriate.

7.2.23 Whilst access to the site would almost certainly all be by car, the abovementioned settlements would be within a 5-minute, 1.5-mile drive, which would enable access to frequency used services and therefore the application site is considered would be situated within a sustainable location in context of this Policy, which is solely for traveller sites. It is recognised that an appeal at Land at Sarratt Lane (6006827) was dismissed in August 2026 (prior to the publication of the new NPPF) for the erection of nine residential dwellings. That particular site is located further down Sarratt Lane, to the south of the application site. In reaching the decision to dismiss the appeal the Inspector concluded that the site was not in a sustainable location, given the nature of Sarratt Lane and reliance on private vehicles to services. However, housing is now assessed against Policy TR3 of the NPPF whereas traveller sites are assessed against HO12. Further, Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy seeks that traveller sites can be located in or near settlements with access by foot and or public transport to local services, including shops, schools and healthcare. Accordingly, whilst the different approaches to the development on whether they fall within a sustainable location may be hard to quantify, the development would accord with Policy HO12 and the relevant part of CP5 of the Core Strategy.

7.2.24 With specific regard to Policy HO12 of the NPPF, given the above, it is considered that the application site is in a sustainable location for Gypsy and Traveller pitches – as there would be access to health services, schools and other basic services within the adjacent settlements.

7.2.25 Officer's note that in the case of the Bucks Hill appeal decision (6004957), the Inspector considered that the creation of an unsafe access meant the scheme involving new traveller pitches failed to comply with paragraph 115 of the previous NPPF and thus concluded it could not be in a sustainable location and was as a result inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, this appeal was considered in the context of the previous NPPF and paragraph 115 which specifically referred to creating places that are safe. In respect of this development proposal, there is no reference to creating safe places in Policy HO12 and thus there is a policy distinction between this application and the appeal decision. In

this instance, as set out below, it has not been demonstrated that the creation of the existing access is safe, although it is recognised that the Highway's Officer notes that a suitable access, subject to appropriate visibility splays could be achieved. Nevertheless, for the purposes of whether the application site falls within a sustainable location, the fact the access may be unsafe at present given the lack of information, does not render the site unsustainable when applied to Policy HO12. As such, it is considered that the points in Policy HO12 can be achieved, which would mean that the location is considered as a sustainable location as set out in the context of Policy GB7(g)(iii).

iv) In the case of major development involving the provision of housing, the development proposed complies with policy GB8 (The Golden Rules).

7.2.26 The Golden Rules do not apply to traveller sites and is therefore not applicable in the assessment of this application in respect of Policy GB7 (g)(iv).

7.2.27 In conclusion, it is considered that the proposed change of use and associated development would satisfy all the requirements of Policy GB7(g)(i to iv). Accordingly, the development is considered to be appropriate development within the Green Belt and would also comply with Policy GB6.

7.2.28 It is accepted that the enforcement notice served recently at the site refers to a Green Belt reason in why the council served the notice, however, this was assessed in the context of that development which solely related to the access and associated development including new gates, rather than in the context of a material change of use.

7.2.29 In summary, the change of use of the site for use as a Gypsy/Traveller Site would meet the exceptions of Policy GB7 of the NPPF and therefore would represent appropriate development in the Green Belt and therefore would not harm the openness of the Green Belt as a result.

7.3 Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Streetscene:

7.3.1 Policy CP1 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) seeks to promote buildings of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness and Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy relates to design and states that in seeking a high standard of design, the Council will expect development proposals to have regard to the local context and conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area.

7.3.2 Policy 2 of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan requires all development proposals to be of the highest design and take account of the Sarratt Design Code (January 2020) which states that proposals should respect the rural character of views and gaps.

7.3.3 Policy DP3 of the NPPF states that development proposals should respond to their context, so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings.

7.3.4 The application site prior to unauthorised tree removal early in 2026 was densely vegetated up to the highway boundary and was heavily wooded in character. The woodland plays an important role in defining the character of the immediate area, with the eastern side of the road displaying rural characteristics given its dense wooded nature and absence of development, creating a clear defined rural edge.

7.3.5 The location of the proposed development in respect of caravans would be set back from the highway by approximately 30m, and would be viewed against the backdrop of woodland trees. However, given the recent clearance works, the application site would be very apparent from views via the access, thus providing clear views of the development which would include a significant area of hardsurfacing, structures and associated

paraphernalia. Such forms of development regardless of their woodland backdrop would represent a form of development that was wholly out of character with the site's rural characteristics and would appear incongruous within its setting, eroding the clear defined rural edge which is created by the woodland from the built up area of Loudwater.

7.3.6 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy expects development proposals to 'have regard to the character, amenities and quality of an area', to 'conserve and enhance natural and heritage assets' and to 'ensure the development is adequately landscaped and is designed to retain, enhance or improve important existing natural features.

7.3.7 Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD sets out that development proposals should seek to retain trees and other landscape and nature conservation features, and that proposals should demonstrate that trees will be safeguarded and managed during and after development in accordance with the relevant British Standards.

7.3.8 The Landscape Officer was consulted during the application and advised that the proposed development would result in deterioration of the protected woodland and would increase the management pressures on the remainder of the trees to be retained.

7.3.9 The proposed development would include the removal of 4 trees. Whilst the clearance of other tree/ vegetation was noted from a site visit. The adverse impacts from the proposed removal of trees from an ancient/semi-natural woodland would result in the further degradation of irreplaceable woodland species and harm its verdant character

7.3.10 The development would therefore result in an urbanising and incongruous form of development to the detriment of the visual amenity and rural characteristics of the site, eroding the clear defined rural edge which is created by the woodland from the built up area of Loudwater contrary to Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy, Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD, Policy 2 of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan and Policy DP3 of the NPPF.

Impact on Landscape:

7.3.11 Policy DM7 of the Development Management Policies LDD states that the Council will require proposals to make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape and that proposals which result in unacceptable harm to the character of the landscape in terms of siting, scale, design or external appearance will be refused.

7.3.12 It is not considered that the proposal will have any significant or detrimental impact on the wider landscape. The proposal would be sited within a woodland, which would be contained and not in a prominent position within the wider landscape and would not be visible from long views. It is therefore not considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the wider landscape character.

Impact on heritage assets:

7.3.13 The application site falls within the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area.

7.3.14 Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD also states that within conservation area, development will only be permitted if the proposal is of a design and scale that preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area…protects trees, hedgerows and other significant landscape features and incorporates landscaping appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

7.3.15 Policy HE9 sates that development proposals within or affecting the significance of conservation areas should…conserve features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. Policy HE6(1) of the NPPF states that

the potential effect of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential effect amounts to a positive effect, harm, substantial harm or total loss of its significance.

7.3.16 Whilst Long Spring is not mentioned in the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area Appraisal, its omission does not weaken its contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Sarratt Lane is identified as 'Sub-Area 3' within the Appraisal which states:

'From its junction with Loudwater Lane, Sarratt Lane rises gently westwards, winding gently through densely wooded countryside and gardens."

7.3.17 The significance of this part of the conservation area is its wooded character which provides a buffer to the residential development which is present at Ladywood Close. The absence of development along the eastern side of Sarratt Lane is a key rural characteristic and positively contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

7.3.18 The Outer Loudwater Conservation Area Appraisal specifically sets out that the relationship between buildings and their associated plots and surrounding planting are as important as the buildings themselves and defines the character of the Conservation Area.

7.3.19 The introduction of a caravan site would fundamentally erode the contribution the site makes by virtue of its wooded verdant nature, to the overall character of the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area. It is considered that any development on the application site would erode its current character owing to (prior its clearance and) its existing nature of being ancient/semi- natural woodland. The cumulative impact of the development on the site would result in the erosion of the woodland to a residential nature and would result in its character being fundamentally changed, with further tree clearance, provision of hardstanding and creation of an access. Further, the associated paraphernalia would further harm the character of the area. Thus, the site would no longer retain any of its current positive semi-rural character and contribution as a woodland parcel of land. Whilst it is acknowledged that there is existing boundary vegetation along the lane, which would provide a degree of mitigation to the views of the development from Sarratt Lane, owing to the existing site clearance, the development would be largely visible. The development would not therefore be totally screened from public vantage points. The access would enable views into the site and of the proposed caravans, which would be considered as in stark contrast to the wooded environment and would be incongruous features. Overall, the proposed development would fail to preserve the character of the site and the positive contribution it currently makes to the overall setting of the Conservation Area. As set out above the application site makes a positive contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area. This is in part due to the landscape visual amenity of the site and the number of trees/mature vegetation.

7.3.20 By virtue of the site circumstances and its significance, there would be limited opportunities on the site to provide significant re-planting. In any event the positive character of the site is attributed to its absence of built form and semi-natural woodland nature. The significant removal of trees has and would further erode the contribution the site makes to the setting of the Conservation Area.

7.3.21 With regards to Policy HE9 and HE6 of the NPPF, given the harm to the significance of the heritage asset, it is not considered that there are any public benefits and that the need for gypsy/traveller pitches, two in this case, would outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area, which would be considered as significant. . The proposal would result in significant harm given the proposed deterioration of the woodland feature on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the recent appeal decision under reference 25/0597/FUL at Land Adjoining Westwood End, Bucks Hill; the inspector stated

that the need did not outweigh the heritage harm. In this case, the level of harm is considered greater and as such, the same conclusion is drawn.

7.3.22 The proposal would therefore fail to preserve or enhance to the character of the Conservation Area. It would not retain or conserve the woodland feature, which makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. As per Policy HE6 of the NPPF substantial weight should be given to the identified harm to the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policy DM3 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013), The Outer Loudwater Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) and Policies HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF (2026).

7.4 Impact on Amenity of Neighbours

7.4.1 Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy states that development should 'protect residential amenities by taking into account the need for adequate levels and disposition of privacy, prospect, amenity and garden space'.

7.4.2 Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LLD states that the Council will refuse planning permission for development, including changes of use, which would or could give rise to polluting emissions by reason of disturbance, noise, light, smell, femes etc… unless mitigation measures can be put in place.

7.4.3 The proposed mobile homes would be set back a minimum of 30m from the highway, however, would be visible from the neighbouring dwellings and at No 1 and No. 2 Ladywood Close, given the existing and proposed tree removal. However, given the separation distance at a minimum distance of approximately 55m, that alone is considered sufficient mitigation to prevent harm or result in unacceptable overlooking. Notwithstanding this, the application site is well contained and whilst some views would be available to the front, the other boundaries would still largely be defined by a dense row of vegetation including mature trees, which would provide screening from other neighbouring properties. Thus, given the location of the proposed plots, it is not considered to result in harm by virtue of a loss of light or through an overbearing impact.

7.4.4 It is noted that the proposed development would result in additional comings and goings/increase intensification of the use of the site. It is not considered that there would be such increased level of activity that the development would result in demonstrable harm to adjacent neighbours.

7.4.5 In summary, the proposed development would not result in any adverse impact on the residential amenity of any neighbouring dwelling so as to justify refusal of the application and the development would therefore be acceptable in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM9 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

7.5 Biodiversity and mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain

7.5.1 Policy N6 of the NPPF outlines that development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland) should be refused.

7.5.2 The site in question is a protected woodland falling within a woodland preservation order (Tree Preservation Order 141) and is a Local Wildlife Site.

7.5.3 Whilst the site is not listed as Ancient Woodland on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, the adjoining woodland to the north west on the opposite side of Sarratt Lane known as Beechengrove Wood is. Notwithstanding, Herts Ecology when responding to the current planning application 26/0849/FUL have commented that the submitted information

identifies that the site forms part of the mapped area of Priority Deciduous Woodland Habitat, which exhibits characteristics associated with long-established semi-woodland, including abundant bluebell ground flora. Herts Ecology also confirmed that habitat survey information recorded 15 ancient woodland indicator species and concluded that the woodland met wildlife site criteria on the basis of its semi-natural canopy, woodland indicator flora and field evidence suggesting an ancient origin. In conclusion, Herts Ecology conclude that the woodland should be considered Ancient Woodland and therefore irreplaceable habitat.

7.5.4 Policy N6 of the NPPF outlines that development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland) should be refused.

7.5.5 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This is further emphasised by regulation 3(4) of the Habitat Regulations 1994 which state that Councils must have regard to the strict protection for certain species required by the EC Habitats Directive. The Habitats Directive places a legal duty on all public bodies to have regard to the habitats directive when carrying out their functions.

7.5.6 The protection of biodiversity and protected species is a material planning consideration in the assessment of this application in accordance with Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies document. National Planning Policy requires Local Authorities to ensure that a protected species survey is undertaken for applications where biodiversity may be affected prior to the determination of a planning application. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Report (Denny Ecology May 2026) was submitted with the application and has been reviewed by Hertfordshire Ecology. It states that the site comprises priority deciduous woodland and has the characteristics similar to ancient woodland including having an abundance of ancient woodland indicator ground flora; there is potential for foraging by bats and is a Local Wildlife Site and therefore officially recognised to be of County importance. Furthermore, no exterior lighting is recommended, and any ancient woodland species should be translocated. A Biodiversity Enhancement and Habitat Management Plan is also recommended, which would be recommended as a condition of any approval. Furthermore, there would be opportunities exist for the provision of ecological enhancements including bat and bird boxes.

7.5.7 Herts Ecology have reviewed the application, raised an objection and advised the application is unacceptable. The woodland is considered to meet the criteria on the basis of its semi-natural canopy, woodland indicator flora and field evidence, which suggests it is of an ancient origin. As such, the woodland is considered as Ancient Woodland and therefore irreplaceable habitat. The proposed development would therefore result in the loss and deterioration of an ancient woodland including harm to a Local Wildlife Site and 100% loss of biodiversity units. Herst Ecology have considered the proposed development would result in harm that cannot be avoided, migration or compensated in any way.

7.5.8 It is therefore considered that on this basis that the woodland should be treated as Ancient Woodland and therefore irreplaceable habitat. The mitigation measures proposed would not overcome the permanent habitat loss and deterioration of the woodland and associated woodland habitats. The ecological assessment also concludes that the proposal would result in an unavoidable adverse impact on the Local Wildlife Site the application site forms part of. The development would therefore fail to comply with Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and Policy N6 of the NPPF 2026.

7.5.9 In respect of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 sets out that every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the

'biodiversity gain condition' requiring development to achieve a net gain of 10% biodiversity value. This is subject to exemptions as set out in the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

7.5.10 In this case the biodiversity net gain condition is considered to apply. A BNG Assessment has accompanied the application, which has been reviewed by Hertfordshire Ecology. The proposed development would not be able to meet a 10% biodiversity net gain on site with a 100% loss and no secured off-site compensation is proposed. Herts Ecology note that the development would result in the direct loss and deterioration of part of this irreplaceable habitat through the proposed works. Whilst the BNG framework provides a mechanism to agree bespoke compensation where impacts to irreplaceable habitats are exceptionally permitted, guidance is clear that proposals should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Herts Ecology advise that no wholly exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated that would justify the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats. Owing to the nature of the site and proposal, it is considered that securing the biodiversity net gain through conditions is not appropriate in this instance and therefore is unacceptable, given the habitat, which is considered as irreplaceable. With no compensation strategy proposed and that it has not been demonstrated that exceptional circumstances exist for such harm to be considered as acceptable.

7.5.11 In summary, it is considered that the proposed development would not secure a biodiversity net gain and is therefore unacceptable and in accordance with Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

7.6 Highway Safety, Parking and Access

7.6.1 Core Strategy Policy CP10 requires development to provide a safe and adequate means of access and to make adequate provision for all users, including car parking. Policy DM13 in the Development Management Policies document states that development should make provision for parking in accordance with the Parking Standards set out within Appendix 5.

7.6.2 Policy CP5 of the DMP LDD sets out that when considering planning applications for sites for Gypsies and Travellers, the provision of safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the site and adequate on-site facilities for parking will be considered.

7.6.3 Policy TR6(4) of the NPPF states that development proposals should be refused if they would have a severe adverse impact on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion, including cumulative impacts), or an unacceptable impact on highway safety; taking into account any mitigation measures proposed as well as any wider network improvements, including measures to support sustainable patterns of movement. This applies both during the construction phase and following completion.

7.6.4 The Highways Officer has reviewed the proposal; whilst the access as constructed and as proposed on the application could be acceptable this would require the provision of visibility splays, which are not currently in effect. It is the required visibility splays that would result in the further removal of protected woodland trees and vegetation, which would not be considered as acceptable. Further, no vegetation is proposed to be removed within the required visibility splays and touring caravans would need to enter the site and need a wider access than a car. No vehicle tracking or visibility splays have been provided as part of the application and as such, it has not been demonstrated that the existing access would be able to facilitate safe access.

7.6.5 The Highway's Officer further objects to the principle of development in this location owing to its lack of sustainability. Whilst their comments are noted, if the proposal was for residential dwellings their comments would be applicable and relevant, such as at the site

to the south, for 9 dwellings, which was dismissed at appeal under reference 25/1294/FUL. In this case, the proposal is for a traveller site, where particular regard must be had to Policy HO12 of the NPPF and not Policy TR3, as explained above.

7.6.6 In terms of parking, there are no specific parking standards for traveller sites; however, the submitted layout of the site shows that there would be four parking spaces. This is considered to be sufficient, and the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

7.6.7 In summary, it has not been demonstrated that acceptable visibility splays can be achieved and even if they could be achieved, for reason expressed above, this would require the removal of trees and vegetation which would further undermine the character and appearance of the woodland. It is therefore considered that given the lack of visibility splay, that the access would not be safe on the grounds of highway safety. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Policy CP10 of the Core Strategy and Policy TR6 of the NPPF.

7.7 Refuse and Recycling

7.7.1 Policy DM10 (Waste Management) of the DMLDD advises that the Council will ensure that there is adequate provision for the storage and recycling of waste and that these facilities are fully integrated into design proposals. New developments will only be supported where:

i) The siting or design of waste/recycling areas would not result in any adverse impact to residential or work place amenity

ii) Waste/recycling areas can be easily accessed (and moved) by occupiers and by local authority/private waste providers

iii) There would be no obstruction of pedestrian, cyclists or driver site lines

7.7.2 It is considered from the submitted site layout plan that there would be sufficient space within the site for bin storage, which could be brought to the front of the site on collection day or accessed from within the site. This is considered acceptable arrangements for refuse/recycling on collection days. For good planning and site management purposes, details of a bin store would be subject to a condition, in the event of an approval. As such, there would be adequate provision for the storage and collection of refuse and re-cycling, in accordance with the requirements of Policy CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM10 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013).

7.8 Drainage and Waste Water

7.8.1 The application site is located within an Environment Agency defined groundwater Source Protection Zone (SPZ) corresponding to an Affinity Water Pumping Station. This is a public water supply, comprising a number of Chalk abstraction boreholes, operated by Affinity Water Ltd (AW).

7.8.2 A condition would require the submission and approval of a Waste Water Scheme and confirmation from Thames Water demonstrating connection to the existing sewer network. As such, subject to a recommended condition in the event of an approval, the proposal is considered to be acceptable in this regard.

7.9 Other material considerations:

7.9.1 It is important to consider whether there are any other material planning considerations as part of the application assessment.

The general need for and supply of Gypsy sites in Three Rivers

7.9.2 The existing number of traveller sites includes 41 pitches across five permanent sites; The Oaklands in Bedmond (12 pitches), Rear of 59 Toms Lane in Kings Langley (9 pitches); Fir Trees (2 pitches), the Land at Langleybury (17 pitches) and the Land South of Old House Lane (1 pitch). This is further outlined within the table below:

Current level of gypsy pitches in TRDC	Number of pitches granted	Number of pitches implemented	Status	Expiry date
The Oaklands, Bedmond	12	12	Permanent	N/A
Fir Trees, Sarratt	2	2	Permanent	N/A
Rear of 59 Toms Lane	9	21	Permanent	N/A
Langleybury Lane	17	17	Permanent	N/A
Land South of Old House Lane (*Current application 26/1017/FUL pending consideration for 5 more pitches*)	1	1	Permanent	N/A
Land Adjacent 321B Uxbridge Road	1	0	Permanent	Expired
Land North of Toms Lane	4	0	Permanent	03.06.2029
Keepers Cottage	2	2	Permanent	N/A
Land South of Harthall Lane	2	0	Permanent	23.10.2029

7.9.3 In July 2025 the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) identified a total need of 41 pitches. The assessment calculated a need of 37 pitches arising from those households who meet the planning definition and a need of 4 pitches arising from households with undetermined. As such, it is clear that there is a demonstrable need for gypsy/traveller pitches within the district. Consequently, subject to the occupants meeting the definition of a gypsy/traveller, there is an identified need within the district. The lack of an up-to-date 5 year supply of deliverable sites should be a significant material consideration, given the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply, this would weigh in significantly in favour of the application.

Alternative Sites

7.9.4 The existing pitches with planning permission in the district are private sites and there are substantial waiting lists for pitches on public sites within Hertfordshire.

7.9.5 Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy endorses support for gypsy provision but advises against development which harms the openness of the Green Belt. As such, it is likely that any development which comes forward in the Green Belt, which is highly likely given the make-up of the district, would fall foul of this policy. Given that the above assessment considers that the site is not Green Belt land, other sites in the district could potentially fall on Green Belt land which could have a greater harmful impact.

7.9.6 Policy HO12 further refers to taking into account the existing level of local provision and the need for additional traveller sites, of which there is in the district.

7.9.7 The lack of alternative sites and the fact that alternatives are likely to be in the Green Belt, given that 77% of Three Rivers District is within the Green Belt, are further considerations which weigh in favour of the application.

Needs of the applicant and their personal circumstances

7.9.8 Annex B of the NPPF defines Gypsies and Travellers as:

"Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.'

7.9.9 No information has been submitted regarding the future occupiers of the site. As such, there are no personal circumstances to consider.

Policy CP5 considerations

7.9.10 In regard to Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy, the proposed development is considered to conflict with part (b), (d) and (e). This is due to no safe and convenient pedestrian access to the site and the lack of adequate on-site facilities for storage purposes, play and residential amenity. The proposed development also does not provide any day room provision, given the constraints of the site. This would therefore weigh against the proposed scheme.

Engagement with Human Rights Act

7.9.11 When considering an application for planning permission for gypsy pitches, the Council needs to consider whether Article 8(1) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is engaged. Article 8(1) provides that everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. Case law has established that Article 8(1) of the ECHR is engaged in applications for planning permission for residential Gypsy caravan pitches irrespective of whether the applicants are occupying the site as their home at the time the application is made.

7.9.12 Article 8(2) of the ECHR allows interference by a public authority with the right to respect for private and family life where the interference accords with the law and is necessary in a democratic society for the wider public interest, in terms of national security, public safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals or for the protection of rights and freedom of others.

7.9.13 Case law has also established that the greater interference with ECHR rights, the greater will be the need to justify the interference by reference to necessity and proportionality. The concept of proportionality can be equated to the balancing exercise which should be undertaken by all decision makers and in the case of applications for Gypsy sites, any action must be evenly balanced and fully considered in order to avoid the criticism that it is disproportionate relative to the harm caused. These cases suggest that legally it will not be sufficient for local authorities to rely on a breach of Development Plan policies in refusing planning permission. Rather there must be clear evidence of demonstrable harm which outweighs the consequences of the Council's decision for Gypsies. There is thus a need for the Council to weigh demonstrable harm against the consequences of a refusal

for the applicant, including health, education, other social issues and the availability of alternative sites.

7.10 Planning Balance

7.10.1 Policy S5 of the NPPF (2026) relating to the principle of development outside of settlements sets out that “only certain forms of development should be approved outside settlements, as set out in the following list. These should be approved, unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework: 1(g) Development which would address an evidenced unmet need for gypsy, traveller or travelling showpeople accommodation, provided it meets the criteria in policy HO12”.

7.10.2 In applying this policy, the circumstances in which the benefits of approving development proposals are likely to be **substantially outweighed by adverse effects** include, but are not restricted to, situations where the development proposal would fail to comply with one of the national decision-making policies which state that development proposals should be refused in specific circumstances.

7.10.3 Having regard to all matters raised above it is also necessary to ascertain whether any other harm, if found, is clearly outweighed by material considerations, to justify the grant of planning permission.

7.10.4 Summary

Adverse impacts	**Weight**
Heritage (contrary to Policy HE6)	Substantial
Streetscene character / loss of trees	Significant
Impacts on Ecology (contrary to N6) and no BNG	Substantial
Highways Safety (safe access not demonstrated)	Significant
Conflict with Policy CP5	Moderate
Benefits	**Weight**
Unmet need for gypsy and traveller pitches	Significant
Lack of 5-year-supply of deliverable sites	Significant
Long term social/economic benefits	Limited
Lack of alternative sites	Limited

7.10.5 It has been found during the assessment that the development would fail to preserve or enhance to the character of the Conservation Area; would fail to provide a safe access; would have an adverse impact on the rural character of the area, result in the permanent habitat loss and deterioration of the ancient/semi-natural woodland and conflict with parts of Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy. There would also be an unavoidable adverse impact on the Local Wildlife Site and a Biodiversity Net Gain would not be provided on or off site. Nevertheless, it is still considered important to review the circumstances and benefits of the development.

7.10.6 During the planning assessment it was found that various factors weigh in favour of the development. These include meeting an identified need for gypsy and travellers meeting the definition (which has been confirmed) within the district, the lack of 5-year-supply of deliverable sites, current lack of alternative sites and the fact that other sites are also likely to fall within the Green Belt. Additionally, the grant of permanent planning permission would count towards the district’s need.

7.10.7 To conclude, when considering the above factors, it is considered that the above identified harm would cumulatively have substantial weight, which would outweigh the benefits associated with the proposed development.

7.10.8 In reaching this recommendation, regard is had Article 8(1) and Article 8(2) of the ECHR given the potential implications of refusing planning permission. The above assessment has clearly demonstrated that significant demonstrable harm would result from allowing the development. This harm is considered justifiable to refuse planning permission for two traveller pitches when balanced against the above requirements. It is also not considered that the grant of a temporary planning permission would be acceptable given the impact and irreversible harm that would arise.

8. Recommendation

That PLANNING PERMISSION BE REFUSED for the following reasons:

R1 The proposed development, by virtue of the change of use and associated structures, paraphernalia and operational development within the woodland of Long Spring would fundamentally undermine the positive contribution that the existing parcel of ancient/semi-natural woodland makes to the verdant setting and significance of the Outer Loudwater Conservation Area, which would be further exacerbated by the removal of a number of protected of trees to facilitate the development. The proposed development would fail to preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area thus leading to harm to a designated heritage asset. The identified public benefits do not outweigh the identified harm. The proposal would be contrary to Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011), Policies DM3 and DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013), The Outer Loudwater Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) and Policy HE6 of the NPPF (2026).

R2 The proposed development, by virtue of the change of use and associated structures, paraphernalia and operational development within the woodland of Long Spring would result in an urbanising and incongruous form of development to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area and rural characteristics of the site, eroding the clear defined rural edge which is created by the woodland. The proposal would be contrary to Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DP3 of the NPPF (2026).

R3 It has not been demonstrated that the vehicular access would provide a safe and useable access to the site for all vehicles associated with the proposed development. The proposed development would be harmful to highway safety and the free flow of traffic. As such the development would be contrary to Policy CP10 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy TR7 of the NPPF (2026).

R4 It has not been demonstrated that the development would not have a detrimental impact on the ancient/semi-natural woodland, an irreplaceable habitat, its biodiversity and protected species on the site. The development would also fail to provide biodiversity net gain. Therefore, the necessary consideration and appropriate mitigation cannot be given to the impact of the development on biodiversity and protected species, which is contrary to Policy CP9 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011) and Policy DM6 of the Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013) and Policy N6 of the NPPF (2026).

8.1 Informative

I1 The Local Planning Authority has been positive and proactive in considering this planning application in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. The Local Planning Authority encourages applicants to have pre-

application discussions as advocated in the NPPF. The applicant and/or their agent did not have formal pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority and the proposed development fails to comply with the requirements of the Development Plan and does not maintain/improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the District.

This page is intentionally left blank




NO FLY TIPPING!







This page is intentionally left blank