



**ERECTION OF 8 NO. DWELLINGS
FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF
EXISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES
AND IMPROVEMENTS TO
EXISTING ACCESS**

**VICTORIA NURSERIES
109 VICTORIA ROAD
WARGRAVE, READING RG10 8AG**

**PLANNING STATEMENT
DECEMBER 2024**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for redevelopment to provide 8 no. dwellings (7 x 3 bed houses and 1 x 1 bed house) following the demolition of the existing buildings and structures at Victoria Nurseries, 109 Victoria Road, Wargrave, Reading RG10 8AG. The application is submitted on behalf of Palatine Homes, a local SME housebuilder of the type which Government particularly seeks to encourage and support in delivering new homes.
- 1.2 The Planning Statement describes how the proposed development complies with relevant development plan policies and national planning policy, including the new National Planning Policy Framework published on 12 December 2024. The new Framework reinforces the urgent priority given to housing delivery and the need for councils to play their part in meet housing need, including new immediate mandatory housing targets for councils to ramp up housebuilding to meet the Government's ambitious targets of 370,000 new homes each year.
- 1.3 The Statement should be read together with the following drawings and reports submitted with the application:

Application Drawings prepared by HP Architecture

24.419 01 P1	Location Plan
24.419 02 P1	Site Plan
24.419 11 P1	Plot 01 – Proposed Floor Plans
24.419 12 P1	Plot 01 – Proposed Elevations
24.419 13 P1	Plots 02 and 03 – Proposed Floor Plans 1 of 2
24.419 14 P1	Plots 02 and 03 – Proposed Floor Plans 2 of 2
24.419 15 P1	Plots 02 and 03 – Proposed Elevations
24.419 16 P1	Plots 04 to 07 – Proposed Floor Plans 1 of 2
24.419 17 P1	Plots 04 to 07 – Proposed Floor Plans 2 of 2
24.419 18 P1	Plots 04 and 05 – Proposed Elevations
24.419 19 P1	Plots 06 and 07 – Proposed Elevations
24.419 20 P1	Plot 08 – Proposed Floor Plans
24.419 21 P1	Plot 08 – Proposed Elevations

24.419 30 P1	Proposed Street Scene
24.419 31 P1	Proposed Site Elevation A-A
24.419 32 P1	Proposed Site Elevation B-B
24.419 33 P1	Proposed Site Elevation C-C

Reports

Design and Statement prepared by HP Architecture, December 2024

Affordable Housing Statement prepared by Paul Dickinson and Associates,
Town Planning and Development Consultants, December 2024

Transport Statement prepared by Highway Planning Ltd, Highways &
Transportation Consultants, November 2024

BS5837:2012 Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
GHA/DS/167890:24 and AIA Plan prepared by GHA Trees Arboricultural
Consultancy, 25 November 2024

Drawing TL-SM-VN271124 - Soft Landscape Plan prepared by Treetop
Landscapes Ltd, 18 December 2024

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by AA Environmental Ltd,
December 2024

Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Note prepared by AA Environmental Ltd,
December 2024

Biodiversity Net Gain Small Sites Metric Spreadsheet prepared by AA
Environmental Ltd, December 2024

Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy prepared by JNP Group,
Consulting Engineers, December 2024

2.0 PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site lies within the built-up settlement of Wargrave on the north side of Victoria Road about 740 metres east of the village centre. The site is surrounded by established residential development (with the exception of the Mace convenience store (A & I Store) immediately adjacent to the east of the

site entrance). Victoria Road comprises a mixture of terraced, semi-detached and detached dwellings. Most development consists of traditional brick houses from the late Victorian/early Edwardian period although there have been more recent infill and replacement developments so that the street scene comprises a variety of architectural styles.

- 2.2 The application site (0.28 ha) comprises a plant nursery with some buildings and covered and open structures associated with its use although it is generally open, particularly creating a gap in the current developed street scene. No. 103 Victoria Road is a residential property (formerly post office and newsagents but now converted to a dwelling). The remaining boundaries are to gardens of residential properties in Victoria Road and in Purfield Drive and Fidlers Walk to the north.
- 2.3 The proposals involve the demolition of the existing nursery buildings and structures and erection of 8 no. dwellings (7 x 3 bed houses and 1 x 1 bed flat). This will comprise an infill dwelling to the site frontage onto Victoria Road, 3 pairs of semi-detached houses within the main part of the site and a 1 bed flat over a garage building. There would be 17 spaces to serve the development and 3 of the parking spaces in the garaging would be replacement parking for the adjacent convenience store (staff/owners) and the existing flat above the store.

3.0 RELEVANT NATIONAL AND LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES

National policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework published 12 December 2024 (NPPF) reaffirms a pro-growth agenda for the planning system. At its heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means that proposals which accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. The NPPF seeks to boost the supply of housing land and to support growth by making sufficient provision for housing, employment and other commercial development in line with paragraphs 11(a) and (b) of the NPPF; see paragraphs 8 and 18.
- 3.2 Other national policy relevant to application includes:

- **The Government has announced that a key objective is to deliver a sufficient supply of homes to meet its ambitious target of 370,000 new homes each year (a 23% increase over the previous Government's targets) with new mandatory housing targets being introduced requiring every council to meet identified housing need.**
- **To support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward. The overall aim should be to meet an area's identified need including an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community (paragraph 61);**
- **Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, are essential for SME housebuilders to deliver new homes, and are often built out relatively quickly. LPAs should give great weight to the benefits of using suitable windfall sites within existing settlements for homes (paragraph 73);**
- **Where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site (paragraph 130);**
- **Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments: (a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area; (b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, (c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change, such as increased densities; (d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place; (e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of**

development; and (f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible (paragraph 135).

The Development Plan

- 3.3 The development plan for the purposes of S70(2) to the TCPA 1990 and S38(6) to the PCPA 2004 is the Wokingham Core Strategy (CS) adopted January 2010 and the Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) adopted February 2014.
- 3.4 The CS policies most relevant to the application include:
- CP1 – Sustainable development
 - CP3 – General principles for development
 - CP5 – Housing mix, density and affordability
 - CP6 – Managing travel demand
 - CP7 – Biodiversity
 - CP9 – Scale and location of development proposals
- 3.5 The MDD policies most relevant to the application include:
- CC01 – Presumption in favour of sustainable development
 - CC02 – Development limits
 - CC03 – Green infrastructure, trees and landscaping
 - CC04 – Sustainable design and construction
 - CC07 – Parking
 - CC09 – Development and flood risk
 - CC10 – Sustainable drainage
 - TB05 – Housing mix
 - TB07 – Internal space standards
 - TB21 – Landscape Character
 - TB23 – Biodiversity and development

- 3.6 We have also taken into account the Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and the Nationally Described Space Standards in preparing the application proposals.

4.0 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

Principle of development

- 4.1 The Core Strategy's spatial vision explains that new development will be concentrated in those towns and villages with existing or proposed infrastructure and services and access to public transport which can support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly for private cars. The site lies within the defined settlement limits of Wargrave which is identified as a location with facilities and services which are appropriate for modest levels of development.
- 4.2 The site lies within an established residential area in an acknowledged sustainable location within walking and cycling distance of the village centre and with the convenience store adjacent to the site. The site is underutilised and in increasingly poor condition and has the potential to accommodate new residential development without harm to the character of the area or neighbour amenity.
- 4.3 The proposals would therefore accord with the Council's spatial strategy set out in its Vision (Section 3 of the CS), Policy CP1 (Sustainable development) and Policy CC01 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development). It would make a contribution as a windfall housing site to the Borough's housing land supply.
- 4.4 The proposals would accord with national policy at paragraph 73 of the Framework which acknowledges that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly and requires LPAs to give great weight to the benefits of using suitable windfall sites within existing settlements for homes. The applicant is a local SME housebuilder of the type which paragraph 73 specifically encourages.

Sustainability

- 4.5 CS Policies CP1, CP4, CP6, CP9 permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport. CS paragraph 4.57 aims to prevent the proliferation of development in areas away from existing development limits as these are not well located for facilities and services and would lead to the increase in use of the private car.
- 4.6 The site is in a settlement which the Council acknowledges is served by shops and facilities and suitable for modest levels of additional development. The CS para. 2.82 notes that Wargrave has its own railway station albeit with a limited stopping service. The Council's updated Settlement Hierarchy Assessment (September 2024) reaffirms that Wargrave is a 'Modest development location' (Tier 2 in the settlement hierarchy) which have sizeable populations and contain most of the key services and facilities and some of the higher-order services and facilities. It also notes that Wargrave is 2.8km from the nearest Tier 1 settlement and (like most modest development locations) has fair public transport accessibility.
- 4.7 The Transport Statement submitted with the application also provides an assessment of the accessibility of the site in relation to local shops and facilities. For example, it notes the convenience store adjacent to the site, doctors surgery and pharmacy (250m), Robert Piggot Junior School (640m), the main shops in the High street (840m) and the railway station (1450m) which indicates the site is very accessible by cycling and walking (having regard to the recommended walking distances in the CIHT document 'Guidelines for Providing Journeys on Foot'.

Dwelling mix

- 4.8 CS Policy CP5 and MDD Policy TB05 seek an appropriate housing mix which reflects a balance between the underlying character of the area and current projected housing needs. The Berkshire (including South Bucks) Strategic Housing Market Assessment (February 2016) identified a market housing need for mainly 3 bed units:

No of beds	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Dwellings required	934	3488	5605	2862	12889
	7.2 %	27.1%	43.5%	22.2%	100%

- 4.9 The Council's most up-to-date Local Housing Needs Assessment (November 2023) shows the priority need continues to be for 3 bed units (Figures 47 and 48):

No of beds	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Dwellings required	515	1399	5041	3890	10840
	4.7 %	12.9%	46.5%	35.9%	100%

- 4.10 On a sub-area basis, the Local Housing Needs Assessment (November 2023) also shows a similar shift towards a market housing need for larger units for the Northern Sub-Area within which the application site is located (Figure 52):

No of beds	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+ bed	Total
Dwellings required	23	45	157	19	206
	11 %	22%	76%	9%	100%

- 4.11 The proposal is for 7 x 3 bed houses and a 1 bed flat. This would be in line with the identified priority need for the Sub-Area in the latest Local Housing Needs Assessment (November 2023) which demonstrates a priority need for 3 bed units (some two thirds of all new market homes in the Northern Sub-Area).

Character of the area

- 4.12 CS Policy CP3 states that development must be appropriate in terms of its scale of activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials, and character to the area in which it is located, and must be of high-quality design.
- 4.13 I have noted in section 2 that the area includes a mix of housing types and ages although the predominant characteristic is Victorian and Edwardian brick houses mainly semi-detached with some detached and terraced houses. These sit quite close to the road and as a consequence the street scene has a

fairly dense and enclosed appearance.

- 4.14 The Design and Access Statement provides a full analysis of the characteristics of the local area and explains the design parameters for the development. Pages 6 to 9 provide a photographic assessment of the application site and pages 10 and 11 provide examples of local design styles and materials.
- 4.15 The design of the proposals reflects the form and character of surrounding development with particular reference to Victoria Road as the approach road to the site. Plot 1 provides an infill plot within the street scene and follows the established building line and reflects the design and materials of its neighbours including a slate roof (the houses within the scheme would have plain clay tiles). The remaining houses 02 to 07 are arranged as pairs of semi-detached houses facing into the internal access. The proposed materials include quality stock facing brick with contrasting brick detail features such as banding courses, voussoirs, quoins and stitching courses, flint detailing and timber detailing and roofs would be quality plain clay tiles (except plot 01 which would be slate to match the street scene).
- 4.16 The layout has been designed to work with the site topography which falls from south to north (nearly 3 metres over the whole site). A buffer has been provided along the northern boundary for new tree planting and to include the proposed swale forming part of the SuDS proposals. The proposed swale would not affect existing mature trees in neighbouring gardens to the north because of the significant changes in level and retaining wall.
- 4.17 The layout incorporates minimum 1 metre gaps between each of the proposed houses and their respective boundaries, so gaps of at least 2 metres between each new house. This complies with the Council's guidance on minimum separation gaps.
- 4.18 The Design and Access Statement explains that whilst not all gardens achieve the full 11m depth set out in Guideline R16 of the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012), this is compensated for by above average widths so that useable areas range from 70 to 100m² and are considered adequate to meet the needs of future occupants and provide good sizes and shapes to ensure the

gardens are suitable for accommodating outdoor activities such as play, clothes drying and storage. The layout is designed to ensure no direct overlooking into opposite gardens.

Density

- 4.19 CS Policy CP5 requires an appropriate density for new developments. Guideline R10 to the Borough Design Guide SPD seeks to ensure that the development achieves an appropriate density in relation to local character. This needs to be balanced against more up-to-date national policy which seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes (para. 73) and avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site (para. 135). The proposed density of about 28.5 dwellings per hectare. This is above the density of the surrounding area but it is considered an appropriate balance between making efficient use of land and respecting the character of the area and meeting priority housing needs for 3 bed homes.

Affordable housing

- 4.20 CS Policy CP5 and the Council's Affordable Housing SPD seek the provision of 20% affordable housing from any development involving between 5-14 dwellings within development limits or where it is sited on land with a total area of 0.16 hectares or more.
- 4.21 The proposed development triggers the affordable housing requirement and would result in a requirement for 1.6 affordable units. Providers have indicated that such a small on-site provision would not be of interest or economic for them to operate. The applicants therefore seek to make an affordable housing contribution towards the off-site provision or regeneration of affordable housing within the Borough in lieu of on-site provision and would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with officers and progress an appropriate S106 planning agreement.

Internal space standards

- 4.22 MDD Policy TB07 states that proposals for new residential units should ensure

that the internal layout and size are suitable to serve the amenity requirements of future occupiers. Guideline R17 to the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) requires adequate internal space to ensure the layout and size achieves good internal amenity for future occupiers. The standards set out in these documents are based on former Mayor of London Housing Guide standards although I am aware the Council also relies on the Government nationally described space standards, so I have assessed the proposals on this basis.

4.23 The proposals would comply with the nationally described space standards:

		NDSS	Proposal	Bed 1	Bed 2	Bed 3
Plot 1	3B6P	95m ²	152.6m ²	Double 12.5m ² 3.65m wide	Double 12.3m ² 3.65m wide	Double 11.8m ² 3m wide
Plot 2	3B6P	95m ²	156.9m ²	Double 14.6m ² 3.4m wide	Double 15.8m ² 4.4m wide	Double 11.6m ² 3.75m wide
Plot 3	3B6P	95m ²	156.9m ²	Double 14.6m ² 3.4m wide	Double 15.8m ² 4.4m wide	Double 11.6m ² 3.75m wide
Plot 4	3B6P	95m ²	158.4m ²	Double 14.6m ² 3.4m wide	Double 17.5m ² 4.4m wide	Double 11.6m ² 3.75m wide
Plot 5	3B6P	95m ²	158.4m ²	Double 14.6m ² 3.4m wide	Double 17.5m ² 4.4m wide	Double 11.6m ² 3.75m wide
Plot 6	3B6P	95m ²	158.4m ²	Double 14.6m ² 3.4m wide	Double 17.5m ² 4.4m wide	Double 11.6m ² 3.75m wide
Plot 7	3B6P	95m ²	158.4m ²	Double 14.6m ² 3.4m wide	Double 17.5m ² 4.4m wide	Double 11.6m ² 3.75m wide
Plot 8	1B2P	50m ²	62.6m ²	Double 16.4m ² 3.2m wide		

4.24 All of the proposed dwellings would therefore comply with the nationally described space standards in terms of overall unit sizes and bedroom sizes and widths. They also incorporate built-in storage of 2.5m² (1.5m² in the case of the 1 bed flat) to accord with the standards.

4.25 Guideline R18 of the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) requires sufficient sunlight and daylight to new properties, with dwellings afforded a reasonable dual outlook and southern aspect. The habitable rooms of each dwelling in that scheme would receive adequate light from the front and rear windows. The proposals provide good natural light to all habitable rooms.

Neighbour amenity

- 4.26 CS Policy CP3 seeks to ensure that new developments are not detrimental to the amenities of adjoining land uses. Guideline R15 to the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) requires the retention of reasonable levels of visual privacy to habitable rooms, with separation of 22 metres to the rear. The proposed layout has been designed so there is no direct overlooking between habitable windows of the new houses and windows to existing neighbours. There would be no first floor habitable room windows in the flank elevations facing towards neighbouring properties in Purfield Drive and Fidlers Way. Because of the fall in the site levels from south to north this also improves the relationship between plots 01 and 02 and No. 111 Victoria Road and the garaging.
- 4.27 Guideline R18 to the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) seeks to protect sunlight and daylight to existing properties and ensure that new developments do not have a detrimental impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. Given the separation distances and orientation of the development there is unlikely to be an unacceptable loss of light between the proposed development and neighbouring properties.

Trees and landscape

- 4.28 MDD Policy CC03 seeks to protect green infrastructure networks, promote linkages between public open space and the countryside, retain existing trees and establish appropriate landscaping. MDD Policy TB21 requires consideration of the landscape character. Guideline R14 to the Borough Design Guide SPD (2012) requires well-designed hard and soft landscaping that complements housing.
- 4.29 A BS5837:2012 tree report and AIA plan prepared by GHA Trees Arboricultural Consultancy are submitted with the application. These identify trees within the site to be removed to accommodate the development. These are assessed as Category C trees and therefore are not considered a constraint on development in accordance with BS5837:2012 advice. Most are identified as small trees of limited value and whose removal would not significantly impact on the local or wider landscape. The proposals include a detailed landscaping plan showing replacement planting to mitigate in

arboricultural terms but also provide part of the measures required to achieve the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirements.

Highway access and parking provision

- 4.30 The Transport Statement submitted with the application notes that the proposal includes a modification to the existing site entrance (which has no clear definition for use by vehicles or pedestrians and comprises the full width of the site frontage) to create a formal bellmouth access road junction and associated footway. This will enable the provision of suitable visibility splays to comply with current guidance. This is considered an improvement over the existing undefined situation.
- 4.31 The traffic generation for the proposed residential development is assessed at between 6 and 8 traffic movements per dwelling per day which would equate to a gross traffic generation of between 48 and 64 traffic movements for a 12 hour day. The nursery use would generate a certain volume of traffic activity (not available from the TRICS database) which would be deducted from the above figures to determine the net traffic impact of the development. As such the net impact must be less than 48 to 64 traffic movements per day. Given this limited scale it is unlikely that traffic from the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the wider highway network having regard to paragraph 116 of the NPPF.
- 4.32 The proposed layout includes the provision of two car parking spaces for each house and two parking spaces for the flat together with one visitor parking space in a layby near to the rear of plot 01. Three of the spaces in the garaging are replacement spaces for the convenience store and flat above the store.
- 4.33 MDD Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 set out the Council's parking standards including provision for EVCP facilities. Based on Table C3-3 and using the Council's parking calculator it is assessed that the proposal requires 2 visitor spaces. As such the proposed parking provision has a shortfall of 1 space. However, the existing nursery use has no formal parking facilities and therefore customers park on Victoria Road which has no parking restrictions and is wide enough to

accommodate parking on both sides. As such, the proposed development results in a small shortfall of one visitor space which can be easily accommodated on Victoria Road in the same manner as the existing nursery use being replaced. EVCPs are provided to comply with the Council's standards.

- 4.34 MDD Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 also set out minimum cycle parking standards which should be conveniently located, covered and secure. The standards require storage for at least 2 cycles for each dwelling. The layout plan shows the provision of covered and secure cycle stores within the rear garden to each of the houses and a ground floor store to the rear of the garaging to serve the flat.

- 4.35 A bin collection point would be provided to the south of plot 08. On collection day the Council's refuse vehicle will be able to reverse a short distance (circa 12m) into the site and then be within the recommended maximum 25m pull distance from the bin collection point. This would comply with the advice at paragraph 6.8.8 of Manual for Streets.

Ecology

- 4.36 MDD Policy TB23 requires development proposals to incorporate new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network.
- 4.37 A Preliminary Ecological Assessment prepared by AA Environmental is submitted with the application. The site was assessed as of overall low ecological value with the species recorded described as common or abundant and are found in similar places across much of Britain. No evidence of protected species was recorded. Specifically, no evidence of bats was recorded within any of the buildings and structures or trees. The site is assessed as providing negligible roosting opportunities for bats. There were no ponds on the site and therefore no breeding opportunities for reptiles or amphibians and no records of GCN within the surrounding 1km study area. There was a record of one slow worm located 0.53m away but with intervening barriers to movement including roads and residential properties.

- 4.38 The assessment concludes there are no ecological constraints to the redeveloped proposals. A series of generic mitigation measures could be implemented to reduce any impact the proposals may have on local wildlife and to provide enhancement measures to increase the nature conservation value of the site in the long term in accordance with Government guidance set out in NPPF 2024 (in addition to the specific mandatory BNG measures referred to below).
- 4.39 A biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessment and small sites metric spreadsheet prepared by AA Environmental Ltd are submitted with the application. These demonstrate that the proposals will result in some loss of habitat units although this has been kept to the minimum reasonably possible and the proposals have been sensitively designed with the provision of new wildlife friendly planting and hedgerows along with other enhancement measures such as the provision of wildlife boxes (which are not factored into the DEFRA metric) which will provide opportunities and benefits for local wildlife which will result in an overall ecological benefit in comparison to the existing onsite conditions. The loss of biodiversity will be compensated by off-site replacement habitat through the purchase of habitat units to meet the 10% net gain requirement.

Flood risk and SUDS drainage

- 4.40 MDD Policy CC10 states that all development proposals must ensure surface water arising from the proposed development, including taking into account climate change, is managed in a sustainable manner and this must be demonstrated through a Surface Water Drainage Strategy.
- 4.41 A flood risk assessment and surface water drainage strategy prepared by JNP Consulting Engineers is submitted with the application. This confirms that the site lies within flood zone 1. Two alternative drainage strategies are proposed. Firstly, infiltration to a below ground drainage network and then to ground via a downstream defender and infiltration tank. Alternatively, runoff to be collected via a series of rainwater pipes and permeable paving and discharging into a below ground drainage network and then the mains sewer via a downstream defender and attenuation tank. The report provides a detailed assessment of

the proposals including proposed storage calculations, designs and specifications demonstrating how the proposal complies with the Government's SuDS hierarchy. The calculations demonstrate that the SuDS features have been sized to cater for runoff generated by the 1 in 100-year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change in accordance with current guidelines. Indicative SuDS layout drawings are provided which show locations for the SuDS structures and demonstrate that the specification dimensions are achievable. The report also includes an initial SuDS operation and management plan (section 6.7) which describes how the SuDS system for this development would be managed throughout the lifespan of the development and who will be responsible for maintenance.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The new National Planning Policy Framework published on 12 December 2024 reinforces the urgent priority that the Government gives to housing delivery and the need for councils to play their part in meet housing need. The Framework introduces new immediate mandatory housing targets for councils to ramp up housebuilding to meet the Government's ambitious targets of 370,000 new homes each year.
- 5.2 The proposals would provide additional homes within the development limits of an existing settlement area. Wargrave is identified as a settlement within which modest development would accord with the Council's spatial strategy. The site is within walking and cycling distance of a range of shops and facilities in the village and is 2.8km from the nearest Tier 1 settlement and has fair public transport accessibility. The small scale of the proposal (A minor development) is appropriate for this settlement both in terms of the spatial strategy and retaining local character.
- 5.3 The proposals would therefore accord with the Council's spatial strategy set out in its Vision (Section 3 of the CS), Policy CP1 (Sustainable development) and Policy CC01 (Presumption in favour of sustainable development). It would make a contribution as a windfall housing site to the Borough's housing land supply and would also make a financial contribution to affordable housing provision.

- 5.4 The proposals would contribute to the Borough's housing land supply and specifically the identified priority need for 3 bed homes and the provision of affordable housing (via a financial contribution in lieu of on-site provision).
- 5.5 The proposals accords with national policy at paragraph 73 of the Framework which acknowledges that small and medium sizes sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly and requires LPAs to give great weight to the benefits of using suitable windfall sites within existing settlements for homes.
- 5.6 The drawings and the other submitted reports demonstrate how the proposals comply with policies relating to the character of the area, design and materials, housing mix, space standards, neighbour amenity, trees, access and car/cycle parking, biodiversity and surface water drainage.
- 5.7 The proposals are sustainable development which would contribute the following benefits to the three overarching economic, social and environmental objectives at NPPF para. 8 and which weigh in favour of the proposals:
- Economic objective – Provides land for housing to support economic growth. The site is immediately available for development to support economic growth. Benefits to the local community and local economy including creation of jobs and supply chain investment associated with the construction stage and increased demand for local goods and services over the long-term occupation of the dwellings and the New Homes Bonus payment which is a local finance consideration to which the Council must have regard in determining the application as required by S70(2) of the TCPA 1990.
 - Social objective – Supports a strong and vibrant community by contributing to the supply of housing in a sustainable urban location. Meets the Government's policy to significantly boost the supply of housing and makes a particular contribution to the priority need for 3 bedroom houses identified in the Council's latest housing needs assessment. Paragraph 73 of the Framework requires the decision maker to give great weight to the benefits of using suitable windfall sites within existing settlements for homes. Moreover, the applicant is a local

SME housebuilder of the type which paragraph 73 specifically encourages.

- Environmental objective – The proposal delivers additional housing within the development limits of the settlement without harm to the built, historic or natural environment and without harm to the character and visual amenity of the area. The proposal would offer a good choice of non-car modes of travel given its accessible location. The proposals achieve 10% biodiversity net gain.

The tilted balance

- 5.8 The Council's latest published annual monitoring report (March 2023) indicates 3.2 years' supply. The Council in determining residential applications in recent months has acknowledged that it still does not have a 5 year housing land supply, as reintroduced by footnote 8 to the new Framework, (in fact, reports to the Council's Planning Committee on 11 December 2024 noted the current housing land supply is less than 4 years) such that paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework is engaged. Consequently, those policies which are most important for determining applications for new housing including CS Policies CP9 and CP11, as well as MDD Policy CC02, are considered out-of-date in accordance with paragraph 11 of the NPPF. None of the policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance as listed in footnote 7 to the Framework apply or provide a clear reason for disapplying the presumption in favour of granting planning permission.
- 5.9 The effect of paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework is to tilt the balance in favour of granting planning permission unless the benefits of the proposal are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the adverse effects, i.e. it gives more weight to those benefits.
- 5.10 Whilst I consider that applying the normal planning balance the proposal accords with policies and planning permission should be granted, the triggering of the tilted balance provides additional justification in support of the proposals. I have set out the economic, social and environmental benefits in paragraph 5.7 above.

- 5.11 I conclude there would be no adverse impacts resulting from the proposals which would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, having particularly regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes. I have demonstrated how the proposals would contribute to each of these key policies. Therefore, planning permission should be granted.

Paul Dickinson BA(Hons)
MRTPI MRICS MCMI
20 December 2024