

TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

MR R RYAN

PLANNING STATEMENT

**LAND ADJACENT TO HUTTS FARM COTTAGE
BLAGROVE LANE
WOKINGHAM
RG41 4AX**

**Proposed erection of 4no. detached dwellings with associated parking and access
(Outline application to consider layout and means of access)**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This planning statement is submitted in support of an outline planning application by Mr R Ryan for the following:

‘Proposed erection of 4no. detached dwellings with associated parking and access – outline application to consider layout and means of access’

- 1.2 The application proposes at this stage to consider layout and means of access.

- 1.3 The statement is divided into the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Site and Surrounding Area
- Planning Policy Context
- The Application Proposal
- Summary and Conclusions

- 1.4 This statement will examine all relevant planning policies both local and national and will demonstrate that the application proposal is both sustainable and in full compliance with policy guidance.

- 1.5 Reference will be made in particular to the fact that the Council does not have a five year supply of housing. The most recent published figure contained within the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement of 31 March 2023 (published 26 January 2024) is that on 31 March 2023, the Council could only demonstrate a 3.2 year housing land supply. As a result, the tilted balance is engaged. This proposal would provide substantial benefits including much needed housing (4no. additional units) and a policy compliant affordable housing contribution. Therefore, when applying the tilted balance, the adverse impacts are

not of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

1.6 In addition to providing housing, this particular proposal will provide for the following substantial benefits:

- Retention and enhancement the boundary screening;
- Provision of a low-density form of development that reflects the character of the area;
- High quality and sustainable dwellings
- Biodiversity enhancements;

1.7 The following consultant reports accompany the submission:

Tree Survey, AIA and TCP – ROAVR Group

Ecological Impact Assessment and BNG Assessment – Darwin Ecology Ltd

Design and Access Statement – Paul Edwards Architecture

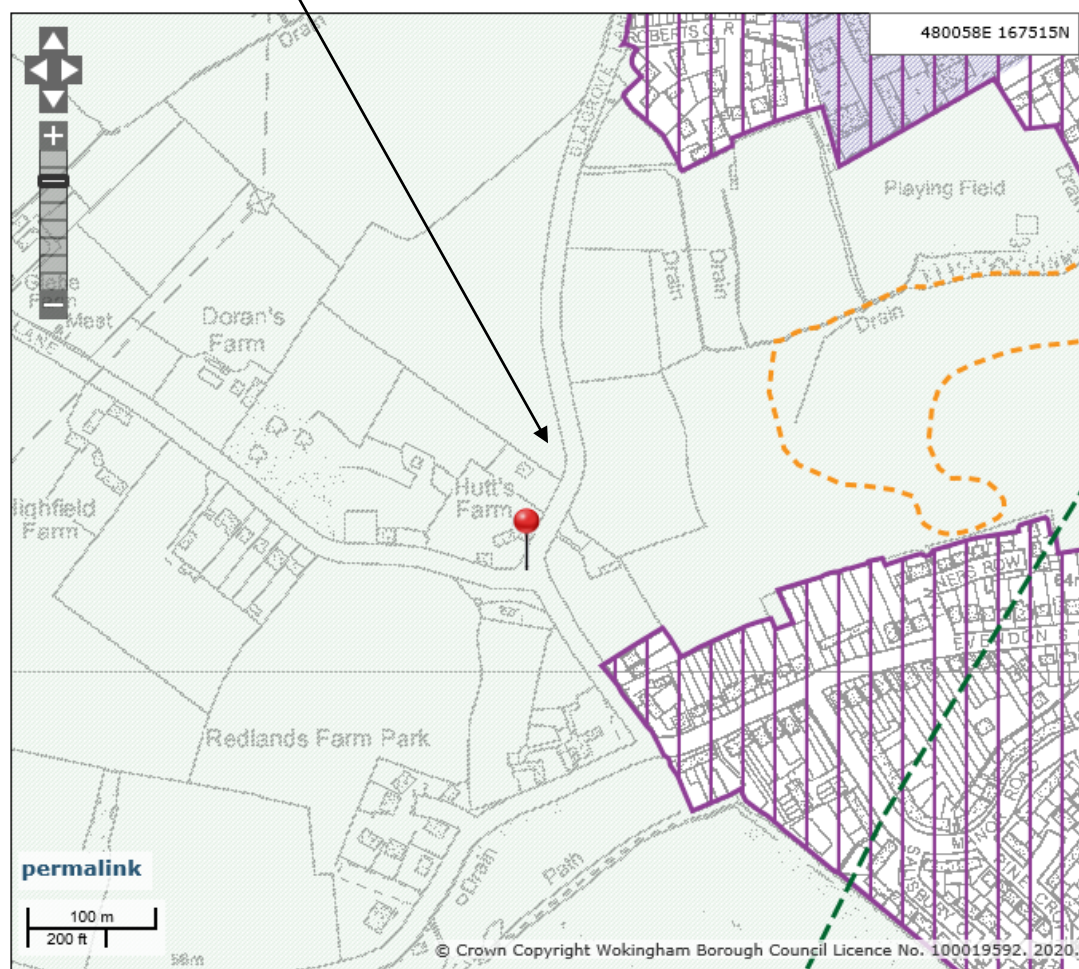
2 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site lies on the western side of Blagrove Lane within land defined as being 'Countryside' in the planning policy Proposals Map. The site comprises an open area of land to the north-east of Hutts Farm Cottage, a detached two-storey dwelling located within a large deep plot. To the rear of the host dwelling is a detached garage / annex building which has planning permission for extension and conversion to an independent 3-bedroom dwelling under LPA ref. 240337 (see Planning History). This permission is currently being implemented.
- 2.2 The application site is well screened by existing trees and hedging, particularly along its boundary with Blagrove Lane. The surrounding area is characterised by larger than average detached properties, paddocks and open fields. Immediately to the south of Hutts Farm Cottage is Hutts Farm which comprises of three detached buildings. To the south-west of the site is Queensferry which is a large modern chalet style dwelling with a front and side gable.
- 2.3 Whilst within the countryside, the site is not considered to be isolated, being adjacent to other dwellings and located close to the settlement areas either side along Evendons Lane and Blagrove Lane. The site is therefore accessible to the bus services and school along the nearby Finchampstead Road. The pedestrian route to Finchampstead Road is primarily via a conventional footway apart from the initial 100m from the application site.
- 2.4 Within 200m of the application site and along the route leading to Finchampstead Road is a retail unit divided into a barbers and community café which attracts multiple customers. The application site is only 150m from the settlement edge of Wokingham (see Proposals Map extract below) which is defined as the most sustainable settlement in the Borough i.e. it is a Major Development Location (MDL). The Core Strategy defines MDLs as the locations which have the 'greatest range of facilities and services'.

Land immediately to the north-west and to the east of the application site (i.e. on the opposing side of Blagrove Lane) forms part of the site currently being considered at appeal for 350 dwellings (ref.222306). The application was initially recommended for approval by officers in 2024 on the basis of a lack of a sufficient 5-year housing land supply and is due to be considered at a public inquiry commencing on 18th March 2025. The Hutts Farm site relates well to this proposal effectively abutting the site on two of its three boundaries.

Proposals Map extract

Application site



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of

Site layout in respect to 'land adjacent to Blagrove Lane' Ref.222306

Land adjacent to Hutts Farm Cottage



3 PLANNING HISTORY

- 3.1 Whilst there is no relevant history on the site itself, the most recent applications relating to Hutts Farm Cottage are considered to be of relevance insofar as the appeal which was allowed was granted against the backdrop of the Council's failure to have a 5-year housing land supply and engagement of the 'tilted' balance:

240337 - Full application for the proposed erection of a first floor extension along with 2no. rear facing dormers, to facilitate conversion of the existing annex building to an independent dwelling, with associated external alterations including addition of a chimney and flue, a front canopy roof and changes to fenestration, plus provision of replacement parking for Hutts Farm Cottage. Approved 27/03/2024.

231631 – Erection of a first-floor extension to facilitate conversion of the existing annex building to an independent dwelling, with associated external alterations including addition of a chimney and flue, front canopy roof and changes to fenestration, plus provision of replacement parking for Hutts Farm Cottage. Approved 07/12/2023.

221676 - Conversion of existing annex building to an independent dwelling with associated external alterations and replacement parking for Hutts Farm Cottage. Refused 26/07/22. Appeal allowed 04/01/23.

4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 4.1 Relevant planning policy guidance falls within the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and the Development Plan which comprises of the Wokingham Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan. The site is not covered by a 'made' neighbourhood plan.

i) National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

- 4.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. It confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 2). The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 231 of the NPPF confirms that the policies in the Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.
- 4.3 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development, including the provision of homes. There are three overarching objectives to sustainable development (paragraph 8) which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective includes the need to make efficient use of land and to improve biodiversity. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).
- 4.4 Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF states that "where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i) The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed, or
 - ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.'
- 4.5 Paragraph 39 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 4.6 Paragraph 70 states 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. To promote the development of a good mix of sites, local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions (paragraph d).
- 4.7 Chapter 11 is concerned with making effective use of land. Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an 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.
- 4.8 Paragraph 129 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:
 - The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
 - Local market conditions and viability;

- The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- The desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

4.9 Paragraphs 131 - 141 are concerned with achieving well-designed and beautiful places. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

4.10 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- 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 increase densities);
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create safe and accessible environments which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

ii) **The Development Plan**

a) **Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)**

4.11 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CP1:** Requires that a number of criteria are met. These include: maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.
- **Policy CP3:** Requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses. Paragraph c) requires that sites are used to their full potential.
- **Policy CP6:** The policy is concerned with managing travel demand. It states that proposals will be granted for schemes that:
 - Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
 - Are located where there is a choice of transport modes available;
 - Improve existing infrastructure;
 - Provide appropriate parking;
 - Mitigate any adverse effects upon the highway network;
 - Enhance road safety;

- Do not cause highway problems.
 - **Policy CP11:** Is concerned with proposals for development on sites located outside of the Development Limit (including Countryside). The policy sets a series of criteria which new developments are required to meet including the following:
 - It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;
 - It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements;
 - In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:
 - i) Bring about environmental improvements; or
 - ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building
 - **Policy CP17:** Policy CP17 states that the Borough requires at least 13,230 dwellings in the period 2006-2026. This housing target is based on achieving the overall requirements (South East Plan) which has since been revoked.
- b) Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

4.12 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CC01:** Policy CC01 states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- **Policy CC02:** Policy CC02 confirms that the development limits are defined on the Policies Map.
- **Policy CC03:** Policy CC03 is concerned with Green Infrastructure, trees and landscaping. It states that development proposals should protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.
- **Policy TB21:** Policy TB21 states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirement of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment including landscape quality, landscape strategy, landscape sensitivity and key issues.

iii) **Supplementary Planning Documents**

Borough Design Guide SPD

- 4.13 The purpose of the guide is to provide general design guidance for all development sites and detailed design guidance for certain topics, these being, residential, streets and spaces, car parking and non-residential development issues. The revised guidance has now been adopted by the Council.
- 4.14 The guidance sets out a number of key urban design objectives, as follows:
- Context and character;
 - Connection and accessibility;
 - Sustainable communities;
 - Sustainable development;
 - Inclusive design process.
- 4.15 In terms of Character and context, it is stated that new development should relate well to its surroundings, including topography and orientation of the site; existing

natural and landscape features of value; heritage assets and their setting; the local settlement pattern and network of routes and neighbouring properties.

- 4.16 Section 4 concerns residential development. Garden size should relate to the house type and to the proposed number of occupants. The guidance states that the Council's minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided that space is useable. Useable gardens should be roughly rectangular in shape; receive direct sunlight for some of the day; be capable of accommodating activities such as sitting, play, clothes drying and outside storage space; and should provide a secure external access to the rear garden for cycle storage. The application proposal meets these requirements in full.
- 4.17 The guidance sets out the minimum privacy and amenity distances as follows:
- Front to front across a street: 10m
 - Rear to rear of dwellings: 22m
 - Flank to boundary: 1m
 - Flank wall to rear of dwelling: 12m
- 4.18 These lengths are increased where development is over a two storey height although it should be noted that this is measured to eaves. The proposed development meets all of the above standards both for 2 and over two storey development.
- 4.19 The guidance also states that all dwellings must provide adequate internal space in an appropriate layout to accommodate a range of lifestyles. Living areas and bedrooms should be large enough to accommodate a range of private and communal activities. The standard for minimum combined floor area of living, dining and kitchen space is 31sq.m (based on 6 bed spaces). Double bedrooms should be a minimum of 12sq.m and single bedrooms a minimum of 8sq.m. Guidance is also given regarding storage space and room configurations. The proposal comfortably meets all of the above standards.

- 4.20 The guidance states that dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight for new and existing properties. New housing should be designed to provide a reasonable outlook for each dwelling; be dual aspect where possible; avoid north facing, single aspect flats; and to have no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. This can be assessed using the methodology set out in report BRE 209 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight'.
- 4.21 A residential design checklist is provided at para 4.13. This statement has assessed the proposal against each of the checklist requirements and found it to be compliant in all areas.

5 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

5.1 The application proposal is for the development of the site to provide 4no. detached dwellings. The application is in outline form to consider means of access and layout at this stage.

5.2 This chapter of the statement assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies and specifically against the following considerations which are set out below:

- The principle of development and housing land supply;
- Three objectives to sustainable development;
- Impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area;
- Trees;
- Biodiversity;
- Impact on amenity
- Transportation;
- Summary and conclusions

i) The Principle of Development

5.3 The application site is located only 150m from the settlement edge of Wokingham within an area defined as 'countryside'. Wokingham is identified in the Core Strategy as being the most sustainable settlement in the Borough (i.e. it is a Major Development Location – MDLs). The Core Strategy defines MDLs as the locations which have the 'greatest range of facilities and services'. Whilst within the countryside, the site is not isolated, being adjacent to other dwellings and located

close to the settlement areas along Evendons Lane and Blagrove Lane and therefore accessible to the bus services along the nearby Finchampstead Road.

- 5.4 The policies that establish the development limits are out of date due to the fact that the Council do not have a NPPF compliant housing land supply. This factor alone reduces the weight that can be applied to the conflict with the Council's locational policies.
- 5.5 Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that LPAs should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement set out in adopted strategic policies, or against their local housing need where the strategic policies are more than five years old.
- 5.6 The updated Standard Method confirms that the revised annual supply now equates to 1,336 dwellings per annum . The most recent published figure contained within the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement of 31 March 2023 (published 26 January 2024) is that on 31 March 2023, the Council could only demonstrate a 3.2 year housing land supply. In line with footnote 8 to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are therefore deemed out of date.
- 5.7 The 'tilted balance' contained in paragraph 11(d) (ii) of the NPPF is therefore engaged in respect of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
- 5.8 The adverse impacts of permitting this development are not considered to be of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits associated with this proposal. As set out below, this proposal is a well-

designed and sustainable form of development which will not result in harm to the landscape character of the area. It is also located conveniently to the settlement edge in a sustainable location. Therefore, in applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the proposal would not result in a level of harm that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

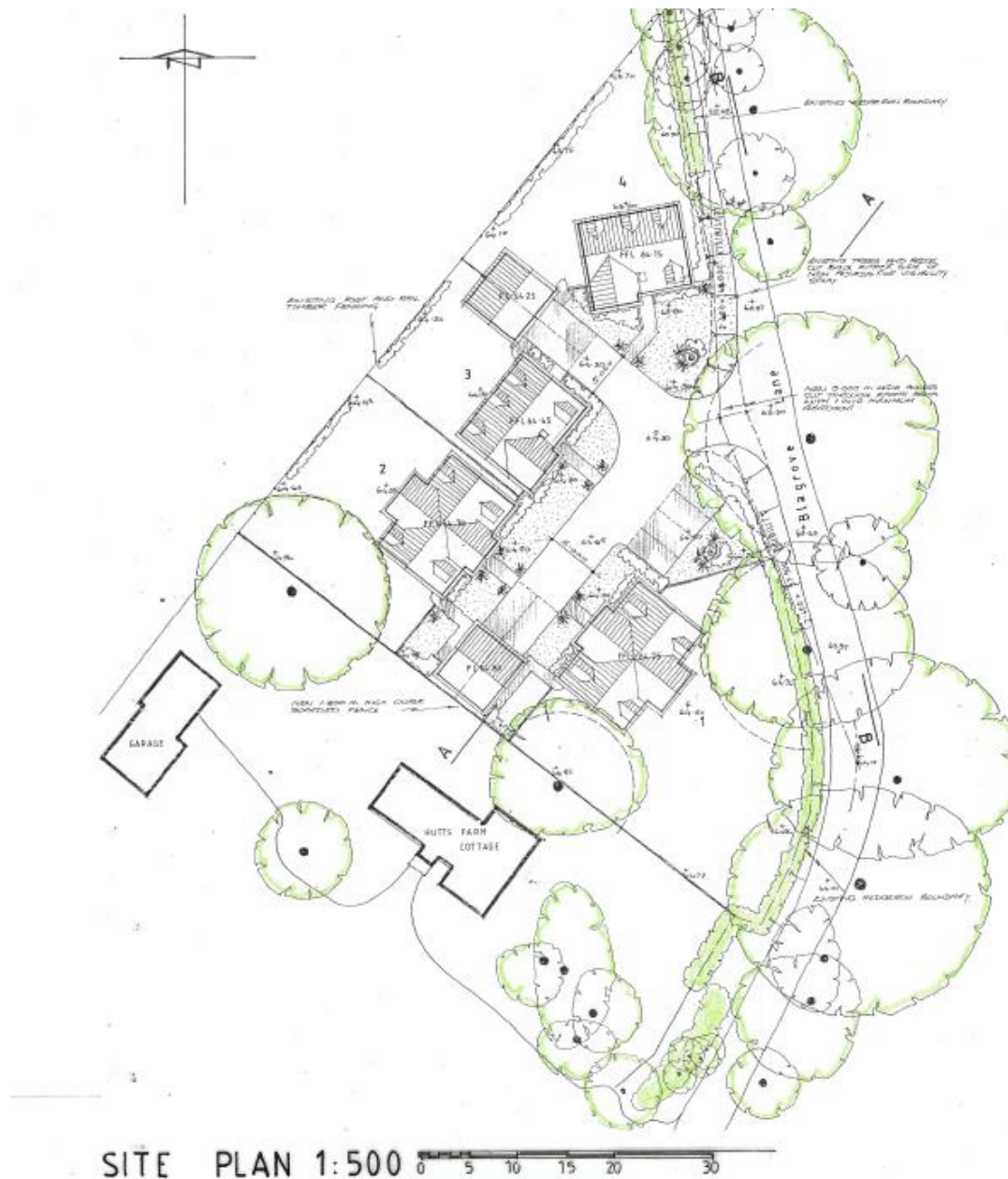
ii) The Three Objectives to Sustainable Development (Paragraph 8 of the NPPF)

- 5.9 Economic objective: The redevelopment of the site to provide for 4no. new dwellings will provide benefits to local businesses in the immediate vicinity. In addition, the development would provide initial short-term employment in the construction industry followed by longer term benefits in terms of additional support for a variety of local business including pubs, restaurants, shops, local trades and private leisure and recreational establishments. None of the land is in use as agricultural land.
- 5.10 Social objective: The application would make a small contribution to the local housing stock. Noting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, this contribution towards the Borough's identified shortfall in housing land supply should be afforded substantial weight. The occupants of the properties would contribute towards the local community and the proposal would fulfill a positive social role.
- 5.11 Environmental objective: The site will make effective use of land in accordance with paragraph 11 and Chapter 11 of the NPPF. Whilst the site is located in land defined as 'countryside', it is not in an area which contains or affects assets of particular environmental importance and is not protected land. Existing trees of significance will be retained and protected. The proposals are therefore considered to enhance the 'high quality' of the environment in line with CS Policy CP1.
- 5.12 Having regard to the above considerations, the policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance do not provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. There are no significant adverse impacts that would

'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal' and the proposal would make a meaningful contribution to the supply of housing in the Borough where there is a substantial shortfall.

iv) Impact on the character of the area

Proposed site layout



- 5.13 The proposed new dwellings would be set back from Blagrove Lane, allowing mature trees and other natural screening to be retained. The only removal of existing vegetation relates to partial removal of the existing laurel hedging along the Blagrove Lane frontage.
- 5.14 The proposed dwellings would be two storey in height and would sit within a low density landscaped setting. Given their setback from the road and well screened nature, the dwellings would be glimpsed from Blagrove Lane in a similar manner to that of other existing houses, including Hutts Farm Cottage itself and the annex building currently being extended and converted to an independent dwelling. The current permission at Hutts Farm Cottage creates a two-tier form of development which this proposal would reflect to some degree. The proposal would not therefore have any significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of Blagrove Lane.
- 5.15 Other views of the proposed dwellings would be generally localised and limited in extent. With suitable mitigation, it is considered that the proposal would have a minor visual impact and a minor/negligible landscape impact (i.e. not a material change).
- 5.16 Furthermore, it is relevant to note that the local area is currently undergoing considerable change. The Council has recently granted outline planning consent for the erection of a 64 bed care home (Use Class C2) in the countryside close to the site at 171 Evendons Lane (ref. 231351). It is acknowledged that this site was in part previously developed, however the consented care house is likely to have an urbanising effect on the character and appearance of the land and the wider area in general.
- 5.17 Furthermore, the site itself is bounded on two sides by the Berkeley Homes site, which is the subject of a current planning appeal (LPA ref. 222306) for the erection of up to 350 dwellings (use class C3) and care home (use class C2) with new access onto Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane. Originally, the application had moved forward with officer's recommendation for approval due, to a large degree, to

the Council's poor housing land supply position. As stated above, the appeal is due to be considered at a Public Inquiry commencing on 18th March 2025.

- 5.18 Therefore, in conclusion, the proposal is sympathetic to the site's location and transitional role adjacent to the settlement edge of which it is in very close proximity. It will not be in conflict with CS Policies CP1 and CP3 and MDD Policy TB21, which requires a proportionate assessment of landscape quality.

iv) Trees

- 5.19 The application proposals ensure that all trees are retained with the exception of one frontage tree (T22) which requires removal due to the new access. This will be replaced with four heavy standard trees of an appropriate species to be specified through planning conditions. A short section of frontage laurel hedge which has minimal ecological and amenity value also requires removal for the new access.
- 5.20 The new dwellings are sited to respect as far as possible the root protection areas of existing trees whilst ensuring that the proposed layout provides enough space for usable amenity space to serve the new occupants for all dwellings. The tree report confirms that encroachment into root protection areas is minor in nature with excavations associated with the new access recommended to be by hand under direct supervision. Once completed, the surface will be constructed using a permeable finish.
- 5.21 The proposal will not lead to situations where excessive shading could result in requests for heavy tree pruning or tree removal. The development will require some minor pruning works to several trees. The proposals therefore meet MDDL Policy CC03 as the proposal will protect and retain existing trees, hedges and landscape features. The loss of one tree is mitigated through replacement with four heavy standard new trees.

v) Biodiversity

- 5.22 The application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment (February 2025) (Darwin Ecology). The EIA confirms that the site is comprised of a large

expanse of modified grassland, a non-native ornamental hedgerow and a small number of medium mature scattered trees. The grassland provides low foraging and commuting potential for protected notable species and the non-native hedgerow was of a monoculture nature further limiting the suitability for protected and notable species presence on the application site. As a result, no phase two surveys are required as part of the development proposals. Modified grassland will be replaced within the site and a range of enhancement measures have been recommended.

- 5.23 The proposal is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Biodiversity Metric which concludes that the net reduction in habitat will require 0.6 credits of off-site A1 habitat and 0.05 hedgerow credits to compensate for the loss of existing habitats.

vi) Impact on amenity

- 5.24 The siting of the proposed dwellings respects the siting of the closest residential dwelling, Hutts farm Cottage. A distance of around 14m would be retained between the closest elevation of the dwelling on plot 1 and the rear elevation of Hutts Farm Cottage. This would be a side to rear relationship which exceeds the Council's minimum standard in the BDG of 12m. The main elevations of the dwelling on plot 4 would be sited at an angle to the rear elevation of Hutts Farm Cottage ensuring that no significant overlooking or loss of privacy to the occupants of that dwelling would occur. Plots 2 and 3 will face directly towards plot 1 across a discrete private drive and parking area at a distance of 14 between the two front elevations, again exceeding the BDG standard for this relationship which is 10m for a separation distance, front to front, across a street.
- 5.25 The proposed dwellings are sited sufficient distance away from the garage/annex building at Hutts Farm Cottage such that the proposal would not adversely affect future occupiers of this building following its conversion into an independent dwelling in accordance with application ref. 240337.
- 5.26 Other residential dwellings along Blagrove Lane are more distant from the site and would not be affected by the proposal. The proposal would also not affect the wider

redevelopment of the larger site which surrounds this particular site. The proposal would therefore comply with CS Policy CP3 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF as a high standard of amenity for existing and future users would be provided.

vi) Transportation

- 5.27 The application proposal proposes a new access onto Blagrove Lane and a policy compliant level of parking equating to 3no. space for each property. Given the fact that the development can be accommodated without raising any transportation or highway issues, the proposal is considered to be compliant with CS Policy CP6.

vii) Summary and conclusions

- 5.28 Importantly, the Council accepts that it does not currently have a 5-year housing land supply and that the tilted balance is engaged as a result (3.2 years which represents a substantial shortfall). Paragraph 125 (d) confirms that planning decisions should promote and support the development of underutilised land and buildings especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained. The Government acknowledges that small to medium sized sites are especially important as they tend to be built out quickly. These factors weigh heavily in favour of this submission and the acute need for housing in the Borough. This factor also contributes towards the 'wider benefits to the community' requirements and is sufficient to outweigh the very limited harm caused through constructing housing in land that is defined as 'countryside'.
- 5.29 In summary, the proposal provides for 4no. dwellings that can be accommodated on the site without materially harming the landscape character of the wider area. The proposal would result in minimal loss of existing landscape features and will achieve numerous biodiversity enhancements through off-site payments via BNG credits. The site can be accessed safely and meets all highway and parking standards. The existing site is of low ecological value.

- 5.30 As a result, the adverse impacts of permitting this development are not considered to be of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits associated with this proposal.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The application (outline) should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The Council remain unable to demonstrate an adequate housing land supply (i.e. 3.2 year supply) and there is a consistent history of under delivery in the Borough. The updated Standard Method now requires an annual supply of 1,336 dwellings in the Borough. There are no significant adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal'. The proposal would make a meaningful contribution to addressing this shortfall by providing four new dwellings in a sustainable location close to the settlement edge with numerous other planning benefits. CS Policies CP1, CP3, CP7 and CP11 are either out-of-date or at the very least should be afforded reduced weight.
- ii) When assessed against other policies in the NPPF there is not considered to be any conflict. The proposal meets each of the three objectives to sustainable development (i.e. the economic, social and environmental objectives). The additional householder expenditure has the potential to provide significant benefit to existing businesses in the area.
- iii) The proposal would not result in a material change to the landscape character of the site thereby ensuring that there is no conflict with MDDL Policy TB21. The proposal would result in minimal tree and hedge loss which will be replaced on-site with a greater number of replacement specimens. All other trees can be adequately retained and protected, and new planting is recommended in addition to be dealt with through a planning condition. There are no substantive reasons to oppose the proposals on arboricultural grounds (see report produced by ROAVR) and the proposals meet the requirements of MDDL Policy CC03.
- iv) The proposal is for a low-density, high-quality development that will provide generous new space for landscaping as well as retaining and enhancing

existing landscape buffers. The proposals meet the design requirements set down with CS Policies CP1 and CP3, the Borough Design Guide and paragraphs 131-141 of the NPPF.

- v) The proposal will not harm existing habitats on the site which is comprised of modified grassland, a non-native ornamental hedgerow and a small number of medium mature scattered trees. The grassland provides low foraging and commuting potential for protected notable species and the non-native hedgerow was of a monoculture nature further limiting the suitability for protected and notable species presence on the application site. The BNG Assessment confirms that off-site bio-diversity net gain will be required.
- vi) The proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of the closest properties to the site which comprise Hutts Farm Cottage and the former annex which is currently being extended and converted into independent residential use. The proposals would provide for a high-quality living environment for future residents. The proposals meet CS Policy CP3 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF as a high standard of amenity for existing and future users will be provided.
- vii) Parking and access are provided in accordance with adopted standards. The proposals are consistent with the requirements of CS Policy CP6.