

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	251124
Site Address:	Land at Lands End House, Beggars Hill Road, Lands End, Twyford, RG10 0UD
Expiry Date:	16 June 2025
Site Visit Date:	4 June 2025
Proposal: Permission in principle application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

Countryside
Contaminated Land Consultation Zone
Local Authorities
Affordable Housing Thresholds
Borough Parishes
Scale and Location of Development Proposals
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone
Site Allocations
Nuclear Consultation Zone
Tree Preservation Orders
Borough Wards
Radon Affected Area
Landfill Gas Consultation Zone
Landscape Character Assessment Area
SSSI Impact Risk Zones
Ordinary Watercourses Consultation Zone
JCEB Areas of Search for Sand and Gravel
JCEB Mineral Safeguarding Areas
Great Crested Newt Consultation Zone Minor

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
Core Strategy (CS)	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 CP11 – Proposals Outside Development Limits CP17 – Housing Delivery
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC01 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development CC02 – Development Limits CC03 – Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping

	CC04 – Sustainable Design and Construction CC07 – Parking CC10 – Sustainable Drainage TB06 – Development of Private Residential Gardens TB07 – Internal Space Standards TB21 – Landscape Character TB23 – Biodiversity and Development TB24 – Designated Heritage Assets
Other	Borough Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document CIL Guidance + 123 List

NO RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Internal

WBC Environmental Health – No comments
WBC Drainage – No objection
WBC Highways – No objection
WBC Landscape and Trees – Request further information
WBC CIL – CIL liable development
WBC Cleaner and Greener – No comments
WBC Ecology Newts – No objection
WBC Ecology – No comments
WBC Built Heritage – No objection

External

Thames Water Utilities Ltd – No comments

REPRESENTATIONS

Woodley Town Council	No comments
Ward Member(s)	No comments received
Neighbours	No comments received

APPRAISAL

Proposal: The proposed development comprises the erection of 1no. detached dwelling within the grounds of the property known as Land's End House, located along Beggars Hill Road in Woodley.

Permission is being sought through the permission in principle (PiP) consent route. The permission in principle consent route separates the consideration of matters of principle for the proposed development from the technical details of the development. The scope of a permission in principle application is limited to location, land use and amount of development (stage 1). Other matters are considered at the technical details consent stage (stage 2).

An indicative site plan has been provided alongside the application. This shows a new access from Beggars Hill Road, a driveway including parking for 3no. vehicles, and

demonstrates how the dwelling would be sited amongst its surroundings. The dwelling appears to have been arranged in a way that its principal elevation faces north, as opposed to towards Beggars Hill Road.

Site Description: The application site is within the ground of Land's End House, a Grade II Listed Building, built in 1935 by Guy Morgan for Miles the aircraft manufacturer. The proposed plot is located to the southwest of the site.

Beggars Hill Road is a typical country lane, lined with mature trees and hedgerows, with minimal built development.

Directly to the west and south of the plot there are woodland Tree Protection Orders under reference TPO-1611-2017.

The stream to the south of the site is recognised by the Environment Agency as Surface Water Flood Zones. Flood zone 3 extends along the edge of the land in the ownership of Land's End House.

The site lies outside any settlement boundary and is therefore classified as within Countryside.

Assessment:

The Planning Practice Guidance ("PPG") advises that the scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Whether permission in principle should be granted bearing in mind the effects of the proposal's location, land use and amount of development on the development plan and other material considerations are required to be considered.

Principle of Development: The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Policy CC02 of the MDD Local Plan and CP9 of the Core Strategy define development limits across the Borough including a hierarchy of major, modest and limited locations; which typically relates to access to services and the density of the area. Policy CP11 of the Core Strategy relates to proposals outside such development limits. It is a restrictive policy designed to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment.

Countryside Location

The site is located in the countryside and therefore must be assessed against policy CP11. This policy states that proposals outside of development limits will not normally be permitted except where:

- 1) It contributes to diverse and sustainable rural enterprises within the borough, or in the case of other countryside-based enterprises and activities, it contributes and/or promotes recreation in, and enjoyment of, the countryside; and

- 2) It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings; and
- 3) It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvement; or
- 4) In the case of residential extensions, does not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building;
- 5) 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.
- 6) Essential community facilities cannot be accommodated within development limits or through the re-use/replacement of an existing building;
- 7) Affordable housing on rural exception sites in line with CP9.

The proposal would not fall into any of the exception categories as set out in policy CP11, as the proposal would not contribute to a rural enterprise, it would not be for a community facility, and neither is the proposal for affordable housing. Moreover, the proposal is not for residential extensions or a replacement dwelling.

The proposal would result in expansion of residential activities on undeveloped land, which is clearly contrary to criteria 2 of CP11. Consequently, the proposal is unacceptable in principle.

Development of Private Residential Gardens

The application site is part of a residential garden and paragraph 75 of the NPPF states that 'local planning authorities should consider the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area'. Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan (Development of Private Residential gardens) states that proposals for new residential development that includes land within the curtilage of private residential gardens will only be granted planning permission where:

- a) The proposal makes a positive contribution to the character of the area in terms of:
 - i. The relationship of the existing built form and spaces around buildings within the surrounding area;
 - ii. A layout which integrates with the surrounding area with regard to the built up coverage of each plot, building line(s), rhythm of plot frontages, parking areas, and
 - iii. Existing pattern of openings and boundary treatments on the site frontage
 - iv. Providing appropriate hard and soft landscaping, particularly at site boundaries.
 - v. Compatibility with the general building height within the surrounding area
 - vi. The materials and elevational detail are of high quality, and where appropriate distinctive and/or complementary.
- b) The application site provides a site of adequate size and dimensions to accommodate the development proposed in terms of the setting and spacing around buildings, amenity space, landscaping and space for access roads and parking

- c) The proposal includes access, which meets appropriate highway standards
- d) The proposal does not lead to unacceptable tandem development
- e) The design and layout minimises exposure of existing private boundaries to public areas and avoids the need for additional physical security measures.

A number of the above criteria would relate to considerations that would fall under the Technical Details Consent when the layout is finalised. However, the existence of policy TB06 does demonstrate that development of residential gardens can be accepted in principle. An assessment against this policy parts (a)(i)(ii) and (iii) will be undertaken within the character section of this report.

Council's 5 Year Housing Land Supply

Paragraph 78 of the NPPF requires local authorities to 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 5 years old.

As of 31 March 2024, the council can demonstrate a deliverable supply of 2,321 dwellings over the next five years. This equates to a deliverable housing land supply of 1.7 years against a LHN of 1,336 homes per annum plus a 5% buffer.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF state that where policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless:

- 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
- 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.

Firstly, in considering i), it must be recognised that the proposed site is not located within any protected areas or assets of particular importance (as outlined above and within footnote 7 and paragraph 189 of the NPPF). Officers must therefore consider the application under ii) and determine whether there are any adverse impacts generated by the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, 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.

An important underlying reason in the context of Wokingham Borough is the historic oversupply of housing against both the requirement set in the Core Strategy local plan and the scale of local housing need as calculated by the previous standard method which remains a key contributing factor to the current lack of the required deliverable housing land supply and this must be considered in the planning balance section of any report.

Having established the tilted balance is engaged, Paragraph 11d(ii) requires the proposal to be considered against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

Emerging Local Plan

The Local Plan Update (LPU), the plan which will supersede the Core Strategy and MDD Local Plan, was published in October 2024 (Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Plan). It was subsequently submitted for examination on 28 February 2025. The LPU sets out the development strategy and proposed site allocations to meet housing needs to 2040.

Weight to be attributed to the emerging policy is informed by paragraph 49 of the NPPF 2024. This advises that weight can be applied according to the plan's stage of preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections, and the degree of consistency with the NPPF. However, due to outstanding representations as a whole, those policies relevant to the location of housing within the LPU are afforded limited weight.

Sustainability of Location

Policies CP1, CP4, CP6, CP9 and CP11 of the CS permit development where it is based on sustainable credentials in terms of access to local facilities and services and the promotion of sustainable transport. Expanding on this, paragraph 4.57 in the Core Strategy aims to prevent the proliferation of development in areas away from existing development limits as they are not generally well located for facilities and services and would lead to the increase in use of the private car.

The NPPF states that housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and seeks to ensure the growth of sustainable transport in managing development and approval of planning applications. More specifically, it seeks to promote sustainable travel in decisions.

The following extract from the applicants Planning Statement refers to the locational sustainability of the site:

"In this respect, the site is directly adjacent to a recently completed strategic housing development and – in pure locational terms (and notwithstanding the fact that part of the site is deemed 'countryside' – it logically follows that the site must be 'sustainable' since, if it were not, the adjacent housing development would not have been allocated in the Local Plan and subsequently developed for residential purposes."

The LPA wholeheartedly disagree with the statement above. Firstly, the site does not wholly sit within the site allocation as brought forward through the MDD Local Plan 2014, but instead is positioned on the buffer of the allocated site, which comprises the adjacent river and protected tree corridor. Development within this part of the site was therefore likely avoided on purpose, to limit the impact of the residential development on the natural environment and to soften the visual, noise, light and other impact of the residential development on the rural environment along Beggars Hill Lane.

In any case, the application sites proximity to the nearby strategic housing development does not automatically render it a sustainable location. Section 4.4.1 of the Manual for Streets by the Department for Transport states that 'Walkable neighbourhoods are

typically characterised by having a range of facilities within 10 minutes (up to about 800 m) walking distance of residential areas which **residents may access comfortably on foot.**

Using this statement, the development would not be considered within walking distance from important services, because whilst there are services along and nearby Headley Road East to the southwest of the site, these are still a considerable distance from the proposed dwelling. Furthermore, with reference to the section in bold above, the proposal fails to overcome fundamental concerns that there is poor quality pedestrian infrastructure around the site. There is no formal footway along Beggars Hill Road and both the footpath that links Beggars Hill Road to the housing developments to the south and Beggars Hill Road are unlit and enclosed by significant tree cover. The footpath is not a recognised public right of way. As a result, occupants of the proposed application site may be discouraged from walking or cycling, particularly during darkness and poor weather, when the route would potentially be less safe.

Due to the location of this site and the limited local services available, it is unlikely that there would be alternative means of transport besides the private car. Therefore, it is concluded that the site is not sustainable in transport terms which forms an objection on highway grounds. Consequently, access to services and facilities is likely to rely more heavily on use of a private car. Hence, the proposal is contrary to Policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP9 of the CS and CC01 of the MDD.

The proposed site does not represent a sustainable location for the development.

Summary of Principle

The site is located outside of settlement limits in the countryside. The proposal fails to meet any of the specified exceptions for development outside of settlement. When turning to the overall aim of the policy, the additional dwelling would be inappropriately located within an existing undeveloped field, which forms part of the formal tree lined driveway and curtilage of Lands End House, creating a higher density of built form within this rural undeveloped lawn, thus having an urbanising impact and failing to maintain the quality of the environment.

The site is also located in an unsustainable and poorly accessible location, where future residents would be reliant on private motor vehicles.

Officers acknowledge the tilted balance is engaged, as per paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF. The tilted balance will be returned to at the end of this report.

Location, land use and amount of development in relation to the impact on character and appearance of the area: Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy sets out general principles for development and states that development should be of an appropriate scale, activity, mass, layout, built form, height, materials and character to the area together with a high quality of design.

Policy TB21 of the MDD states that proposals shall retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape.

RD1 of the Borough Design Guide states that new development and associated

landscape should retain, incorporate and enhance features that contribute towards the landscape character.

Policy R11 requires a coherent street character, including in terms of scale, rhythm, proportion and height.

The application site forms part of an undeveloped grassland. The proposed dwelling would sit adjacent to the tree corridor to the south, which is protected by TPO-1611-2017, and this forms a large and distinct barrier between the rural character of Beggars Hill Road, and the large-scale housing development to the south.

Whilst the tree corridor would be retained as part of any future development, the proposal represents the excessive encroachment of development away from existing housing, which would blur the difference between the residential character of the planned housing estate to the south and the undeveloped rural nature of Beggars Hill Road, to the detriment of the Countryside's visual amenities and openness.

Residential development in the local area comprises a sporadic pattern of development, with the majority of dwellings on the west side of Beggars Hill Road. The proposed development would result in a significant urbanisation of the site, with the layout proposed being inconsistent with the spacious context of dwellings which defines this part of Beggars Hill Road.

Further to the above, it is highly likely that dwelling would be positioned into the plot as opposed to facing Beggars Hill Road (as indicatively indicated on the proposed site layout). This arrangement is not commonplace on this stretch of Beggars Hill Road and introduces physical built form further back into the countryside and will see greater intensification of hardstanding owing to parking, the access road etc requiring removal of hedgerow vegetation which has a positive contribution to the road. This results in an urbanisation of the countryside and the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Despite the retention of most of the roadside vegetative boundary, the development of the front of the site would likely detract from views of the house, and the additional access would significantly impact on the rural character of the road. The setting of the proposal in terms of the subdivision of amenity space, duplication of domestic paraphernalia and intensification of use of this currently tranquil setting surrounding the house would result in an unsatisfactory relationship with the local area, contrary to with A i), ii), iii) & b) of policy TB06.

The site is located in the countryside and in Wokingham District Landscape Character Area B1 Loddon River Valley with Open Water' a landscape of moderate quality and condition with a modest capacity for change. The landscape strategy to conserve the positive characteristics of the landscape and enhance the character and condition of key elements. A Local Wildlife Site backs onto the eastern site boundary; the River Loddon (or Old River). There are Veteran trees within the site but none located in close proximity to the area proposed for the new dwelling.

The site has a large curtilage with a parkland character, containing a single dwelling known as Lands End House which is a Grade 2 listed building. Woodland is a significant

feature of the site and area, with a TPO 1611/2017 covering the western boundary adjacent to the lane and the southern boundary with SAL04. The TPO extends to the opposite side of Beggars Hill Road and thereafter links with Ancient and semi-ancient woodland close by to the west.

Key characteristics of the B1 Loddon River Valley are the undeveloped riverine character, wooded context and local tranquillity. The landscape is in a moderate condition. The key issues relating to the LCA are changes in deciduous woodland structure. Effects on tree health, demand for new residential development impacting landscape character and pressure for expansion and pressure for new roads, widening of roads and visual intrusion of roads threatening the rural character of the lanes.

In addition to this, the site lies within “Valued Landscape” as set out in The Valued Landscape Topic Paper 2020 (evidence base to the Emerging Local Plan). The site is within the River Loddon Valued Landscape. Paragraph 187a of the NPPF (Dec 2024) requires decisions to ‘contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment’. The NPPF requires that this contribution and enhancement should be achieved in two ways that are relevant to the circumstances of this application:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, – including ... trees and woodland

The importance of valued landscapes in the Borough have been acknowledged by Inspectors at recent appeals, the features in these landscapes raise it above “mere countryside” and weight must be given to these landscapes. The proposal emphasises three of the key issues relating to this LCA (identified above) and fails to contribute to or enhance the valued landscape contrary to both TB21 and the NPPF.

Accordingly, the principle of an additional dwelling on this site is not considered to retain or enhance the condition, character and features that contribute to the landscape or maintain the low-density character of development in the vicinity. As such, the proposal is not considered acceptable policy TB21 and policy CP11; the latter which seeks to maintain the quality of the environment. Whilst all development would have an impact on the environment in some respect, impacts can be of varying degrees, the impact on the environment in this case is considered to be more than neutral for the reasons outlined above, and so therefore conflicts with one of the overarching aims of policy CP11.

Location, land use and amount of development in relation to impact on neighbouring amenity: Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy states that development shall be without detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users.

Given the site is already in a residential use as part of Lands End House, the continuation of this land use is acceptable in relation to neighbouring amenity, albeit the proposal would introduce a more intense residential use for neighbours compared to the existing situation. However, given the proposal is for a maximum of 1 dwelling, the amount of development and intensity of the land use is not considered to result in harm to neighbours in terms of increased noise from domestic life.

The final layout would be subject to technical detail consent where further assessment in relation to neighbouring amenity would be carried out (in terms of the positioning of the dwellings in relation to neighbouring outlook, light etc). However, the proposed dwelling appears to be sufficient distance from any neighbouring properties so they could be designed to limit impact on any neighbours in terms of overlooking, loss of light or any overbearing impact.

It is considered that the development as proposed in relation to neighbours is acceptable.

Location, land use and amount of development in relation to the highway network: Policy CP6 of the Core Strategy states that development should not lead to highway problems, along with providing for sustainable forms of transport.

Policy CC07 states that sufficient parking shall be provided as part of development proposals.

WBC Highways do not raise any concerns regarding the location and amount of development on the highway network and the proposed site is of sufficient size to provide reasonable parking for a single dwelling. Highway considerations would also be reviewed at technical details stage once the layout finalised. However, it should be noted that Beggars Hill Road has a restriction on vehicular access in the vicinity of the site.

Location, land use and amount of development in relation to the impact on the natural environment (trees and ecology): Policy CC03 of the MDD states that development shall protect existing trees and hedges and incorporate high quality landscaping.

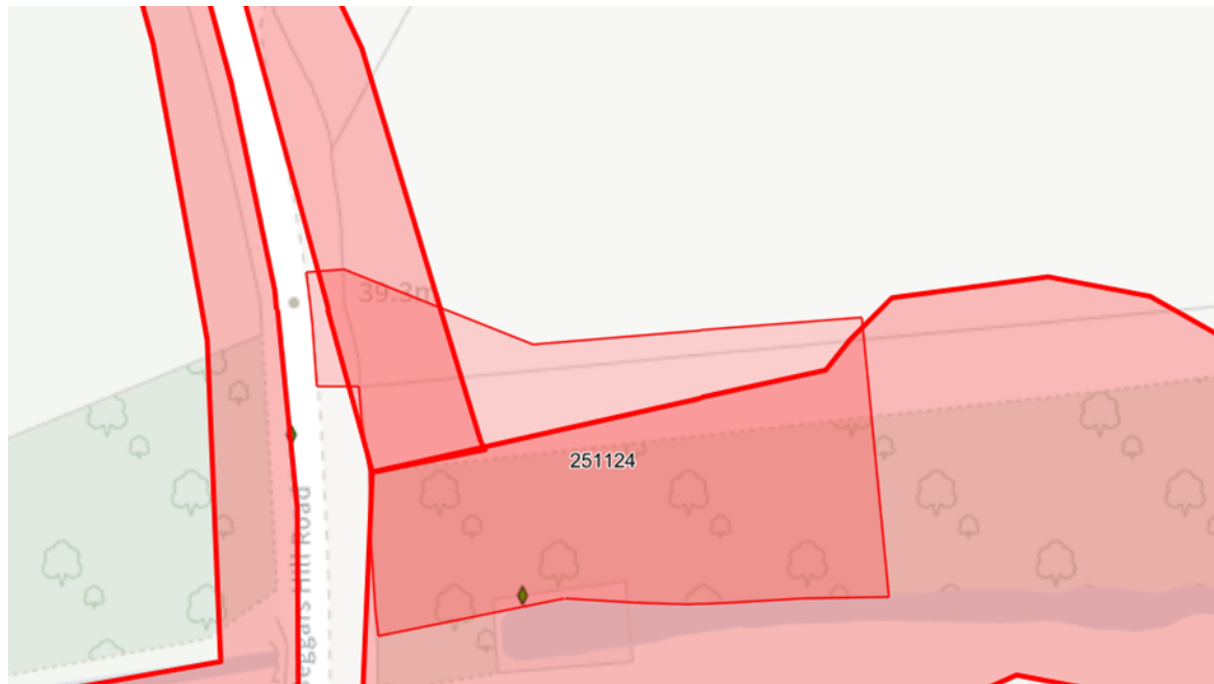
The WBC Tree Officer raised concern over potential impact of the development on protected trees, with the context of the proximate TPO trees protected by a tree protection order having been set out previously in this report.

The presence of the TPOs are material to the determination of this permission in principle because they fundamentally limit the developable area of the site and prevent any viable access. It has not been demonstrated that the development will be possible without incursion into and root protected areas or that the development can be built without the loss of protected trees. Given the trees define the site character in this rural location, this will also impact on the character of the area.

A woodland TPO protects all trees within the defined area of woodland, regardless of the size, species or age, this includes any saplings and natural regeneration. It is noted that the grassed area of the site has been managed e.g. mowed which would clear or damage any saplings in this area and would be an offence under the TPO legislation. Regardless of the current management regime, the entire area within the TPO is protected, leaving limited space to erect a dwellinghouse or provide an access.

There is one veteran Willow tree on the site and a veteran Oak tree opposite the proposed site access. It has not been demonstrated that there will be no impact on this tree. This will need to be addressed as it has an impact on the tilted balance

assessment. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and GOV.UK guidance clearly requires refusal of development that would result in loss or deterioration of ancient woodland or veteran trees, unless wholly exceptional reasons are demonstrated and suitable compensation is in place. The TPOs within the site can be seen in the image below and the veteran trees are marked in green. Due to their location and the size of the site, it is likely that the site could be developed for a single dwellinghouse without harm to these trees and it is considered that veteran trees could be dealt with at technical details stage if all other matters were acceptable.



Likewise, the WBC Ecology Newts Officer has advised that further information on Great Crested Newts would be required at technical details stage.

Location, land use and amount of development in relation to flood risk: Policy CC09 of the MDD states that all sources of flood risk, including historic flooding, must be taken into account at all stages and to the appropriate degree at all levels in the planning application process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding.

The application site is located in Flood Zone 1 which is the lowest risk of flooding. There is not incompatibility between the proposed location, use and amount of development and flood risk. Full drainage details including a drainage strategy report would be required at technical consent stage.

Planning Balance: The proposal is located outside of the defined settlement boundary, within the countryside. The proposal does not meet any of the exceptions for development in the countryside, as outlined in policy CP11. It also fails to comply with one of the overarching aims of policy CP11 which is to maintain the quality of the environment and has a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area. This is because the proposal introduces a denser level of development which would fail to integrate with the layout of existing built form on this stretch of Beggars Hill Road which would be of detriment to the character and appearance of the area and wider

landscape character. Additionally the proposal would have a detrimental impact on protected trees.

Furthermore, the site is located in an unsustainable location whereby there are poor bus services, walking routes and access to facilities and amenities, thereby additional reliance would be needed on private motorcars contrary to CP6.

Whilst the above negative aspects of the application weigh against the scheme, as discussed earlier in the report, the tilted balance is engaged when determining this application owing to the Council being unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. As per paragraph 11(d)(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.*

This scheme would contribute to the boroughs housing stock, which holds substantial weight in the planning balance in principle, although the contribution to the overall housing land supply would be limited to one dwelling reducing the weight in this case. However, 11(d)(ii) goes on to say that particular regard has to be given to directing development to sustainable locations. As discussed above, the site is not sustainable in terms of transport modes and accessibility, owing to its location in the countryside. Accordingly, the weight attached to the benefits of the housing proposed under this scheme is thereby reduced in weight, and the drawbacks, as outlined above, in combination, are considered to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the primary benefit, which is the provision of one house. Owing to the narrow considerations as part of permission in principle applications, other benefits cannot be discussed/afforded weight at this stage.

The recommendation is therefore to refuse permission in principle.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL): When planning permission is granted for a development that is CIL liable, the Council will issue a liability notice as soon as practicable after the day on which the planning permission first permits development. Completing the assumption of liability notice is a statutory requirement to be completed for all CIL liable applications.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010): In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	N/A
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date:	16 June 2025
Earliest date for decision:	4 June 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	<i>JMM</i>
Date:	16 June 2025