



Planning

Outline Application

Hillside

**Lower Wokingham Road, Crowthorne, Wokingham
RG45 6BX**

*Outline application with all matters reserved
for the proposed erection of up to 11 no.
dwellings following demolition of the existing
dwelling and outbuildings.*

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CIL | Enforcement | Land Promotion | Planning | Sequential Tests |

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Appendix 1: HELLA Allocation

Appendix 2: NP Allocation

Appendix 3: 240803 Officer/Committee Report

Appendix 4: Wokingham 5YHLSS

Appendix 5: PINS Hearing Letter

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is produced to support an outline application for the erection of 11 dwellings with all matters reserved, following the demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.
- 1.2 This planning statement will cover the background to the application and provide the necessary information to enable its determination by officers at the Council. It will consider the proposal in light of relevant planning policies and other material considerations. The conclusion reached is that key material considerations and the wider objectives of National and Local planning policy support the grant of permission.
- 1.3 In addition to this planning statement, the application is accompanied by the appropriate planning application forms and ownership certificate, duly signed and completed, and the following plans prepared by Bonney Architecture:
- 1:1250 Site Location Plan
 - 1:250 Proposed Site/Block Plan
 - 1:200 Illustrative Floor Plans, Roof Plans, and Elevations
- 1.4 The relevant application fee will be submitted by the applicant separately.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The application site is located to the west of Lower Wokingham Road and comprises of an existing dwelling, Hillside (previously known as Jovike). The site is currently served by three separate access points, a detached garage and a large rear garden area.
- 2.2 The topography of the site overall is gently sloping, with the natural fall of the land from front to rear (east to west) with a level difference of circa 3m along the western boundary. The level difference from NE corner to SE corner is approximately 1.5m and from NW corner to SW corner is approximately 1m. The site is surrounded by trees and vegetation on its perimeter; however, the remainder of the site is void of any vegetation.
- 2.3 The site is **1ha (2.5 acres)** and is all within the applicant's ownership. The land is viewed to be previously developed land due to its residential nature.
- 2.4 Residential properties part of the Ashdale Park development occupy the northern side of the site, as well as properties facing Little Fryth located to the western side. To the south is a single dwelling known as Woodpeckers. The eastern side of Lower Wokingham Road is characterised by a linear form of development with a mix of dwelling types and designs whilst the wider character does include Priors Wood, Talisman Close, and Houston Way which all act as similar cul-de-sac's which serve between 10-15 units.
- 2.5 The site has been assessed with the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA, 2021) under reference 5FI024 on the basis of its suitability to support 15 dwellings.

- 2.6 Section 5.3 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan also notes and supports the proposed allocation within RGS located within the Parish.
- 2.7 The site is located within a highly sustainable location and avoids key constraints such as Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings (and other heritage assets) and the Green Belt. In addition, the site is located in Flood Zone 1 which is the lowest category of flood risk.

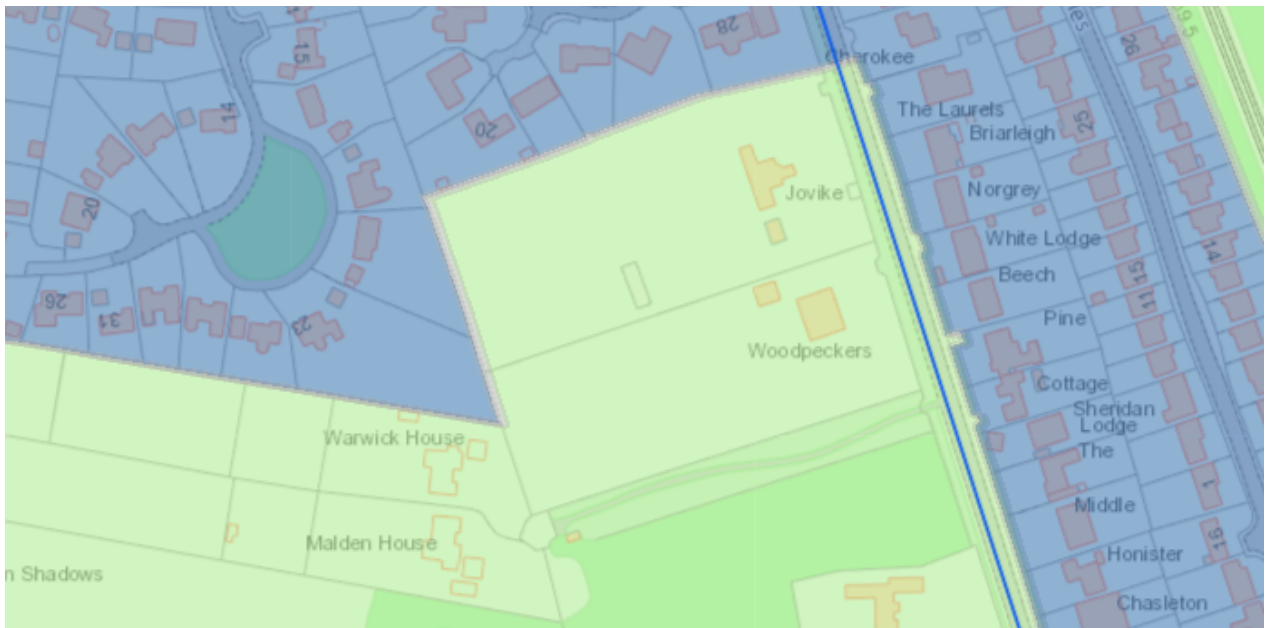


Figure 1 – Modest Development Location Area shown in blue (WBC Online Portal)

- 2.8 As is evident from the above mapping image, given that the site adjoins the settlement boundary and built development along Lower Wokingham Road, it is considered to relate well to the existing settlement boundary.

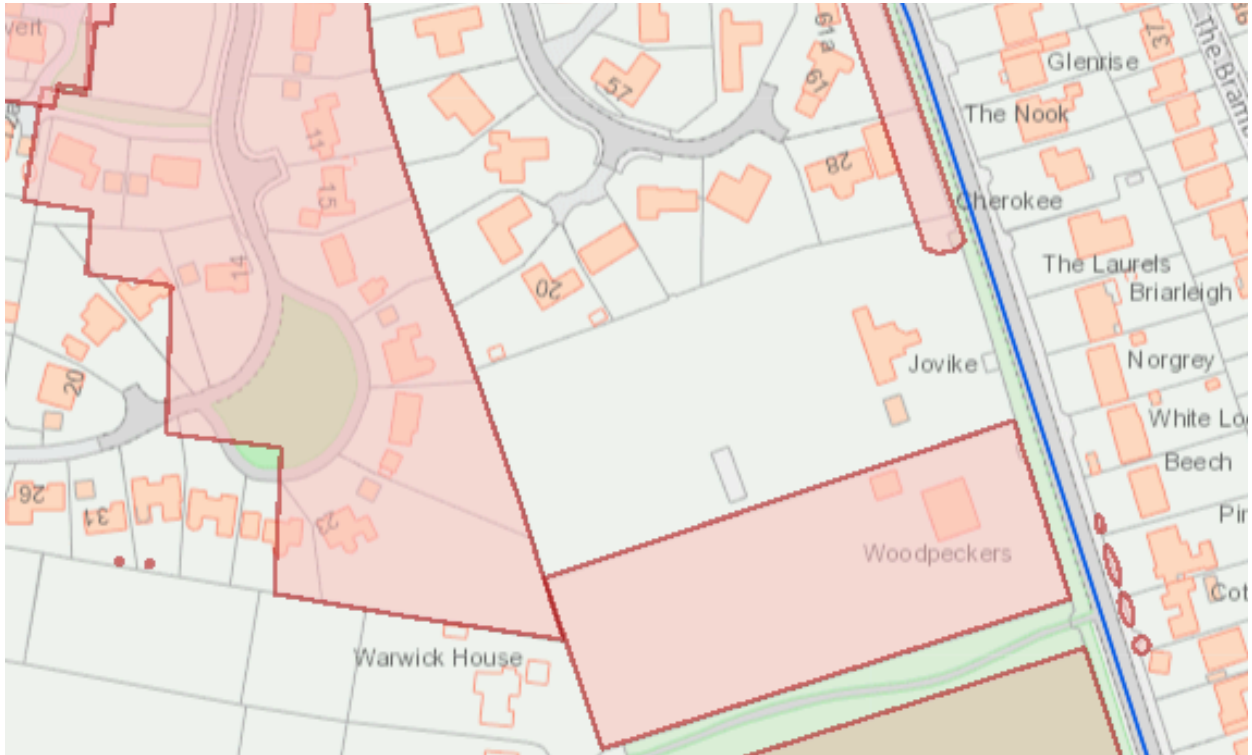


Figure 2 – Group TPO's on and adjacent to the site (WBC Online Mapping Portal)

- 2.9 As shown by the above image taken from the Wokingham Tree Constraints Map, a group TPO order is in proximity to the Site (however, the Site itself is only affected in the very north east corner, and by 1 tree falling within its red line, which will not preclude residential development of the Site coming forward)
- 2.10 In regard to sustainability, as aforementioned, the application site is located adjacent to a modest development location ensuring that is a suitable and sustainable location for residential development.

3. Planning History

3.1 The below table highlights the relevant planning history in this instance.

<u>Application No</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Decision & Date</u>
240803	Outline application with all matters reserved for the proposed erection of up to 18 no. dwellings following demolition of the existing dwelling and outbuildings.	Approved 28/04/2025

3.2 Application 240803 is directly relevant to this submission, as this submission in essence seeks to amend this previously approved outline application.

3.3 Crucially, within the officer report (Appendix 1), Wokingham Borough Council conclude that even though there is some conflict with the Spatial Strategy of the adopted Local Plan, consideration must be made in conjunction with the Council's housing supply and delivery test figures.

3.4 Wokingham Council also confirm that development of the site would create a development that would '*satisfactorily integrate into the surrounding area, one that would protect and enhance the natural environment*'.

3.5 Wokingham Council also concluded that the proposed access was suitable subject to highways and surrounding character, whilst even though '*sustainable modes of transport in this location are lacking, but not to a sufficient degree that the site would be at odds with the existing settlement*'.

- 3.6 The above conclusions are still relevant to this submission, with only the number and size of the proposed dwellings being altered within this submission. The conclusions made regarding the access and location still stand, whilst the cul-de-sac integration with the surrounding area, natural improvements, and contribution to housing supply are still significant factors that should be viewed on balance.

4. Development Proposals

- 4.1 The National Design Guide (2019) identifies that “well-designed homes and buildings are functional, accessible and sustainable. They provide internal environments and associated external spaces that support the health and well-being of their users and all who experience them. They meet the needs of a diverse range of users, taking into account factors such as the ageing population and cultural differences. They are adequate in size, fit for purpose and are adaptable to the changing needs of their occupants over time” (para 120-121).
- 4.2 Regarding the requirements of NPPG Paragraph: 029 Reference ID: 14-029-20140306 in respect of Design and Access Statements, the proposal is described as follows:
- 4.3 The proposal seeks the erection of 11 detached dwellings with associated access, landscaping and amenity areas. 9 of the dwellings will be 5-bedroom units with two 6-bedroom units being proposed. Each dwelling will be two storeys in nature, with the 6-bedroom units being **2 and a half stories**.
- 4.4 To note, this differs with the previous outline application for 18 units in which 7 affordable units were approved, alongside 6 3-bedroom dwellings, 6 4-bedroom dwellings, and 6 5-bedroom dwellings.

- 4.5 The proposed scheme will also provide 24 allocated parking spaces alongside 4 visitor spaces.
- 4.6 The proposed access matches the previously submitted access, with a similar layout being proposed in this outline submission. However, it is important to note that access, layout, scale, appearance and landscaping are all reserved for future consideration and therefore, the site layout as shown is not final or confirmed.

5. SA and HELAA Assessment

- 5.1 Firstly, a brief review of the allocations regarding the site provides some clarity regarding its suitability.
- 5.2 The Councils SA scores the Site highly, and is summarised below:

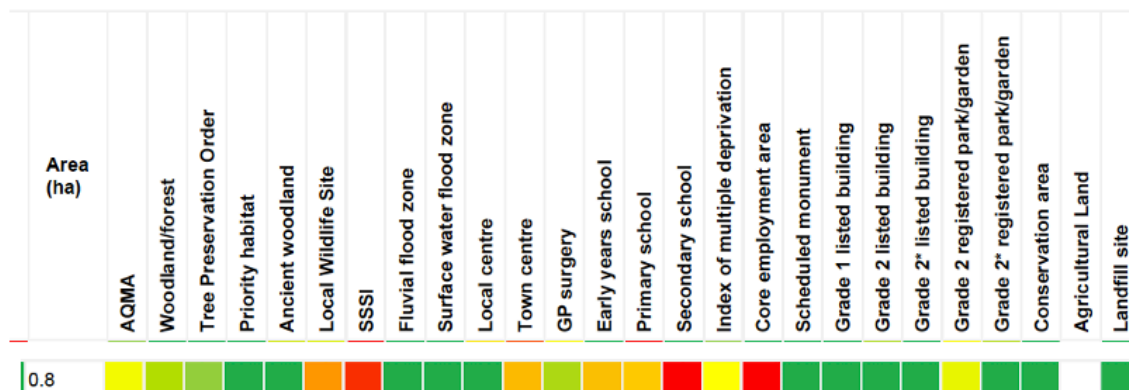


Figure 3 – Wokingham Borough Council SA Site Review

- 5.3 Whilst we acknowledge that the Site is within 1km from Heath Lake SSSI, the Site is still a reasonable distance from this constraint. It should also be noted that the existing use of the Site is residential, and it is surrounded on three sides by residential development. Therefore, we feel the impact on the SSSI is not significant.
- 5.4 The conclusions regarding core employment area is also questioned. There is a large number of employment opportunities in the nearby Crowthorne. In addition, the Site is within walking distance to

Crowthorne train station which does have multiple connections to Guildford, Reading, and London.

5.5 The 2021 Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) was published on the Wokingham Website on the 22nd of November 2021.

5.6 The HELAA's assessment of the Site (reference 5FI024) is summarised below:

- *"The proposed development would be adjacent to Pinewood (Crowthorne) and could form a logical extension to the settlement, achieving a satisfactory relationship with the existing settlement pattern and built-up area. The development of the site would not lead to the physical or perceived coalescence between settlements."*
- *"Overall, the proposed development would provide an opportunity for development which broadly conforms to the existing settlement form and landscape character."*
- *"The site is beyond a reasonable walking distance from a defined centre; however, the site is within a reasonable walking distance of Crowthorne station offering regular journeys into Wokingham which could increase footfall within the town centre."*
- *"The site is beyond a 20-minute walk to the nearest local centre at California Cross Roads, however it is within a 20 minute walk of the parade of shops along Dukes Ride which contains a food store and pharmacy amongst other comparison retail, takeaways, etc."*
- *"St Sebastian's Primary school is around a 20-minute walk from the sites"*

- Development of 15 dwellings is “*Unlikely to materially affect the strategic road network.*”

5.7 Therefore, it is concluded that the site is suitable for development whilst there are a sufficient number of benefits to developing this location, namely: location, edge of settlement natural extension, character, train station access, adjacent amenities and road safety.

6. Policy Assessment

6.1 **Principle of Development:** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a relevant material consideration to the application. Firstly, Policy S3 of the NPPF details a presumption in favour of sustainable development with Policy S5 being applied outside of settlements.

6.2 Policy S51 sets out the certain forms of development that should be approved outside of settlements. The relevant test is that such forms of development should be approved ‘*unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies in this Framework*’.

6.3 Firstly, Policy S51i confirms that land which is allocated for development would be approved subject to a weighting exercise of the benefits and adverse effects. Therefore, the fact that the site is allocated is enough to justify development in this out of settlement location.

6.4 The proposed site is also well related to an existing settlement whilst Wokingham Borough Council currently have an unmet need for housing. In addition, the site is within a walking distance of a well-connected station and does not prejudice any other long-term development. Therefore, development of an out of settlement

location is acceptable in accordance with Policy S51h, Policy S51i and Policy S51j.

- 6.5 Furthermore, the proposal could also be classed as either limited infilling, in accordance with S51e, or the redevelopment of PDL land, in accordance with S51d of the Framework.
- 6.6 Policy CP9 (Scale and location of development proposals) directs development to locations within development limits, however, this updated NPPF policy directly highlights that out of settlement development should be supported subject to the parameters set out above.
- 6.7 Policy CP11 (Proposals outside Development Limits) states that development proposals will not normally be permitted in the countryside except where one or more of the specified exceptions apply.
- 6.8 Wokingham Council previously accepted that the proposal does not comply with any of the exceptions set out in Policy CP11, but confirmed that this development would not result in any greater level of physical coalescence with the nearest settlement, Finchampstead North further to the northwest. Whilst in conflict due to failure to meet the necessary criteria, the proposal is not considered to undermine the intended purpose of policy CP11.
- 6.9 Therefore, Wokingham have accepted that development in this location is acceptable as there is no conflict with the underlying purpose of CP11, the same conclusion should be made subject to this outline application. Additionally, it is worth noting that Policy CP11 does directly conflict with the new Framework which sets out the tests for when development outside of settlements should be supported. Adding additional categories and variables that must be adhered to conflicts with the newly adopted framework.

6.10 However, it is clear that such development is acceptable in this location subject to an assessment, on balance, of whether the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects.

Benefits and Adverse Effects Weighting

6.11 The benefits and effects of the proposal are provided within the below table with the relevant weightings denoted.

<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Effects</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Provision of Housing	Substantial	Conflict with Local Spatial Policy	Significant
Suitable Location (edge of settlement)	Significant		
Suitable Location (walking distance of train station and amenities)	Significant		
Environmental Improvements	Significant		
Suitable Design (Layout and design matches surrounding character)	Moderate		
Efficient use of land and existing access	Moderate		
Economic Benefits	Moderate		

- 6.12 The above table clearly highlights the benefits of the scheme subject to the relevant risk. As discussed above, the proposal seeks to provide housing in an out of settlement location which ticks all of the boxes laid out with the new framework. The site is on the edge of settlement, surrounding by other residential built form, is viewed to be in a suitable location and comprises other environmental, economic, and social benefits.
- 6.13 The policy test also states that substantial effects must outweigh the benefits of a proposed scheme. It is clear in this instance that the effects are not substantial and, on balance, do not counterweight the benefits of the proposal.
- 6.14 Crucially, this proposal should be assessed against the existing use of the site. It is not an effect to compare this scheme to the previous approval for 18 units.
- 6.15 As explained below, a viability case has been put forward which details why the scheme has been amended subject for less units and a different housing mix. The previous scheme has not been implemented and, on reflection, was viewed to not be viable in this location.
- 6.16 The benefits of providing 11 houses (net 10 gain) on this site are still significant, with the effects of doing so not being substantial enough to refuse this proposal. Consequently, this outline permission should be accepted in principle.
- 6.17 **Housing Supply:** Following the above, appendix 2 confirms that Wokingham Boroughs housing supply sits between 2.3 and 2.5 years below the five-year target figure.

- 6.18 Therefore, it is evident that substantial weight should be given to the provision of housing within the borough, especially housing that is viable and deliverable in practice.
- 6.19 **Affordable Housing:** Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy states that affordable housing must be provided on sites for 5 dwellings or more or sites which are 0.16 hectares or larger. However, appendix 3 is provided in which the planning inspector has consulted on the new draft local plan and confirmed that this requirement should be increased to 10 units in line with national guidance.
- 6.20 The proposal seeks to develop 10 net units however, and thus, an affordable housing contribution is required.
- 6.21 A viability assessment has been submitted alongside this statement which confirms how and why it is not possible to provide affordable housing alongside this provision. Please refer to this document for more detail regarding the viability evidence as this will not be repeated here.
- 6.22 **Character and Appearance of the Area:** Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 require a high quality design that respects its context. This requirement is amplified by MDDL Policies CC03 and TB21 which require development proposals to protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure, retaining existing trees, hedges and other landscape features wherever possible and incorporating high quality - ideally native – planting as an integral part of any scheme, within the context of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment.
- 6.23 Policy CC02 of the MDD states that planning permission for proposals at the edge of settlements will only be granted where they can demonstrate that the development, including boundary treatments, is within development limits and respects the transition between the

built-up area and the open countryside by taking account of the character of the adjacent countryside and landscape.

- 6.24 The proposal seeks to replicate the layout of surrounding cul-de-sac on the west side of the road and seeks to provide environmental enhancements through the provision of ponds and planting. The perimeter trees on the site will be retained, retaining the character of the existing site and existing green boundaries.
- 6.25 Furthermore, the site is in close proximity to the settlement, forming the settlement edge, surrounded by residential development on all sides, and therefore the impact on the countryside is reduced and would not be an unusual or uncommon development within the immediate residential landscape, despite its current countryside designation.
- 6.26 In addition, as this site is allocated in the RGS, it was envisaged, and accepted through the HELAA exercise, that a residential development on this site has the opportunity to broadly conform with the existing settlement form and landscape character. It would also not lead to the physical or perceived coalescence or unduly compromise the separate identity of settlements.
- 6.27 Policy TB06 of the MDD Local Plan seeks to avoid inappropriate development of residential gardens where there is harm to the local area. Permission would only be granted where there is a positive contribution to the built form and surrounding spaces, integration with the layout of the surrounding area, appropriate hard and soft landscaping, amenity space, building separation and compatibility with the general building height.
- 6.28 Policy D1 and D3 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan echoes a number of the above.

- 6.29 This outline planning application is accompanied by an indicative site layout, however, as this proposal is only outline this is subject to change and, thus, cannot warrant a refusal reason. However, this outline denotes with strong likelihood what the proposed layout will comprise of. The reduction in the number of dwellings ensures that more greenery and buffers have been and can be enforced between existing and proposed dwelling, and between the proposed dwellings themselves,
- 6.30 More vegetation and planting are also proposed adjacent to Lower Wokingham Road. Therefore, the reduction in units seeks to address some of the comments raised by the WBC Trees & Landscape Officer within the previously approved application when he objected. This layout allows less hardstanding, more vegetative buffers and greenery, cleaner verdant areas and better separation distances.
- 6.31 **Residential Amenity:** The submitted indicative Site Layout Plan demonstrates that all proposed dwellings could accord with the separation distances advocated within the design guide. The indicative Site Layout Plan also demonstrated that suitable gardens and separation distances could be adhered to subject to Wokingham Borough Council's standards.
- 6.32 Therefore, the submitted indicative site plan evidences that there would be no adverse impact on amenity; however, matters are reserved subject to a full application for further assessment.
- 6.33 **Trees and Landscaping:** The submitted indicative Site Layout Plan demonstrates that sufficient trees and planting are proposed whilst no adverse impacts on existing trees are proposed. However, further information can be submitted alongside a full application to justify development from an arboricultural perspective and matters are reserved subject to a full application for further assessment.

- 6.34 **Transport and Parking:** Policy CC07 and Appendix 2 of the MDD Local Plan stipulates minimum off street car parking standards, including provision for charging facilities. All parking spaces meet minimum dimension of 5m x 2.5m and accord with the relevant standards set out within the MDD.
- 6.35 Electric and cycle parking will be provided within the proposed garages and can be subject to a condition on a full planning submission.
- 6.36 Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP6 require consideration of the travel impacts of development, emphasising the importance of reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car indicating that new residential development should mitigate any adverse effects on the existing highway network by providing for alternative, sustainable forms of transport.
- 6.37 The application is accompanied by a Highways Statement which evidences that the proposal will have no impact on the adjacent highways network, whilst plans are attached which highlight that emergency vehicles can turn on the access whilst suitable visibility splays are afforded.
- 6.38 Please refer to the attached highways statement for further details.
- 6.39 Therefore, the submitted information evidence that there would be no adverse impact on highways; however, matters are reserved subject to a full application for further assessment.
- 6.40 **Ecology:** Policy TB23 of the MDD Local Plan requires the incorporation of new biodiversity features, buffers between habitats and species of importance and integration with the wider green infrastructure network. Policy CP7 of the Core Strategy states that sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an

international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted.

- 6.41 The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which evidences that the proposed will have no impact on ecology subject to mitigations and suggested conditions which limit any impact.
- 6.42 Therefore, the submitted information evidence that there would be no adverse impact on ecology; however, matters are reserved subject to a full application for further assessment.
- 6.43 **BNG:** Policy TB23 of the MDD states that development proposals should result in an overall net gain but does not specify an amount. However, updates to national policy impose a 10% increase on sites post 2024. Policy IRS5 of the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan also states that developments should provide a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%.
- 6.44 A Revised Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain metric calculation alongside revised Biodiversity Net Gain Design Stage Report have been submitted to support this outline application.
- 6.45 Based on the indicative site layout, it has not been demonstrated that the proposals will result in a net gain. However, the applicant is willing to obtain credits subject to a suitable legal agreement on full submission to address the loss in biodiversity.
- 6.46 Therefore, the submitted information evidence that there would be no adverse impact on biodiversity; however, matters are reserved subject to a full application for further assessment.
- 6.47 **Flooding:** The whole of the application site falls within Flood Zone 1 where the risk of flooding is low and whilst the proposed end use for residential dwellings is classified in the NPPF a 'more vulnerable'

development, such a use is considered appropriate within Flood Zone 1 without the need for either the Sequential or Exception test to be undertaken.

- 6.48 Notwithstanding, as the site area is greater than 1 ha, a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required, despite the site being located in Flood Zone 1. The application is therefore accompanied by an FRA and Drainage Assessment which concludes that the site is at low risk of flooding from all sources including fluvial, surface water and ground water. Furthermore, the site is allocated within the Local Plan Update (5FI024) and as such, site assessments have been carried out within the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Overall, the proposal is accepted in principle in terms of flood risk.
- 6.49 Therefore, the submitted information evidence that there would be no adverse impact on flooding; however, matters are reserved subject to a full application for further assessment.
- 6.50 **Community Infrastructure Levy:** The development is CIL liable and will be subject to such a contribution when a full planning application is made.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 This statement has demonstrated that the proposed development is acceptable in principle and should be approved on outline subject to the relevant policy test.
- 7.2 Material planning considerations have been carefully considered and analysed, as evidenced in section 6 of this statement and the supporting plans and documents. It is considered the proposed development would contribute an appropriate windfall site to the

Borough's housing supply without having adverse effect on the character of the area or the amenity of neighbouring residents.

- 7.3 It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with relevant Development Plan Policies and is further supported by National Guidance. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

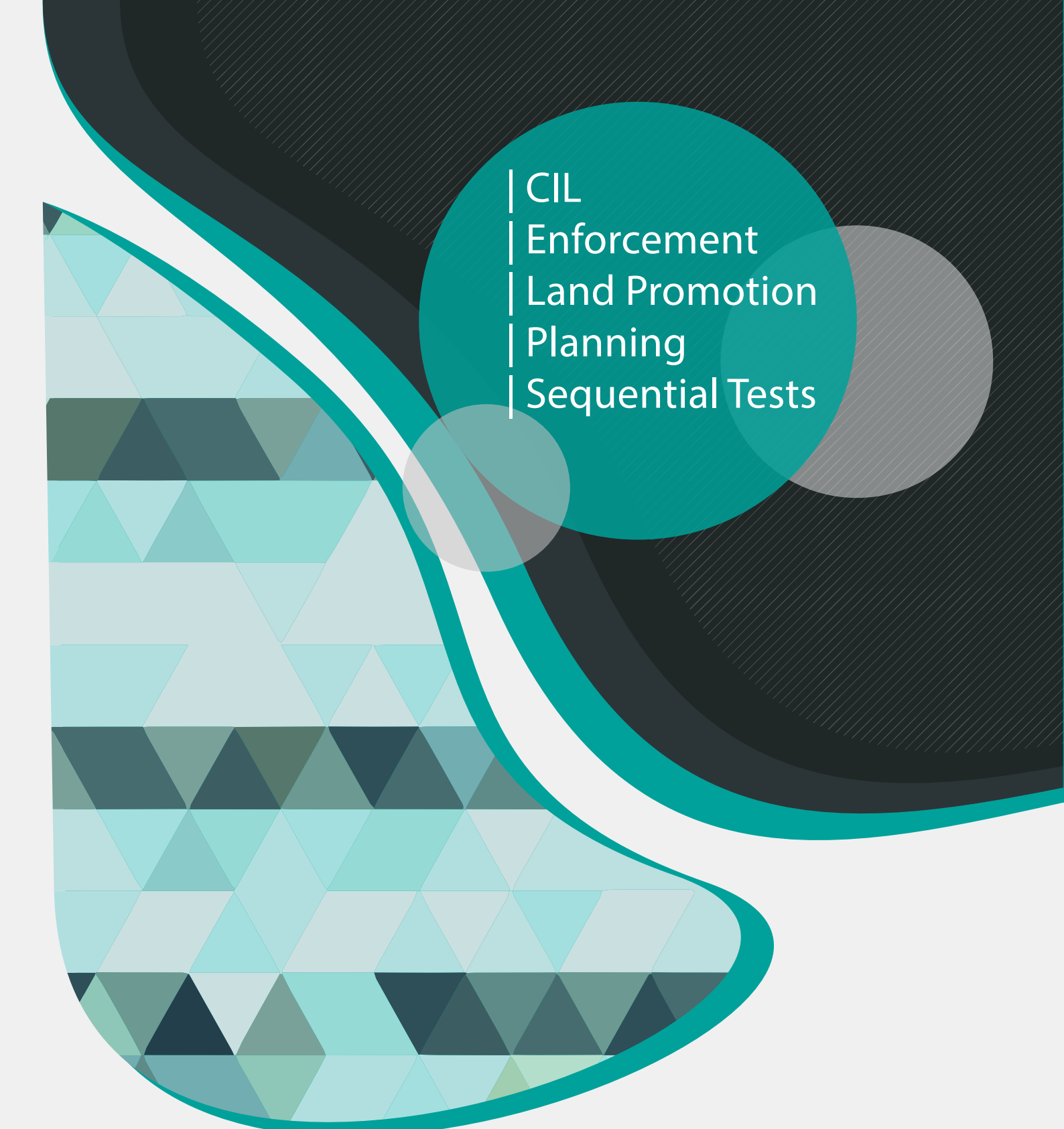


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