



woolf bond
planning

Planning Statement

Land south of 6 Harvest Place, Wargrave

Application for Permission in Principle for residential development comprising the erection of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 dwellings, including removal of some existing outbuildings.

Prepared for:
Mr & Mrs Jackson

Prepared by:
Tom Rumble & Graham Ritchie
Woolf Bond Planning Ltd

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Woolf Bond Planning Ltd (trading as Woolf Bond Planning)
Registered office: Agriculture House, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2TZ
Registered in England No. 15596600



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Group

Contents

1. Introduction and Summary.....2

2. The Site and Surrounding Area.....4

3. The Proposal 10

4. Planning Policy Context 12

5. The Need for Housing in the Borough..... 20

6. Main Issues and Planning Balance Assessment..... 22

7. Summary & Conclusions 33

1. Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 This Statement has been prepared by Woolf Bond Planning Ltd in support of a planning application by Mr & Mrs Jackson on land south of 6 Harvest Place, Wargrave. The application relates to a Permission in Principle (PiP) submission for the erection of between 2 and 3 dwellings on land to the south of 6 Harvest Place, Wargrave.
- 1.2 Since 1st June 2018, it has been possible to apply directly to the Local Planning Authority for Permission in Principle (PiP) for development that is not:
- Major Development (defined in the DMPO as 10 or more houses or on a land area of 1 hectare or more);
 - Habitats Development;
 - Householder Development; or
 - Environmental Impact Assessment Development.
- 1.3 The scope of the PiP application is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Other matters should be considered at the 'Technical Details' consent stage.
- 1.4 The PiP comprises the following:
- Site Location Plan - Drawing No. P26-09-100
 - For the 2 dwellings proposal
 - Indicative Site Layout - Drawing P26-09-S-101
 - Indicative Context Plan – Drawing P26-09-S-102
 - Google Earth Extract – Drawing P26-09-S-103
 - Indicative Street Scene – Drawing P26-09-S-104
 - For the 3 dwellings proposal
 - Indicative Site Layout - Drawing P26-09-S-201
 - Indicative Context Plan – Drawing P26-09-S-202
 - Google Earth Extract – Drawing P26-09-S-203
 - Indicative Street Scene – Drawing P26-09-S-204
 - Landscape and Visual Appraisal (includes figure 6 as separate file)
 - Letter from Highway Planning Ltd (21st April 2026)
- 1.5 The site, surroundings and its context are summarised in Section 2. Section 3 describes the application proposal. Section 4 sets out the relevant planning policy and material

considerations. Section 5 sets out the need for housing in the Borough. A planning assessment of the proposal is then detailed in Section 6.

2. The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site comprises paddock land that lies to the south of the existing dwelling at 6 Harvest Place, Wargrave. It is located within the Parish of Wargrave, in designated countryside and the metropolitan Green Belt. School Hill forms the southern and western limits to the site, albeit the site is screened by a strong tree belt that runs along the road. To the east of the site are school playing fields which are used by the local schools.
- 2.2 The tree belt along School Hill provides a clear boundary to the site and limits views into and out of the site from the road. This tree belt along the road together with the school playing fields contains the paddock. Harvest Place alongside the village of Wargrave is inset from the Green Belt. A satellite view of the site (NB: the red line boundary is approximate) is provided below.



Aerial photo of site with location edged red.

- 2.3 The application site is 0.45 hectares in area and is irregular in shape. It would be accessed direct via an existing crossover onto Harvest Place located in the eastern part of the existing curtilage of no. 6.
- 2.4 A series of photographs are presented below to illustrate the existing site and its immediate surroundings.



View of western boundary of site (showing tree belt along School Hill)



View across site taken from south-east corner



View of eastern boundary (taken from school playing field to the east of the site).



View of existing site access location off Harvest Place

- 2.5 The map below shows the site and existing built form within its immediate locality. This illustrates the proximity of the site to existing built form alongside its immediate proximity to educational facilities at the Infant and Junior Schools.

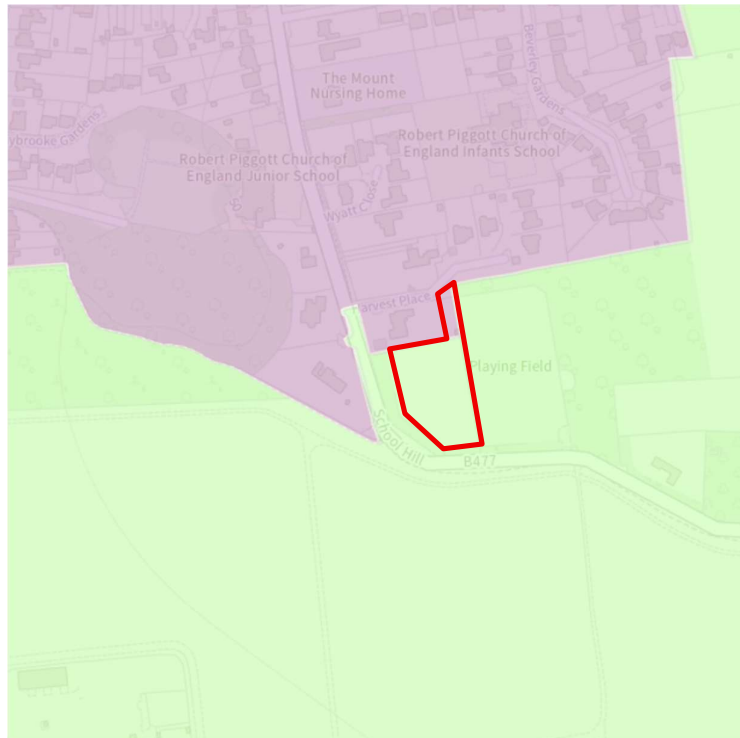


Map of site and surroundings (source Wokingham Borough Council mapping)

- 2.6 The officer's report for the redevelopment of The Mount Nursing Home (LPA ref. 222456) considered by the Council's Planning Committee on 14th December 2022 notes that Wargrave is a designated modest development location (paragraph 7). The Committee Report also indicated (paragraph 15) that:

The application was supported by a sustainability assessment. There is excellent access to bus and rail within Wargrave and to local shops on High Street and Victoria Road.

- 2.7 The Mount Nursing Home site is only 175 metres north of the subject site. It follows that a similar positive sustainability conclusion can be made in relation to the subject site.
- 2.8 A review of the online policy proposals map indicates that the site access lies within the modest development location of Wargrave with the part where dwellings are proposed lying within the Green Belt. An extract of the policy map showing this distinction is provided below.



Extract from Policy Map.

- 2.9 Whilst the site extends into the Green Belt, the aerial photos alongside those taken around the site illustrate its containment by vegetation. The site adjoins areas inset from the Green Belt to the north (Harvest Place) and west (The Spindles). The NPPF (paragraph 155) indicates that development of homes in the Green Belt is not inappropriate where it entails grey belt, there is a demonstratable need for the use and the site is in a sustainable location.
- 2.10 The justification as to why the site can readily be regarded as a grey belt location are explained in section 6 of this statement. However, at this initial stage, reference is made to the officer's report relating to the redevelopment of The Mount Nursing Home (LPA ref. 222456) indicates, the shops and public transport services are available to potential residents around 800m from the site, at the junction of School Lane and High Street. The plans supplied above confirm that the Robert Piggott Church of England Infant and Junior Schools are also exceptionally well related to the site. A safe, defined footway available along the eastern side of School Hill exists, the site is well related to the village centre and within walking distance of Wargrave train station. Consequently, the site can be regarded as being sustainably located.
- 2.11 The Council mapping confirms that there are no statutorily or locally listed buildings on or near the application site. Further, the site is not within a Conservation Area nor area there any Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or near the site.
- 2.12 The site is situated within flood zone 1, according to the Environment Agency flood maps, meaning a low probability of flooding.
- 2.13 Council mapping data also confirms that there are no TPO's on or near the site.

- 2.14 Having regard to the site location especially its proximity to The Mount Nursing Home (around 170m from the site), the clear statement relating to accessibility of that site also applies to this one, given that the schools are located between the two sites. The distance to the public transport services and shops along the High Street are around 800m from the site which would typically entail a 10 minute walk. The route from the application site past the schools to the High Street uses street lit pavements and therefore provides opportunities for safe access to them. These facts therefore further illustrate the sustainability credentials for the site.

Planning History

- 2.15 The Council's online planning database indicates that the following would be relevant applications on or near to the site, which primarily relate to the dwellings on Harvest Place.
- 2.16 The principle of the development of the dwellings subsequently built out as Harvest Place was established through application 98/67508/F approved 5th August 1999. This was revised through application 99/69891/F (approved 30th March 2000) which confirmed that the application site for this scheme was to be used as paddock land ancillary to plot 6 (now numbered as 6 Harvest Place).

- 3.1 The application is for Permission in Principle and comprises the erection of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 dwellings, including removal (and movement) of some existing outbuildings.
- 3.2 The scope of the Permission in Principle is limited to location, use and amount of development. Detailed matters relating to inter alia, design, highways, drainage, ecology, dwelling mix and affordable housing are to be dealt with at the Technical Details Consent (TDC) stage and cannot form justified reasons to refuse an application at this PiP stage.
- 3.3 The principle nature of the scheme means that the decision has to specify the location of the site, the type of development and provide an indication of the amount of development the site has permission in principle for. The location is land to the south of 6 Harvest Place, Wargrave and the land use is for residential development. The proposal is for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 new residential dwellings.
- 3.4 The amount of residential development must be expressed as a range, indicating the minimum and maximum net number of dwellings (i.e. taking in to account any existing dwellings on the site) which are, in principle, permitted. Whilst a matter to be agreed at the TDC stage, it is anticipated that the proposed dwellings would have a traditional appearance of two storeys with similar ridge and eaves heights to neighbouring properties (as already exist on Harvest Place) to the north of the site.
- 3.5 The submitted Illustrative Proposed Site Layout Plans indicate how a scheme for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 new dwellings can be accommodated on the site with their respective plots extracted below. The layout confirms the ability for the site to accommodate the proposed quantum of development at a medium to low density and in a form that logically responds to the surrounding pattern of development.



Layout for 3 dwellings (drawing P26/09/S/201)

- 3.6 For clarity, whilst illustrative drawings are provided these are all for contextual purposes only. The only determining drawing relevant to the application is the submitted Location Plan (Drawing No. P26/09/100).

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the relevant development plan against which the application proposal will be determined, comprises:

- Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (CS) (January 2010); &
- Wokingham Borough Managing Delivery Local Plan (MDD) (February 2014).

4.2 A number of the key development plan policies against which the application should be considered are set out below.

Wokingham Core Strategy (Adopted January 2010)

- CP1: Sustainable Developments
- CP3: General Principles for Development
- CP4: Infrastructure Requirements
- CP5: Housing Mix, Density & Affordability
- CP6: Managing Travel Demand
- CP7: Biodiversity
- CP9: Scale & Location of Development Proposals
- CP11: Proposals Outside Development Limits (Including Countryside)
- CP12: Green Belt

4.3 Over and above those pertaining to the spatial strategy of the Local Plan, the Council's online interactive planning map confirms that the site is relatively free of policy designation restrictions with the exception of the Green Belt.

4.4 The site is shown as within a Site of Special Scientific Interest risk zone on MAGIC maps. However, the development does not match any of the proposed descriptions that require consultation with Natural England.

4.5 Policy CP1, taken as a whole, requires new development to attain the highest levels of sustainability as is practicable with regard to location, materials, pollution and energy efficiency. Matters of pollution and energy efficiency are encompassed within Building Regulations as should be taken as complied with. The Building Regulation requirements will, in turn, inform the choice of materials (together with a character assessment of the area and to be determined at technical Details stage). The matter of locational sustainability has been addressed in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.9 and 2.13 above. It can be clearly concluded that any forthcoming development will comply fully with Policy CP1.

4.6 Policy CP3 sets out the general principles for new development which can be summarised as follows:

- Appropriate in scale and mass for its setting
- Functional, adaptable and safe layout

- No adverse impacts upon ecological, heritage or landscape features
- Efficient use of land

- 4.7 Whilst the final design of the proposed development is to be fixed at the technical details consent stage, the submitted illustrative layout shows how a safe, adaptable and functional layout, appropriate in scale and massing to its surrounding can be achieved on the site without any adverse effects upon the built or natural environments in accordance with this policy. It is envisaged that a conventional two storey scale in a traditional form with large garden areas can be provided. The gross density at between circa 4 and 7 dwellings per hectare is fully commensurate with the character of the area.
- 4.8 Policy CP4 requires new development to provide infrastructure improvements to mitigate its impact on existing services and facilities. Depending upon the final scale of development (which is to be fixed at the technical details consent stage), the appropriate quantum of infrastructure improvements (or contributions in lieu) can be secured via legal agreement (at the TDC stage) or funded by CIL payments.
- 4.9 Policy CP5 requires new residential developments to provide a suitable mix of homes and appropriate levels of affordable housing. This policy has been found inconsistent with national policy by the Planning Inspectorate on numerous occasions¹. Since the application site area extends to 0.45ha, it is below the threshold² for seeking affordable housing as the proposal is not a major scheme. Notwithstanding, any affordable housing obligations would be agreed and secured at the TDC stage.
- 4.10 Policy CP6 requires new development to be sustainably located, maximise the modes of transport other than the private car and be sound in terms of highway safety and on-site parking provision. This is a matter for the technical details consent stage. However, locational sustainability has been addressed in paragraphs 2.5 to 2.9 and 2.13 above, and the illustrative masterplan shows that each dwelling can facilitate sufficient on-plot parking provision. The supporting highway note prepared by Highways Planning Ltd. confirms that adequate visibility can be provided and that the site lies in a sustainable location. It is considered that a scheme design in accordance with Policy CP7 can be facilitated on the application site. For clarity, there is clear precedent in the immediate context both through local and appeal permissions that this site forms an accessible location to comply with Policy CP6.
- 4.11 Policy CP7 requires new development proposals to not result in any adverse effects upon the natural environment and to avoid an on-site loss of biodiversity. Whilst this is a matter for the TDC stage, any forthcoming development will be required to demonstrate a 10% net gain in biodiversity in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. As such, it can be assured that the proposed development will accord with the requirements of this policy.
- 4.12 Policy CP9 sets out the overarching spatial strategy across the plan period and, taken as a whole, requires development proposals to be commensurate with the existing or proposed

¹ PINS ref: APP/X0360/W/23/3331651, APP/X0360/W/22/3300991 and APP/X0360/W/19/3224032

² NPPF paragraph 65

levels of facilities in its locality. The policy also sets out the hierarchy of development locations as Major Development Locations, Modest Development Locations, Limited Development Locations and the Boundary of the Science Park. The proposed development is not located within any of the aforementioned areas and falls to be considered as countryside development. However, it must be noted that the Council in their statement published August 2025 regarding the position for the period April 2025 to March 2030 can currently only demonstrate a 2.5 year supply of housing land, with a shortfall of 3,456 dwellings. As such, the tilted balance is engaged, and only very limited weight can be attributed to any technical conflict with Policy CP9.

- 4.13 Policy CP11 reiterates the Council's restrictive approach towards development in the countryside but lists a number of exempt forms of development. The proposed development, being for residential dwellings, does not meet any of the exemption criteria. However, the policy defines its position to restrict countryside development as being *"to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment"*. The implications of this wording were discussed in the recent School Road & Orchard Road, Hurst Appeal³, where the Inspector, at paragraph 9 of their decision, said:

"However, that policy says that 'in order to protect the separate identity of settlements and maintain the quality of the environment' development outside Development Limits will not normally be permitted. Whilst there appears to be an assumption that a proposal outside of the Development Limits would contravene one or both of those aims, if the specific issues around a case meant it did not, then the policy would not be contravened and there would be no need to comply with any of the certain circumstances given." (our emphasis)

- 4.14 The Inspector then disaggregates and expands upon the overarching objectives of the Policy by saying:

"Although it was suggested that the first of these 2 aims sought to protect the identity of the settlement next to which the development was occurring, I have difficulty reading the policy in that way. Rather, it seems to be directed towards avoiding the coalescence of neighbouring settlements, so undermining their respective identities as distinct and separate villages or hamlets. The development would not offend this aim..."

And

"Turning to the second aim, although quite clearly appreciated by local residents, the site does not form or abut part of a valued landscape under the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and is not allocated as a Local Green Space."

³ PINS Ref: APP/X0360/W/24/3342812

It is clear from the provided aerial imagery and submitted suite of plans that the site is very well contained by surrounding built form and landscape features. As such, the proposed development would not contribute to the coalescence of settlements and therefore respect the established identity of the area. Additionally, much like the School Road and Orchard Road site, the application site is not within a valued landscape, nor is it designated as a Local Green Space.

- 4.15 Overall, it must be considered that the proposal would not breach the purpose of Policy CP11. In any case, the Council have a very significant shortfall in housing land supply which engages the tilted balance thus reducing the weight that can be attributed to any conflict with Policy CP11 should the Council view it in such a manner following the above appeal precedent.
- 4.16 Policy CP12 indicates that the Council will not approve schemes for inappropriate development in the Green Belt based upon the definitions in PPG2. This policy is out of date since PPG2 was replaced by the NPPF in its first iteration (published 2012). There have been several updates to the NPPF issued since, most recently in December 2024. As referenced the current version of the NPPF indicates that "grey belt" development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt. For the reasons explained in section 6 of this statement, the scheme is fully consistent with the advice on grey belt proposals and therefore it forms appropriate development in the Green Belt.

Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted 2014)

- 4.17 A number of the key development plan policies against which the application should be considered are set out below.
- CC01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
 - CC02: Development Limits
 - CC09: Development and Flood Risk
 - TB01: Development within the Green Belt
 - TB07: Internal Space Standards
- 4.18 Matters relating to landscape impact, design and housing mix must be dealt with at the TDC Stage. The principle of development is dealt with below.
- 4.19 Policy CC01 reiterates paragraph 11 of the NPPF by stating that development plan compliant proposal will be supported without delay. However, and as is the case here, where the policies relevant to an application are out of date, proposals will be supported so long as the benefits outweigh any adverse effects of granting permission. In this instance, the Council can only demonstrate a 2.5 year housing land supply. As such, and in accordance with footnote 8 of the NPPF, the policies that guide the location of new housing are out of date and only limited weight can be applied to them. In the context of Wokingham, these are Policies CP9 and CP11 of the Core Strategy and Policy CC02 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan.
- 4.20 Policy CC02 supplements Policies CP9 of the Core Strategy by defining settlement boundaries and other acceptable locations for development. As discussed, due to the Council's poor

housing land supply position, the weight that can be attributed to this policy, and its restrictive approach to development outside defined settlement boundaries is very significantly reduced.

- 4.21 Policy CC09 pertains to flood risks that may affect development. Environment Agency (EA) mapping confirms that the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1. A full drainage strategy is to be considered at the TDC stage.
- 4.22 Policy TB01 indicates that the Council will not approve schemes for inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, the policy references paragraphs 89 and 90 of the NPPF. Whilst these were included in the 2012 edition, the guidance has been updated, most recently in December 2024. The current version of the NPPF indicates that "grey belt" development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt as is now listed in NPPF paragraph 155. For the reasons explained in section 6 of this statement, the scheme is fully consistent with the advice on grey belt proposals and therefore does not entail inappropriate development.
- 4.23 Policy TB07 pertains to the future living environment created by residential development. Whilst the final design of the proposed dwellings is to be fixed at the technical details consent stage, the submitted illustrative masterplans show that between 2 and 3 dwellings with floor spaces exceeding nationally described space standards (relative to their proposed size) can be comfortably accommodated on the site.
- 4.24 The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan contains numerous other policies pertaining to design, layout, amenity and energy efficiency which are not applicable at this stage.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.25 The NPPF is a strong material consideration in assessing the application. The NPPF is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with three overarching, but interlinked objectives. Paragraph 8 is relevant to the application as the proposal would help to deliver each of the strands of sustainable development.
- 4.26 The proposal will help to deliver each of these objectives, thereby responding to the requirement in paragraph 10 of the NPPF that development is pursued in a positive way, reflecting the presumption in favour of sustainable development which sits at the heart of the Framework.
- 4.27 Paragraph 39 relates to decision making and states that: '*Local Planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including... Permission in Principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area*'.
- 4.28 At paragraph 61, the NPPF is clear that the Government's objective is to boost significantly the supply of homes, and that it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed.

- 4.29 NPPF paragraph 73 states that small and medium sized sites (like the application site) can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly.
- 4.30 Paragraph 78 states that Local Planning Authorities 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.
- 4.31 Paragraph 110 seeks to focus significant development on locations which are or can be made sustainable, however it recognises opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.
- 4.32 Paragraph 124 of the NPPF encourages planning policies and decisions to promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes. The following paragraph outlines the need for planning policies and decisions to promote and support the development of under-utilised land, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained.
- 4.33 Paragraph 155 indicates that development of homes in the Green Belt is not inappropriate where it utilises grey belt land and it would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt land, there is a demonstrable need for the development and the location is sustainable. The application site utilises grey belt land and the proposal fulfils all the other requirements of this test.

Emerging Development Plan

- 4.34 The Council has submitted a Local Plan Update for Examination by the Secretary of State. The Examination is ongoing with stage 2 Hearings Scheduled from 17th March until 10th July 2026. Pending the receipt of the Inspector's Report into the submission Local Plan Update, no further consideration of this is included in the planning statement having regard to the extent that there remain unresolved objections as per paragraph 49 of the NPPF.
- 4.35 Therefore, very limited weight (if any) applies to the policies of the Submitted Local Plan Update. The emerging Local Plan Update is not therefore considered further.

Written Ministerial Statements

- 4.36 On the 30th July 2024, the Deputy Prime Minister, made a Written Ministerial Statement ("WMS") in which announcements were made about the Government's intentions to make changes to the planning system to significantly boost the delivery of housing:

We are in the middle of the most acute housing crisis in living memory. Home ownership is out of reach for too many; the shortage of houses drives high rents; and too many are left without access to a safe and secure home.

We are therefore reversing last year's changes which loosened the requirement for local authorities to plan for and meet their housing needs, and we are going further still, by mandating that the standard method is used as the basis for determining local authorities' housing requirements in all circumstances.

We are therefore updating the standard method and raising the overall level of these targets – from around 300,000 to approximately 370,000.

It is however also clear that brownfield land can only be part of the answer, and will not be enough to meet our housing needs.

But we cannot wait for all release to come through plan making. Where authorities are under performing – be that lacking a sufficient land supply or failing to deliver enough homes as measured by the Housing Delivery Test – we will therefore also make it clear that applications for sites not allocated in a plan must be considered.

- 4.37 A further WMS was issued by the Minister of State for Housing and Planning on 16th December 2025 to accompany the publication of the draft revisions to the NPPF. This included further announcements emphasising the Government's intentions related to further revisions to the planning system to accelerate the delivery of housing. The statement included:

England remains in the grip of a housing crisis that is both acute and entrenched. The detrimental consequences of this disastrous state of affairs are now all pervasive: a generation locked out of homeownership; 1.3 million people languishing on social housing waiting lists; millions of low-income households forced into unaffordable private rented housing; and more than 170,000 homeless children living in temporary accommodation.

Our economy, and the public services we all rely on, are suffering too because as well as blighting countless lives, the housing crisis is consuming ever larger amounts of public money in the form of a rapidly rising housing benefit bill and it is hampering economic growth and productivity by reducing labour mobility and undermining the capacity of our great towns and cities to realise their full economic potential.

The monumental scale of the challenge that this government inherited demanded a commensurate response. That is why we committed ourselves, unashamedly, to an incredibly stretching housebuilding target of 1.5 million new safe and decent homes in this Parliament. And it is why we acted quickly and boldly to put in place the foundations of a revamped planning system that will facilitate the delivery of high and sustainable rates of housebuilding in the years ahead.

Within three weeks of taking office, we moved to consult on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), finalising them in December 2024. Amongst the many changes made in that initial revision to the Framework were the restoration and raising of mandatory housing targets; a new Standard Method for assessing housing needs aligned to our 1.5 million new homes target; greater support for social and affordable housing provision; a strengthening of policy relating to brownfield land development; a modernised, strategic approach to Green Belt land designation and release; and enhanced support for key economic sectors and clean energy infrastructure.

In March, we introduced our landmark Planning and Infrastructure Bill. The Bill will speed up and streamline the delivery of new homes and critical infrastructure, supporting delivery not only of the government's 1.5 million new homes target but also our Plan for Change milestone of fast-tracking 150 planning decisions on major economic infrastructure projects by the end of this Parliament.

- 4.38 Paragraph 6 of the NPPF confirms that WMS are a material consideration. The weight to be attached to that of the Deputy Prime Minister, as cited above, has been discussed in numerous recent appeal decisions such as the Moggie Lane appeal decision⁴ in which the Inspector, at paragraph 4, said.

"a direction of travel has been outlined within the Written Ministerial Statement, which is a material consideration of very significant weight" (our emphasis)

- 4.39 The restatement of the Government's commitment for the achievement of the delivery of at least 1.5 million homes during the parliament reinforces the clear direction of travel. The application must be considered in this positive policy context and substantial positive weight be accorded to the scheme's housing provision.

⁴ PINS Ref: APP/R0660/W/24/3339806

5. The Need for Housing in the Borough

- 5.1 The Council's latest published housing land supply position statement⁵ identifies that the Council can demonstrate a 2.5 year supply of deliverable housing land.
- 5.2 The current Wokingham Borough Local Plan was adopted in January 2010. Paragraph 78 of the NPPF states that Planning Authorities must identify and annually update a supply of deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against local housing needs calculated using the standard method where strategic policies are more than 5 years old.
- 5.3 As indicated above, the Council have prepared a draft submission version of the Local Plan Update which is currently being examined. The Stage 2 Hearings are scheduled to take place from 17th March until 10th July 2026 and the subsequent timetable for later stages remain uncertain including when the Local Plan will be adopted.
- 5.4 Until the Local Plan is adopted, the Council is required to demonstrate a 5 year housing supply position against the latest derivation of Local Housing Need (LHN). Having regard to the median workplace based affordability data published on 26th March 2026⁶ and the dwelling stock information issued on 22nd May 2025⁷, the current LHN figure is 1,305dpa. The latest published position statement indicates that from April 2025 to March 2030, the Council's supply is 3,453 dwellings. This results in a supply of 2.5 years or a deficit of 3,490 dwellings compared to the requirement for 6,851 dwellings (1,370.2 dpa) based upon a LHN of 1,305dpa with 5% buffer.
- 5.5 The Council has had significant challenges in the maintenance of a five year supply for several years as illustrated in the chart and table below. This confirms that based upon the Council's own assessments, since that issued for the April 2022 to March 2027 period, it has consistently failed to demonstrate a five year supply. The inability to show the required minimum five year supply has been a long standing issue which has existed for half the period since 2018)when a Standard Method for determining housing requirements was established in the NPPF).

⁵ Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31 March 2025 (Published August 2025)

⁶ Average for the 5 years (2021-25) was 11.24.

⁷ 74,654

Comparison of five year land supply positions as assessed by Council since Standard Method established housing requirements

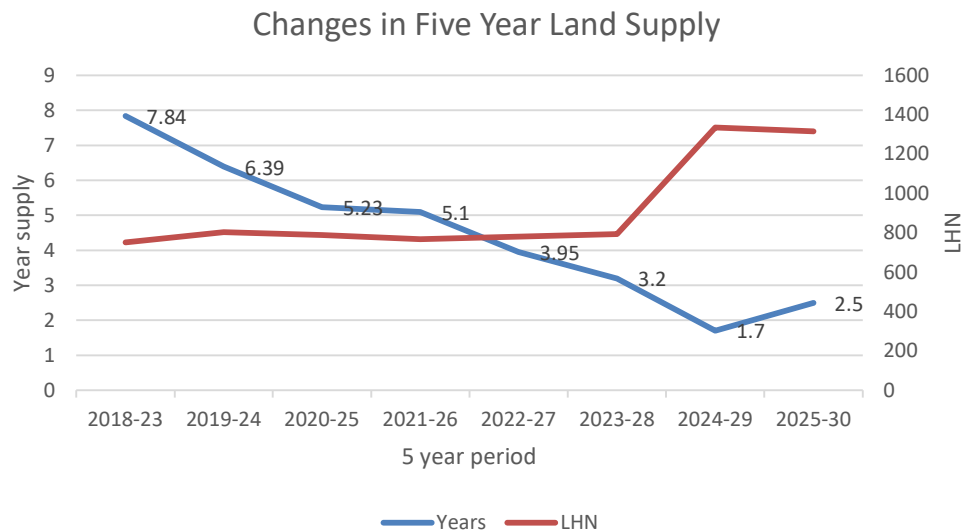


Table to accompany chart of land supply assessment comparison.

	Apr 2018 - Mar 2023	Apr 2019 - Mar 2024	Apr 2020 - Mar 2025	Apr 2021 - Mar 2026	Apr 2022 - Mar 2027	Apr 2023 - Mar 2028	Apr 2024 - Mar 2029	Apr 2025 - Mar 2030
Years	7.84	6.39	5.23	5.1	3.95	3.2	1.7	2.5
LHN	752	804	789	768	781	795	1,336	1,317
Council's contended deliverable supply	6,193	5,398	4,332	4,115	3,237	2,545	2,321	3,453

- 5.6 The table indicates that a key factor which has resulted in the long standing inability to show a five year supply is a direct consequence of the diminishing pool of deliverable sites. With the uncertainty over the timeline for the examination of the Local Plan and also the timetable for the potential construction of the provisionally allocated sites within it, the quickest (and necessary) solution to addressing the ongoing deficit is the approval of more applications, such as through this PiP submission.
- 5.7 Further, although the Council has accepted its inability to show the obligated minimum five year supply for several years, Inspector's through appeal decisions have identified deficits for an even longer period. This further reinforces the benefits that this scheme offers in contributing towards the resolution of the ongoing land supply shortfall.
- 5.8 It is clear that a step change (and a significant one) in the approach to housing delivery is required to alleviate this pressing need. The scheme positively contributes towards this important issue.

6. Main Issues and Planning Balance Assessment

- 6.1 The proposed development is eligible for consideration for PiP because it is not major development, habitats development, householder development or Environmental Impact Assessment development. As mentioned, this PiP relates to land to the south of 6 Harvest Place, Wargrave.
- 6.2 The scope for a PiP is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Only issues relevant to these 'in principle' matters should be considered at the PiP stage.
- 6.3 Whilst the proposed development falls to be considered as countryside development (and in the Green Belt), the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply.
- 6.4 As such, this application should be considered in line with paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF which states that applications for development should be viewed favourably unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.5 There are no policies in the Development Plan, or NPPF that provide a clear reason for refusing permission in this instance. Indeed, the site is not at risk of flooding, would not affect any heritage assets, is not a habitat site, and does not fall within any other landscape designation.
- 6.6 The site is located within the Parish of Wargrave and adjacent to the defined development limits for this modest location. Policy CP11 states that proposals will not normally be supported outside development limits to maintain the quality of the environment and separate identity of settlements. However, the application site is well contained by vegetation (particularly along its western, southern and eastern boundaries) and well related to the existing settlement, namely the residential cul-de-sac forming Harvest Place to the north. There is also neighbouring development (to the north, forming Harvest Place) and to the west (on the opposite side of School Hill) of the site. Ultimately due to the Policy CP11's age and the substantial housing land supply deficit, the policy has long since stopped being appropriate as one that can be attributed anything beyond very limited weight in the decision making process.
- 6.7 Policy TB21 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan requires development to conserve or enhance the quality of the District's landscape assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. Whilst only the principle of development is to be considered at this stage, it is considered that nature of development proposed is appropriate for its context. Design matters arising from Policy TB21 of the Management Plan can be secured at TDC Stage.
- 6.8 The site is located within the Wargrave-Twyford Arable Chalk Lowlands (H1) landscape character area. This is judged to have a moderate quality overall and judged to be in moderate condition, with scope for improvement. As detailed within the supporting Landscape & Visual Appraisal, the site is visually well contained and any available visual effect the development would be localised and would not have a significant impact on the wide landscape. From where views are available, the site would be seen with the backdrop of already established existing residential development also in view. The proposed development would be low profile and

would not compromise landscape character. A detailed landscape strategy can be secured at the technical details stage. The scheme therefore complies with Policy TB21 (again a policy that must be considered within the context of the established housing land supply deficit).

- 6.9 As identified above, the site is not in a Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings within the vicinity of the application site. No heritage assets will be affected by the proposed development. Further, the site is bound by existing residential development on its northern and western sides. The southern, eastern and western edges are defined by a natural landscape barrier. The scheme therefore offers a logical rounding off to this residential area in an acknowledged sustainable location. This is helpfully illustrated on the aerial photos below.



Aerial photo (Source: Google Earth)



Aerial photo (Source: Google Earth)

- 6.10 The second photo, in particular, illustrates the strong development logic associated with this site given it has a direct relationship with the existing number 6 Harvest Place property to the north (through which it would be accessed). In addition, the image illustrates how built form already moves southward on the opposite side of School Hill already and importantly how, the site benefits from natural containment by virtue of a strong, established landscaped boundary running around western, southern and eastern boundaries. The site therefore benefits from a strong degree of development logic.
- 6.11 The site lies within the Green Belt and therefore it is important to assess the scheme within the parameters provided by paragraphs 154 and 155 of the NPPF, and the various categories of development that are not inappropriate in this designation. Although the lists of development types in paragraph 154 broadly reflect those in the earlier PPG2 (as referenced in Core Strategy Policy CP12), this has been supplemented by that listed in paragraph 155. The additional development types in paragraph 155 confirm that the approach of MDD Policy TB01 is also unduly restrictive. The PiP application is therefore prepared in the context of the latest guidance as set out in the NPPF, especially paragraph 155. This indicates that:

The development of homes, commercial and other development in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

- a) The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan;**
- b) There is a demonstrable need for the type of development proposed;**
- c) The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and**

d) Where applicable the development proposed meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.

6.12 The proposal accords with the criteria specified in paragraph 155 as explained below, thereby resulting in the application not representing inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Each of the criterion in paragraph 155 are therefore considered in turn.

a) Utilise Grey Belt

6.13 The Glossary of the NPPF indicates that 'grey belt' is defined **"for the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to purposes a), b), or d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development."**

6.14 The PPG provides further guidance on **"How should the contribution land makes to the relevant Green Belt purposes be assessed?"**⁸ within the Green Belt chapter. Given its relevance to an assessment of the matter, the PPG guidance is repeated below:

Green Belt purposes and clarification	Contribution	Illustrative features
A – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up area This purpose relates to the sprawl of large built up areas. Villages should not be considered large built up areas.	Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development, and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development. They are also likely to include all of the following features: - be adjacent or near to a large built up area - if developed, result in an incongruous pattern of development (such as an extended "finger" of development into the Green Belt)
	Moderate	Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be adjacent or near to a large built up area, but include one or more features that weaken the land's contribution to this purpose a, such as (but not limited to): - having physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development - be partially enclosed by existing development, such that new development would not result in an incongruous pattern of development - contain existing development

⁸ ID ref 64-005-20250225

Green Belt purposes and clarification	Contribution	Illustrative features
B – to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another. This purpose relates to the merging of towns, not villages.		- being subject to other urbanising influences Assessment areas that make only a weak or no contribution are likely to include those that: - are not adjacent to or near to a large built up area - are adjacent to or near to a large built up area, but containing or being largely enclosed by significant existing development
	Weak or none	
	Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely to be free of existing development and include all of the following features: - forming a substantial part of a gap between towns - the development of which would be likely to result in the loss of visual separation of towns
	Moderate	Assessment areas that contribute moderately are likely to be located in a gap between towns, but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to): - forming a small part of the gap between towns - being able to be developed without the loss of visual separation between towns. This could be (but is not limited to) due to the presence or the close proximity of structures, natural landscape elements or topography that preserve visual separation
	Weak or none	Assessment areas that contribute weakly are likely to include those that: - do not form part of a gap between towns, or - form part of a gap between towns, but only a very small part of this gap, without making a contribution to visual separation
	Strong	Assessment areas that contribute strongly are likely be free of existing development and to include all of the following features: - form part of the setting of the historic town - make a considerable contribution to the special character of a historic town. This could be (but is not limited to) as a result of being within, adjacent to, or of significant visual importance to the historic aspects of the town
Purpose D – to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns This purpose relates to historic towns, not villages. Where there are no historic towns in the plan area, it may not be	Moderate	Assessment areas that perform moderately are likely to form part of the setting and/or contribute to the special character of a historic town but include one or more features that weaken their contribution to this purpose, such as (but not limited to):

Green Belt purposes and clarification	Contribution	Illustrative features
necessary to provide detailed assessments against this purpose.		- being separated to some extent from historic aspects of the town by existing development or topography - containing existing development - not having an important visual, physical, or experiential relationship to historic aspects of the town
	Weak or none	Assessment areas that make no or only a weak contribution are likely to include those that: - do not form part of the setting of a historic town - have no visual, physical, or experiential connection to the historic aspects of the town

- 6.15 Wargrave is included in the second tier of the Borough's settlement hierarchy and is categorised as a modest development location. It's inclusion in the second tier of the hierarchy indicates that this is not a town given that it lies within an area covered by a parish not town council. This contrasts with several of the places in the highest tier of the hierarchy which are categorised as major development locations – with Earley, Woodley and Wokingham overseen by town councils. This would be an indication that Wargrave is a village and not a town for the purposes of any consideration of grey belt. This fact itself confirms that in relation to, at least, purposes B and D, the site plays no role in its performance against these purposes (let alone a strong one).
- 6.16 The Council's Green Belt Assessment (June 2016) prepared jointly with Bracknell Forest considered the context of settlements in the Borough for the purposes of determining the contribution towards the various purposes. Whilst the Council's Green Belt Assessment predates the guidance on grey belt, it is nonetheless an indication of the role of each settlement, especially regarding contribution towards the various purposes. Table 2.1 of the assessment indicated that Wargrave and Twyford were both regarded as large built up areas/towns for the assessment of contribution towards purposes A and B. This table in the assessment also indicated that both Twyford and Wargrave are historic towns for the consideration of contribution towards purpose D. Whilst the approach of the Green Belt Assessment is noted, as section 2.3 of it is clear, the categorisation of settlements for the study was informed by its context, which will have included its limited geographical area. With due regard to the modern PPG guidance, it is very likely that this study would need to have applied the purposes very differently today when compared to how it was applied in 2016. Notwithstanding, for the reasons we come onto below, the assessment did not identify this area to play a significant role in relation to any of the Green Belt purposes in any event.
- 6.17 Whilst recognising this important context, Table 2.2 of the Green Belt Assessment indicated that the areas covered by the designation would be appraised on the basis of three different levels of contribution. These were:

- a) The parcel makes a **Significant Contribution** to (a) Green Belt purpose(s) and release (either in whole or in part) is only likely to be considered where particular material considerations exist to justify this.
- b) The parcel makes a **Contribution** to (a) Green Belt purpose(s) and release (either in whole or in part) would need to be balanced against various material planning considerations,
- c) The parcel makes a **Limited Contribution** to (a) Green Belt purpose(s) indicating that release (either in whole or in part) could be considered in the context of other material considerations.

6.18 The application site south of 6 Harvest Drive lies within parcel W12a appraised in the Green Belt Assessment. The extent of parcel W12a is shown below and includes an extensive area to the east of the application site.



Extent of parcel W12a in the Council's Green Belt Assessment (application site edged in red)

6.19 The detailed assessment of wider parcel W12a in the Council's Green Belt Assessment is provided in the Table below.

Extract of detailed Green Belt Assessment for Parcel W12a

Green Belt Purpose	Additional Detailed Criteria for Part 2 Assessment (if relevant)	Assessment of Parcel W12a
To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up area	Would potential development represent an outward extension of the urban area, result in a physical connection between urban areas, or lead to the danger of a subsequent coalescence between such settlements? If released from Green Belt could enduring long-term settlement boundaries be established?	CONTRIBUTION Helps to contain Wargrave to the west

Green Belt Purpose	Additional Detailed Criteria for Part 2 Assessment (if relevant)	Assessment of Parcel W12a
	Does the parcel sensibly round-off an existing built-up area to help create good built form?	
To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another	Would potential development in the parcel appear to result in the merging of towns or compromise the separation of towns physically? Would potential development of the parcel be a significant step leading towards coalescence of two settlements?	LIMITED CONTRIBUTION No direct role given location away from large built up area
To preserve the setting and character of historic towns	What is the relationship of the land with the town? Is there a direct visual connection between the historic components (typically the core) and the Green Belt context? Does the parcel make a positive contribution to the setting of the historic town such as providing a gateway, viewpoint, or historic landscape?	LIMITED CONTRIBUTION No direct role given the location of the parcel relatively distant from historic towns

- 6.20 The Council's wider Green Belt Assessment indicates that Parcel W12a (that includes the application site) **did not** make a significant contribution towards any of the three relevant purposes for discounting its categorisation as grey belt. It is therefore clear from the Council's own study that the site can be regarded as grey belt, as it does not make a strong contribution to any of the 3 relevant purposes.
- 6.21 The clear conclusion that wider parcel did not have strong contribution towards the relevant Green Belt purposes also occurs when considered in the context of the application site itself, that forms a very limited part of the wider W12a parcel. The clear containment of the site by the substantial tree belt, especially to the south and west along School Hill confirms that it plays no more than moderate contribution towards the relevant purposes. Furthermore, the site would not reduce the separation distance between Twyford and Wargrave. This again further reinforces its absence of any strong contribution towards Green Belt purposes.
- 6.22 The application site forms a very minor part of the wider Green Belt in the Borough (it is under 0.5ha in size). Clearly, its development would not undermine the purposes of other land covered by this designation within the Borough. The scheme is therefore acceptable in the context of the first criterion.
- b) demonstrable need for the type of development.*
- 6.23 As indicated in section 5 of this statement, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five year supply of housing, with a maximum provision of 2.5 years. In this context, there is a clear and

pressing need for additional dwellings in the Borough. The scheme therefore accords with this criterion for the consideration of grey belt.

c) Is the site in a sustainable location

- 6.24 Paragraphs 2.5 to 2.9 and 2.13 of this statement refer to the sustainability credentials of the site. A site circa 170 metres to the north of the site has already been confirmed as lying in a sustainable location (defined by recent precedent). In addition, the site is immediately related to an infant and junior School and benefits from a continuous footway all the way through to Wargrave village centre, bus services and the train station. The site therefore offers a genuinely sustainable location with regard to non car modes of travel. The scheme therefore accords with this criterion for the consideration of grey belt.

d) Compliance with Golden Rules

- 6.25 As the site area is less than 0.5ha, the proposal does not entail major development. Consequently, the scheme does not need to show compliance with the Golden Rules.

Conclusion on Green Belt Matters

- 6.26 The application site fulfils all the criteria for grey belt as specified in the PPG. The proposal does not therefore represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 6.27 Paragraph 11 of the Framework states that proposals should only be refused if the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Decisions should also apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which can be achieved through three the dimensions defined in Paragraph 8 as: economic, social and environmental.
- 6.28 The economic role of the NPPF requires proposals to contribute to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy. The proposal would encourage development and associated economic growth with future occupants undoubtedly contributing to the local economy and continued viability of local services in Wargrave, such as the Infant and Junior Schools (that are known to have declining pupil numbers), shops on the High Street, and local bus services.
- 6.29 The social role of the NPPF requires planning to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and states that it should create a high-quality built environment. The proposal provides an opportunity to contribute to the housing stock of the settlement and the wider Borough at a time of substantial housing land supply deficit.
- 6.30 In terms of the environmental role, the NPPF requires that the natural, built and historic environment should be protected and enhanced and should mitigate against climate change. The proposal for residential use is considered to be compatible with the character of the surrounding area and will be well screened by existing vegetation. The potential for supplementary landscaping ensures there is no detrimental impact to the landscape. The proposal is therefore not considered to have any adverse effect on the natural environment and will form a logical infill scheme having regard to the settlement pattern and landscaping around the site.

- 6.31 In relation to access, the width, capacity and visibility available are to be considered at the technical details consent stage.
- 6.32 Suitable car parking provision is proposed appropriate to the development type and scale, including disabled parking provision, in line with local standards. Cycle parking is also proposed in line with local standards.
- 6.33 As discussed at paragraphs 2.5 to 2.9 and 2.13 of this statement, the site can be described as located in a sustainable and accessible location given it is located within an area that benefits from established public transport and community facilities.
- 6.34 The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is classified as being of low risk. Further, as a site of under 1 hectare in size there is no requirement for the provision of a Flood Risk Assessment. Further assessment would be made at the TDC matters stage.
- 6.35 In relation to the site itself, it is noted that the site is located adjacent to existing residential properties to its immediate north, with further homes to the west. The site is therefore well related to the established residential settlement.
- 6.36 The site is not of high environmental value. For the reasons discussed in detail earlier in this section and the supporting images earlier in section 2 of this statement, the site is enclosed by significant mature landscaping as well as being surrounded by residential development. Existing landscaping that can be strengthened through the site's development. The scheme therefore offers the ability to retain and enhance the design and landscape quality of the site.
- 6.37 Overall, it has been demonstrated that the proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of the scope of PiP (location, land use and amount). In respect of location, the site lies in a sustainable location surrounded by existing residential development.
- 6.38 The illustrative scheme includes dwellings in an arrangement which continues that established by neighbouring development. The scheme would be in keeping within the established pattern. Further, there remains the potential for greater landscaping within the site and along its eastern, southern and western boundaries. The proposed dwellings would become part of a wider established residential area which envelops the site. They would assimilate into the existing pattern of built form and have a clear visual connection to the existing built form. Through this development, the proposed density would be between 4 and 7 dwellings per hectare across the whole site. This low density is commensurate with the prevailing density found in the area.
- 6.39 In respect of land use, the proposed development would comprise a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3 new dwellings which will contribute towards the Borough's housing supply. Residential use in this location would not be out of keeping with the character of the area, which is characterised by residential development.

- 6.40 In relation to amount, the development of between 2 and 3 new dwellings is minor in terms of its scale and extent. It can be comfortably accommodated at the site without being disproportionate to the local context and average densities of this part of Wargrave. Further, the existing scale and pattern of development can be wholly respected.
- 6.41 The earlier part of this section has confirmed that the presumption in favour of sustainable development is engaged. As such, permission should only be refused if the adverse effects of doing so would outweigh the benefits, which, as has been discussed throughout this statement, they do not.

7. Summary & Conclusions

- 7.1 Section 2 of this statement summarises the site's existing use, development and character. It also refers to the site's self-contained nature surrounded by a mix of residential buildings and the site's location adjacent to an established residential area in a sustainable location.
- 7.2 Section 3 provides a summary of the proposed development that would enable between 2 and 3 new residential dwellings of a low to medium density nature to assimilate to its landscape and townscape setting. The scheme would respect and assimilate into the existing built form and building line located to the immediate north of the site.
- 7.3 Section 4 provides a summary of relevant planning policy context. Section 5 discusses the nature of the Council's housing land supply deficit position. Finally, section 6 considers the scheme within the context of the development plan and demonstrates that the non-compliance with the countryside policies that dictate the location of housing is outweighed by the benefits of the scheme in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF. Further, section 6 confirms that the scheme can be regarded as a grey belt proposal within the Green Belt and therefore does not represent inappropriate development. Such an approach is wholly consistent with established precedent discussed in section 2.
- 7.4 This proposal is for minor development (between 2 and 3 new residential dwellings) and therefore qualifies for a PiP, subject to consideration against the relevant policies of the Development Plan and other material considerations
- 7.5 In principle, the site represents an opportunity for a sustainable form of residential development that accords with the Framework as the site is not 'isolated' and instead is read within the context of the built-up area of Wargrave, where residential development would help maintain the vitality of local services and facilities. As indicated, the scheme also accords with the definition of grey belt and consequently is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
- 7.6 The Framework confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching economic, social and environmental objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. The development contributes sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and PiP can be granted accordingly.



woolf bond
planning

Correspondence address:

**The Mitfords
Basingstoke Road
Three Mile Cross
Reading
Berkshire
RG7 1AT**

The Vine
High Street
Stockbridge
Hampshire
SO20 6HF

Cheyenne House
West Street
Farnham
Surrey
GU9 7EQ

01189 884923 | office@woolfbond.co.uk | woolfbond.co.uk

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Woolf Bond Planning Ltd (trading as Woolf Bond Planning)
Registered office: Agriculture House, Stoneleigh Park, Kenilworth CV8 2TZ
Registered in England No. 15596600



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