

## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

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**APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN  
PRINCIPLE FOR RESIDENTIAL  
DEVELOPMENT FOR A MINIMUM AND  
MAXIMUM OF 9 DWELLINGS**

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**LAND TO THE REAR OF OAK TREE,  
WAINGLES ROAD,  
CHARVIL**

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Prepared by:

**Woolf Bond Planning Ltd.**

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**Woolf Bond Planning**  
Chartered Town Planning Consultants

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. This Statement has been prepared by Woolf Bond Planning in support of an application for Permission in Principle ('PiP') for the residential development of a minimum of 9 and maximum of 9 no. dwellings on land to the rear of Oak Tree, Waingels Road, Charvil.
- 1.2. Since 1st June 2018, it is possible to apply directly to the Local Planning Authority for Permission in Principle 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. 02-00
  - Existing Block Plan Drawing No. 02-01
  - Illustrative Sketch Plan-9 Dwellings Drawing No.SK01
  - Illustrative Wider Context Plan Drawing No. SK02
  - Illustrative Perceived Settlement Plan Drawing No. SK04
  - Sketch 05 Drawing No. SK05
- 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. SITE DESCRIPTION & PLANNING HISTORY**

### **Site Description**

- 2.1. The site comprises a series of paddocks and small fields to the rear of the dwelling known as Oak Tree. It is located within the Parish of Charvil, in designated countryside and near the southwestern border shared with Woodley Parish. Waingels Road runs in a general northeasterly manner past the site, connecting onto Park Lane to the east and Denmark Avenue to the west. Development is predominantly contained to the southern side of Waingels Road with the overarching character being defined by large dwellings set within spacious plots. The northern side of Waingels Road is characterised by strong tree planting with the playing fields of Waingels School just beyond. A satellite view of the site (NB: the red line boundary is approximate) is provided below.



**Aerial view of the site outlined in red and surroundings (Source: Google)**

- 2.2. The application site is 0.99 hectares in area and is irregular in shape and would be accessed direct via an existing access on its northern boundary.
- 2.3. A series of photographs are presented below to illustrate the existing site and its immediate surroundings.



**Photo showing view of site access**



**Photo showing the general condition of the site**



**Photo showing the general condition of the site**

2.4. The map below shows the site and existing built form in the vicinity of the site.



**Map of the site and surroundings with site outlined in red (Source: Wokingham Borough Council Planning Policy Mapping)**

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- 2.5. The officer report for nearby application 230113<sup>1</sup> identifies Charvil as falling within designated countryside. Whilst within designated countryside, the Site also benefits from enclosure by existing features, especially neighbouring dwellings fronting onto Waingels Road. Consequently, the scheme will be seen in the context of this development which means that the site does not result in urban expansion but rather a logical infill.
- 2.6. Council mapping confirms that there are no statutorily or locally listed buildings on or near the application site. Furthermore, the site is not within a Conservation Area nor are there any Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or near the site.
- 2.7. The site is situated within flood zone 1, according to the Environment Agency flood maps, meaning a low probability of flooding. Additionally, Environment Agency mapping also confirms that the Site is not subject to flood risk from any other source.
- 2.8. Council mapping data also confirms that there are no TPO trees on or near the site.
- 2.9. The nearest bus stop is located on Tippings Lane, approximately a 10 minute walk from the site. The services available from this bus stop provide sustainable linkages to Reading (including the train station), Winnersh Triangle train station and the Select Car Leasing Stadium. As such, there is a realistic prospect that modes of travel, other than the private car, will be utilised by future residents. This was a view shared by the Planning Inspectorate when determining the Land off Waingels Road Appeal<sup>2</sup>, saying at paragraphs 6 & 7 of their decision:

**“Although the appeal site and the existing development along Waingels Road are physically separated from the main body of the residential area to the south-west, they are nonetheless geographically close to it. There is a footpath running past the site that provides good pedestrian access to both nearby settlements of Woodley and Charvil, which**

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<sup>1</sup> Approved in June 2023, Land South West Of Lakeside, Waingels Road, Charvil, RG10 0UA

<sup>2</sup> PINS Ref: APP/X0360/W/16/3154876

contain a range of shops and services. In addition, there are bus stops within walking distance of the site that provide access to these settlements. Moreover, the site is within reasonable cycling distance to the rail network, thereby offering opportunities to travel further afield through the use of sustainable transport modes.”

“Because of this, the occupants of the proposed dwelling would not be wholly reliant on the use of private motorised transport for most of their day-to-day needs. Moreover, the development would make a small contribution to supporting the vitality of the nearby shops and services. The site does not, therefore, occupy an isolated location and accords with the overall objectives of CS Policy CP11 and paragraph 55 of the Framework. The proposal would also be in broad accordance with the overall travel objectives of CS Policy CP1 and those of CS Policy CP6.” (our emphasis)

- 2.10. This view was adopted by Council officers when assessing application 230113 who said:

“opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions vary between urban and rural areas and there is a reasonable prospect that the occupiers would make some journeys by sustainable modes of travel, particularly in the summer months. Furthermore, the levels of accessibility for the residents of existing nearby properties and the future occupiers of the development would be similar. It is also to be noted that in the appeal decision APP/X0360/W/16/3154876 for the proposed erection of a detached dwelling at Land off Waingels Road, RG10 0UA (within 200m of the application site) the inspector considered the site to be reasonably sustainable and the occupants of the proposed dwelling would not be wholly reliant on the use of private motorised transport for most of their day-to-day needs. This is material consideration for the

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**current application. Consequently, no objection is raised in this instance on locational sustainability grounds”**

- 2.11. Given the firmly established precedent of locational sustainability set by the Planning Inspectorate and adopted by Council officers, to conclude otherwise in this instance would represent inconsistency in decision making. To assist this point, the below plan illustrates the location of the approved 2016 appeal site, the locally approved 2023 site and the subject application site. Whilst a new Local Plan is emerging, no development plan policy has changed during the period of the two approved applications and the subject one.



The image above shows the relationship of the application site (shaded red) to the established local and appeal precedent. Both locations are considered sustainable by the local authority (shaded yellow) and by the Planning Inspectorate (shaded blue) are located at the extremities of Waingels Road. As such, it can reasonably be considered that Waingels Road (including the subject site) in its entirety is a sustainable location.

- 2.12. The site is located within an area that benefits from established public transport and community facilities. The locality includes a scout hub, secondary school & college, and large public open spaces for the new dwellings. A further range of local facilities and services would be accessible in Woodley, located approximately 1Km to the west on Brecon Road. This settlement would be accessible by means other than the private car, namely a bus route but is also reasonable walking and cycling distance. These are shown on Sketch 05 (extract below):



Extract of Drawing Sketch 05

### **Planning History**

- 2.13. The Council's online database confirms that the site has only a single application in its planning history from pre-1998. Whilst the details of the application are not readily available it is considered that, due to the application's age, that it is of little consequence given the significant changes in the local and national planning landscape since 1998.

### **3. THE PROPOSAL**

- 3.1. The application is for Permission in Principle and is a proposal for a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 9 dwellings on this 0.99 hectare site.
- 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 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 rear of Oak Tree, Waingels Road, Charvil and the land use is for residential development. The proposal is for a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 9 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 technical details consent 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 to the north of the site.
- 3.5. The submitted Illustrative Proposed Site Layout Plan indicates how a scheme for a minimum and a maximum of 9 new dwellings can be accommodated on the site with their respective plots are 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.



### Illustrative Proposed Site Layout

- 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.

#### **4. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

##### Development Plan Policy

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

- Wokingham Core Strategy (adopted January 2010)
- Wokingham Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (adopted 2014)
- Joint Minerals & Waste Plan (adopted January 2023)

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)

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. However, it is appreciated that those it is subject to, being sited within and close to habitats suitable for protected species and mineral extraction, that warrant careful consideration (at the appropriate stage).

4.4. 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

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has been addressed in paragraph 2.9 to 2.12 above. It can be reasonably concluded that any forthcoming development will comply fully with Policy CP1.

4.5. 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

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 circa 10 dwellings per hectare is fully commensurate with the character of the area.

4.6. 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.

4.7. 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 occasions<sup>3</sup>. In any case, affordable housing is a matter for the technical detail stage and can be secured by legal agreement.

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<sup>3</sup> Pins ref: APP/X0360/W/23/3331651 + Pins Ref: APP/X0360/W/22/3300991 + PISN Ref: APP/X0360/W/19/3224032

- 4.8. 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 2.9 to 2.12 above, and the illustrative masterplan shows that each dwelling can facilitate sufficient on-plot parking provision. 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 a sufficiently accessible location to comply with Policy CP6.
- 4.9. 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 technical details consent 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.
- 4.10. 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 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 can currently only demonstrate a 1.7 year supply of housing land<sup>4</sup>. As such, the tilted balance is engaged and only very limited weight can be attributed to a technical conflict with Policy CP9.
- 4.11. 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

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<sup>4</sup> [Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31 March 2024 \(30<sup>th</sup> January 2025\)](#)

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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 Orchard Road Appeal<sup>5</sup>, 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)**

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**

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<sup>5</sup> PINS Ref: APP/X0360/W/24/3342812

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**Policy Framework (the Framework) and is not allocated as a  
Local Green Space.”**

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 Orchard Road site, the application site is not within a valued landscape, nor is it designated as a Local Green Space. Whilst it is acknowledged that the locality is proposed to form part of the River Loddon valued landscape under Local Plan Update Policy NE6, this plan is yet to be tested at examination. As such only very limited weight can be applied to this proposed designation. In any event, the site is an extremely small proportion of that proposed designation and contributes in no significant sense to its identification. That is due to the site being contained by existing built form and landscaped boundaries. Lastly, the site is not currently, nor is it proposed to be, Local Green Space.

Overall, it must be considered that the proposal would not contravene 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.

Wokingham managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Adopted 2014)

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

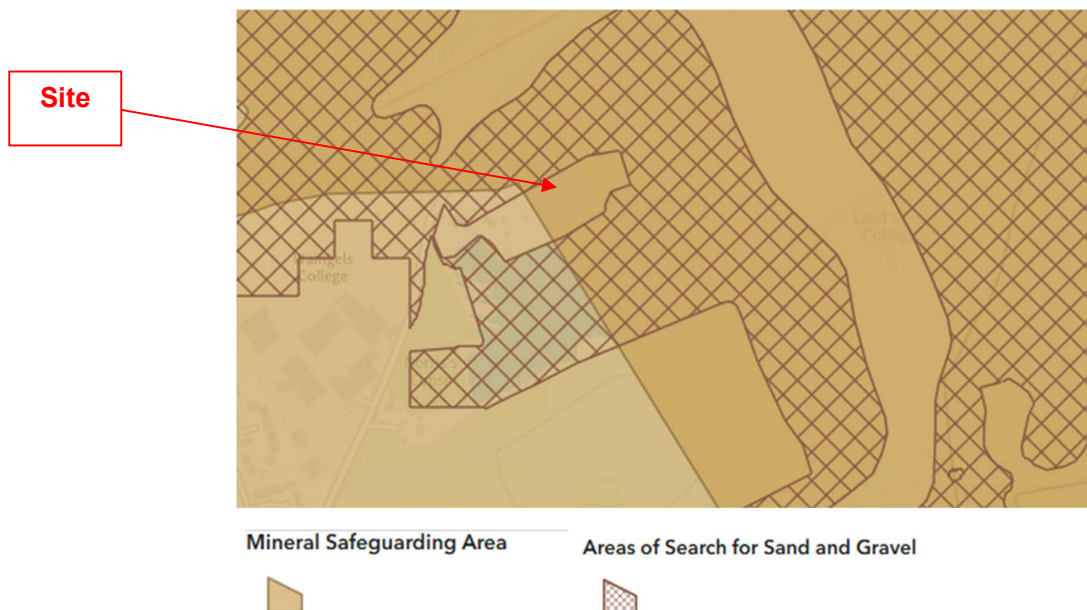
- CC01: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
- CC02: Development Limits
- CC09: Development and Flood Risk
- TB07: Internal Space Standards

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- 4.13. Matters relating to landscape impact, design and housing mix can be dealt with at Technical Details Consent Stage. The principle of development is dealt with below.
- 4.14. 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 1.7 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.
- 4.15. 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.
- 4.16. Policy CC09 pertains to flood risks that may affect development. Environment Agency (EA) mapping confirms that the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1. Additionally, EA mapping also confirms that the site is at very low risk of surface water flooding. As such, the principle of development on the application site is acceptable with regard to flood risk. A full drainage strategy is to be considered at the technical details consent stage.
- 4.17. 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 masterplan shows that 9 dwellings with floor spaces exceeding nationally described space standards (relative to their proposed size) can be comfortably accommodated on the site.

- 4.18. 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.

Central & Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals & Waste Plan

- 4.19. Wokingham Borough Council recently adopted the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals & Waste Plan (January 2023) and now forms part of the local development framework for Wokingham.
- 4.20. As evidenced by the supporting policies map, the application site falls within a mineral safeguarding area. This is highlighted in the extract below.



Extract from the Council's Interactive Policies Map

- 4.21. Policy M2 of the Minerals & Waste Plan states that:

**“non-minerals development in the Minerals Safeguarding Area may be permitted if it can be demonstrated...that the option of prior extraction has been considered as part of an application”**

- 4.22. The supporting text of this policy, at paragraph 6.40 of the Minerals & Waste Plan details how the assessment of impacts upon a Minerals Safeguarding Area will be undertaken:

**“In assessing development proposals within the MSA, the Central & Eastern Berkshire Authorities will have regard, amongst other things, to the size and nature of the proposed development, the availability of alternative locations and the need for phasing of the proposed development. Account will also be taken of the quantity and quality of the sand and gravel that could be recovered by prior extraction and the practicality and environmental impacts of doing so. A minimum plot size of 3 hectares will apply in the safeguarding process to avoid repeated consideration of prior extraction where this can be assumed to be uneconomic, due to the small size of the parcels of land involved. However, applications will be monitored to ensure a piecemeal approach is not taken which could accumulate to have an impact on resources.” (our emphasis)**

- 4.23. The application site measures approximately 0.99ha in size. As such, in accordance with the methodology detailed above, the site is too small to be considered economically viable for mineral extraction.
- 4.24. For this reason, it is considered that the proposal would not result in adverse impacts upon the Minerals Safeguarding Area.
- 4.25. No other policies within the Joint Minerals & Waste Plan are applicable to the application site or nature of development proposed.

National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') (Published December 2024)

- 4.26. The NPPF is a strong material consideration in assessing the application. The NPPF is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development,

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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:

- a) **An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth...**
- b) **A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, but ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations;**
- c) **An environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land...**

4.27. 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.

4.28. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 (d) notes that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or those most relevant are out of date, permission should be granted unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Footnote 8 of the NPPF states that, for applications pertaining to the provision of housing, the relevant development plan policies are out of date if the Local planning Authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. The latest position statement published by the Council states that only a 1.7 year housing land supply position can be demonstrated. As such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development (the tilted balance) is engaged.

4.29. 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'*.

- 4.30. 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.
- 4.31. 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.
- 4.32. 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.
- 4.33. 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.
- 4.34. 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.

Written Ministerial Statement (July 2024)

- 4.35. 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"**

- 4.36. Paragraph 6 of the NPPF confirms that Written Ministerial Statements 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 decision<sup>6</sup> 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)

- 4.37. The application must be considered in this positive policy context.

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<sup>6</sup> 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 statement<sup>7</sup> identifies that the Council can demonstrate a 1.7 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. The Council are currently consulting on a Local Plan Update. This Regulation 19 consultation concluded on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 with the Council now reviewing the representations made.
- 5.4. Given that the emerging local plan is yet to be tested at examination and could still be subject to modifications as a result of this process, it is unclear as to when this new local plan will be adopted. Until such a time as this new Local Plan is adopted, the Council are liable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply set against a housing need calculated using the standard method. At present this is 1,336 dwellings per annum. The latest published position statement is set against this requirement meaning the 1.7-year supply available represents a shortfall of 4,408 dwellings.
- 5.5. It is clear that a step change (and a significant one) in the approach to housing delivery is required to alleviate this pressing need.

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<sup>7</sup> Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31 march 2024 (Published 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025)

## **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 rear of Oak Tree, Waingels Road.
- 6.2. As clarified above, the scope for 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, 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.
- 6.8. 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.
- 6.9. The Site is located within the Parish of Charvil but outside the village settlement boundary as defined in the Council's Settlement Boundaries Review Topic Paper<sup>8</sup>. 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. The application site is well contained by vegetation (particularly along its eastern western and southern boundaries and by neighbouring development (to the north) and is not considered to adversely impact on the wider setting. Further, as discussed in section 2, the Council have approved applications in this countryside designation within the immediate vicinity of the site previously. Ultimately due to the Policy's age and the substantial housing land supply deficit, the policy has long since stopped being

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<sup>8</sup> [Wokingham Borough Council: Topic Paper – Settlement Boundaries Review](#)

appropriate for being attributed anything beyond limited weight in the decision making process.

- 6.10. 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 premise 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 Technical Details Consent Stage.
- 6.11. 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, eastern and western sides. Its southern edge is defined by a natural landscape barrier beyond which is a lake. This forms a logical rounding off to this residential area in an acknowledged sustainable location. This is helpfully identified on the Illustrative Wider Context Plan below.



**Illustrative Wider Context Plan**

- 6.12. 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 dimensions defined in Paragraph 8 as: economic, social and environmental.
- 6.13. 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 Woodley and Charvil, such as Waingels School, Charvil Country Park, and local bus services.
- 6.14. 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.
- 6.15. 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 in the established pattern of development along Waingels Road.
- 6.16. In relation to access, the width, capacity and visibility available are to be considered at the technical details consent stage.

- 6.17. 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.
- 6.18. As discussed at paragraph 2.9 to 2.12 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, as ratified by the Planning Inspectorate. The presence of further recent residential development (both constructed and approved) in the locality supports this conclusion.
- 6.19. The NPPF (2024) in paragraph 83 states that 'where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby'. This acknowledges that there may be the need to travel and it would be reasonable to accept the use of a private car in a village location (for some journeys).
- 6.20. There will be no 'severe' residual or cumulative traffic impact arising from the development proposals. The development proposal therefore meets local and national planning policy requirements, and there is no reason from a transport perspective for the planning application to be refused permission.
- 6.21. 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. It is anticipated that an improvement in surface water run-off can be achieved through the implementation of on-plot SuDS features and enhanced green landscaping. Further assessment would be made at the technical consent matters stage.
- 6.22. 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 in all directions. The site is therefore not located far away from other places or buildings given the existence of established residential and other buildings in the immediate vicinity.

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- 6.23. 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.
- 6.24. 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.
- 6.25. 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 and building line of development associated with Waingels Road. Further, there remains the potential for greater landscaping within the site and along its northern boundary. 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 circa 10 dwellings per hectare across the whole site. This low density is commensurate with the prevailing density found in the area.
- 6.26. In respect of land use, the proposed development would comprise a minimum and a maximum of 9 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.
- 6.27. In relation to amount, the development of 9 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 Charvil. Further, the existing scale and pattern of development in particular defined by development along Waingels Road can be wholly respected.

### Summary: Development Plan Policy

- 6.28. 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.

### National Planning Policy Considerations

- 6.29. As demonstrated throughout this statement, the proposal stands to benefit from the presumption In Favour of Sustainable Development as prescribed by Paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF.
- 6.30. The merits and potential impacts of the application scheme are now assessed in relation to the three sustainability tests set out at paragraph 8 of the NPPF. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states (amongst other things) that the assessment of the sustainability roles should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. In accordance with the guidance at paragraph 8 of the NPPF, a combined analysis in relation to the sustainability role is set out below. The analysis is then summarised in tabulated form by breaking down the individual components of economic, social and environmental matters to assist in the consideration of the overall planning balance.

### *Economic Considerations*

- 6.31. The principal economic benefits, which are reinforced by the current economic challenges facing the country, are summarised below.
- 1) Increased house building that in turn drives economic growth further and faster than any industry. In this regard the proposals will be contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is being made available in the right place in a site that is not remote and at the right time to support growth.
  - 2) Comprises a small site whereby NPPF paragraph 73 states that such sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly.

- 3) For the economy to function, sufficient housing is required in the right locations and at the right time. As established by the precedent referenced in section 2, this site is accessible to the many services in the large town of Woodley by means other than the private car and is therefore a sustainable location.
- 4) Create or support direct, indirect and induced jobs from the homes built on the site<sup>9</sup>.
- 5) Helping to deliver a significant boost to the local economy through 'first occupation' expenditure of up to £10,924<sup>10</sup>. This is expenditure on new furniture and other household goods that residents spend as 'one-offs' when moving into a new home.
- 6) In terms of household expenditure, data from ONS Family Expenditure Survey 2021-23<sup>11</sup> shows that the 'average UK household spend' is £526.10 per week (Table A33) (or £27,357.20 per year), whereas in South East England it is 16.4% higher than the UK average (Table A33). This means average weekly spend per household is £612.40 (or £31,844.80 per annum). For the application scheme, the total gross expenditure is estimated to be up to £286,603.20 annually to the economy. A proportion of this household expenditure is anticipated to be spent in local shops and services and will help sustain the existing services across Wokingham Borough including in Woodley, Charvil and the surrounding villages. The expenditure will include that a proportion of that spent on areas including food & non-alcoholic drinks (£70.90 per week); alcoholic drinks (£12.90 per week); recreation and culture (£69.30 per week), household goods and services (£39) and miscellaneous goods and service i.e. hairdressing & beauty treatments (£47 per

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<sup>9</sup> See page 13 of the Homes Builders Federation "Economic Footprint of UK Housebuilding" (July 2018)  
- <https://www.hbf.co.uk/news/economic-footprint-uk-house-building-july-2018/>

<sup>10</sup> Research carried out by OnePoll on behalf of Barratt Homes (August 2014;  
<https://www.barratthomes.co.uk/the-buying-process/home-buying-advice/>) indicates an average spend of £5,462 per dwelling.

<sup>11</sup> [Family spending workbook 3: expenditure by region - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#).

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week).<sup>12</sup> Given the current economic challenges facing the UK these are significant economic benefits.

- 7) Allowing the application would secure CIL contributions for community facilities. This local infrastructure provision will support the local community and also generates economic activity including jobs.
- 8) Furthermore, as the application site is located in designated rural area, in accordance with paragraph 65 of the NPPF, an affordable housing contribution can be sought even if the final quantum of development is for 5 dwellings or fewer.

6.32. By providing land of the right type, in the right place, and at the right time to support economic growth, the development of 9 no. dwellings on the application site satisfies the objectives at paragraph 8 of the NPPF and assists in the aims of the NPPF in helping to build a strong and competitive economy (NPPF, paras 85-87).

6.33. In accordance with the provisions at paragraph 85 of the NPPF, the temporary and more permanent economic benefits associated with the residential development, attract **moderate to significant weight** respectively in the planning balance.

#### *Social Considerations*

6.34. The principal benefits that arise from the proposal in respect of the **social role** relate to helping to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, including by providing high-quality housing required to meet identified needs in open market and affordable sectors. The benefits are:

- 1) The provision of 9 new homes in the Borough in a sustainable location.
- 2) The application scheme is immediately available and can deliver much needed housing during the early part of the five year housing land supply

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<sup>12</sup> Figures based upon SE Regional data in Table A33

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period. Consistent with NPPF paragraph 73, such sites can make an “important contribution” to meeting the housing requirement in an area.

- 3) Meeting general housing needs is a benefit, consistent with the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.
- 4) The increase in supply of new open market housing will improve affordability ratios, thereby improving the ability of the population to own their own home and enhance how society and the economy function.
- 5) The proposal can provide a range of housing types and sizes, and a mix that will enable a mixed community to develop.
- 6) The scheme would enable the delivery of high-quality residential accommodation in a landscaped setting with appropriate garden and parking provision.

6.35. In determining the weight to be attached to the contribution of the market housing, Ministerial speeches and Government commissioned reports stretching back several years set out in stark relief the scale of the housing crisis. The consequences of this crisis are that **“...ordinary families, young people starting out in life and many others struggling to secure that most basic of human needs – a place to call their own – and being denied the opportunities that come with it”<sup>13</sup>**.

6.36. Substantial weight should be attached to the provision of new homes. The emerging Local Plan Update represents the most up-to-date positions on housing need and give a strong indication of the likely direction of travel – and the scale of the challenge faced by Wokingham Borough. These facts reinforce the need for more homes in the Borough. Considering the above, substantial weight should be attached to the contribution of this scheme to the provision of housing given the pressing and evidenced need.

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<sup>13</sup> Rt. Honorable James Brokenshire Secretary of State, MHCLG Local Government Association Annual Conference 2018 Speech.

- 6.37. It should be noted also that, irrespective of the five year housing land supply deficit in Wokingham Borough, the policy objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, as articulated explicitly in NPPF paragraph 61, does not cease to apply in the event of a supply of housing in excess of five years.<sup>14</sup>.
- 6.38. Overall, the social benefits of the scheme attract **substantial weight** in the overall planning balance.

*Environmental Considerations*

- 6.39. In terms of the environmental role, the scheme would deliver a high-quality residential environment, making the best use of an underused parcel of land in a manner commensurate and respectful to its setting and locality. The benefits are:

- 1) The provision of a well designed, low to medium density design in keeping with the site's surroundings and providing a high quality layout.
- 2) The site presently offers a very limited landscape contribution by virtue of its enclosure. By comparison, the proposal can enables a substantial amount of boundary landscape planting of a native form and additional containment of the site.

Overall, the environmental benefits of the scheme attract **substantial weight** in the overall planning balance.

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<sup>14</sup> Crondall Parish Council v SOSHCLG [2019]CO/3900/2018 EWHC1211(Admin) paragraph 108

6.40. These sustainable considerations are summarised in the table below.

| <b>Economic Considerations</b>                                                                                        | <b>Weighting</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Increased house building to meet needs and drive economic activity and growth                                         | Significant      |
| Direct and indirect jobs from homes being built on site                                                               | Significant      |
| GVA per annum from construction phase                                                                                 | Significant      |
| One off first occupation expenditure                                                                                  | Significant      |
| Increased household expenditure                                                                                       | Significant      |
| CIL contributions                                                                                                     | Moderate         |
|                                                                                                                       |                  |
| <b>Social Considerations</b>                                                                                          |                  |
| Meeting an established housing need                                                                                   | Significant      |
| Delivering a housing scheme that is immediately available in the early part of a five year housing land supply period | Significant      |
| Delivering new housing to improve affordability ratios in an area of high house prices                                | Significant      |
| Improving the ability of the population to own their own home and enhance how society and the economy function        | Significant      |
| Significantly boosting the supply of new homes consistent with Government policy                                      | Significant      |
| Providing a range of housing types,sizes and mix in response to identified local needs                                | Significant      |
| Delivering high-quality residential accommodation in a landscaped setting                                             | Moderate         |
|                                                                                                                       |                  |
| <b>Environmental Considerations</b>                                                                                   |                  |
| An enhancement to the design quality of the area                                                                      | Significant      |
| An improved contribution to the landscape quality of the area                                                         | Significant      |

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| The efficient development of a site | Significant |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|

- 6.41. Overall, the proposal represents sustainable development. Further, it is consistent with many sections of the NPPF including chapter 5 that seeks the delivery of housing; section 11 that seeks effective use of land; section 12 that encourages high quality design; and section 15 that encourages biodiversity gain and improvements to the quality of the landscape.
- 6.42. As the analysis undertaken throughout this statement has demonstrated, whilst the application site is sited outside defined settlement boundaries, the benefits of the proposed scheme clearly outweigh the benefits. In this regard the application scheme represents sustainable development as prescribed by paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF such that planning permission should be granted on this basis.

#### Summary: Principle of Development

- 6.43. The site is suitable for residential development for the following reasons:

#### *Location*

- 6.44. The site is within the Parish of Charvil and is designated countryside land. Despite its countryside designation, the site is part of a built-up, residential area, being visually and physically well-contained by the rest of the development fronting onto Waingels Road. As such, it is considered that the site is sustainably located. Such a view has been taken by the Planning Inspectorate as discussed in paragraphs 2.9 to 2.12 of this statement.
- 6.45. Future residents of the proposed dwellings would benefit from the close proximity to local services and facilities by foot and by public transport (nearest bus stop at Tippings Lane – approx. 10-min walk from the site). The proposed development would help sustain local services and facilities within Woodley and Charvil, as well as nearby settlements accessible by public transport, in accordance with paragraph 83 of the Framework. Its relationship to Waingels Road ensures it will form a pattern of development compatible with the site's surroundings.

- 6.48. The location of the residential development would be situated within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding). Additionally, Environment Agency mapping confirms that the site is not at risk of flooding from any other source.
- 6.49. The redevelopment of this unkempt site offers a real opportunity to enhance the landscape value of the area.
- 6.50. The site is well-screened by existing vegetation to the west, south and east, which will provide good levels of amenity and screening for neighbours and future occupiers.

#### *Land Use*

- 6.51. The residential land use is compatible with the predominate character and land use along Waingels Road.
- 6.52. The residential land use is a public benefit and would contribute towards meeting the housing need and accords with the Government's objective of boosting the supply of housing.

#### *Amount of Development*

- 6.53. Spatially, the plot is sufficient in size with enough land to accommodate the erection of 9 no. new dwellings in keeping with the character and appearance of the surroundings. The ability to respect the existing pattern and built form of development surrounding the site is illustrated on the Illustrative Layout Plans.

## **7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

- 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 and other buildings and the site's location as part of the residential area.
- 7.2. Section 3 provides a summary of the proposed development that would enable 9 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 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. Such an approach is wholly consistent with established precedent discussed in section 2.
- 7.4. This proposal is for minor development (9 no. 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 Waingels Road, where residential development would help maintain the vitality of local services and facilities.
- 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 Development Plan and there is a presumption accordingly.

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