



## PLANNING STATEMENT

PLANNING IN PRINCIPLE APPLICATION FOR A PHASED APPLICATION FOR UP  
TO 6 SERVICED PLOTS FOR CUSTOM BUILD HOUSING

LAND ADJACENT TO HUCKLEBURY

WAINGELS ROAD

CHARVIL

## **Contents**

1. INTRODUCTION
2. SITE DESCRIPTION AND PLANNING HISTORY
3. THE PROPOSAL
4. LOCAL PLANNING POLICY
5. NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY
6. THE NEED FOR CUSTOM BUILD HOUSING IN THE BOROUGH
7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The statement has been submitted in support of a planning in principle ('PIP') for a phased application for a maximum of 6 serviced plots for detached custom build dwellings, on land adjacent to Hucklebury, Waingels road, Charvil
- 1.2 Planning permission applications allow for applicants to submit applications to the local authority to determine if the principle of development is acceptable prior to submitting additional technical information for approval.
- 1.3 This application is supported by a planning supporting statement, 1:1250 location plan marked in red, and a indicative layout and proposed phasing plan.

## **2. Site description and planning history at the application site**

- 2.1 The application is site is just over 1 acre in size , is largely flat and
- 2.2 The site is currently a mixed use of residential garden and equestrian land.
- 2.3 There was a previous application for single custom build serviced plot in 2024, that was refused by the council, and then the planning inspectorate

## **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1 The application proposed is a planning in principle a phased application for up to 6 serviced plots on a site just over 1 acre.
- 3.2 The application requirements are limited to location, and the proposed maximum amount of dwellings. Although a proposed layout has been provided for up to 6 dwellings this is purely for indicative purposes, and all highways, drainage, ecology and dwelling designs will come as part of a detailed matters if this application is approved.

3.3 This is proposed as a phased application due to the requirements of this being a proposal for serviced plots for custom build purposes and to be able to meet the individual requirements of the community infrastructure levy.

3.4 The proposal for up to 6 dwellings is on the lower end of the dwellings per hectare, but due to the rural location, and low density housing, it is deemed more sympathetic to the character of the area.

#### **4. local planning policy requirements relevant to this application**

##### **4.1 Wokingham Council policy CP1**

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). It can be reasonably concluded that any forthcoming development will comply fully with Policy CP1.

##### **4.2 Wokingham Council policy CP3**

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 indicative 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 single or two Storey scale in a traditional form with large garden areas can be provided.

#### 4.3 Wokingham Council policy CP4

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.

#### 4.4 Wokingham Council policy CP5

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, albeit this application is supported with a legal agreement that limits the consent to Serviced plots for custom build only purposes.

#### 4.5 Wokingham Council Policy CP6

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. The indicative plan 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.

#### 4.6 Wokingham Council Policy CP7

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 the proposed scheme for up to 6 individual serviced plots that will be under 1 acre in size, there will be no requirement to meet the 10% BNG increase.

#### 4.7 Wokingham Council policy CP9

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.

#### 4.8 Wokingham Council Policy CP11

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

It is clear from the provided aerial imagery and submitted location plan 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.

## 5. Wokingham managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Adopted 2014)

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

5.1 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.

5.2 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

5.3 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.

5.4 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

5.5 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.

5.6 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.

## **6. National planning policy framework (NPPF)**

6.1 Paragraph 11 of the NPPF establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, requiring planning permission to be granted where local plans are out-of-date, unless adverse impacts significantly outweigh the benefits.

Overview Paragraph 11 is a central element of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and plays a pivotal role in decision-making for planning applications in England. It sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, meaning that development proposals should generally be approved unless there are strong reasons not to do so. This presumption is particularly important when local development plans are out-of-date or when local authorities cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

6.2 Paragraph 63 highlights the importance of establishing need and to plan for people wishing to build their own home. The need is created by the self-build register to which the LA need within 3 years of the base period to supply enough plots to meet the demand. West Berkshire has recently admitted to significantly failing to supply enough plots to meet the demand of the register and that of the self-build and custom build act 2015.

6.3 Paragraph 73, talks about the importance of small to medium sites, and how they can make an important contribution to the housing requirement in the area, and how opportunities should be sought to bring forward small sites, especially for self build and custom build housing.

## **7 The Need for serviced for plots for Custom build dwellings**

7.3 The need is determined by Wokingham councils self-Build register that has previously been agreed by Wokingham Council that they have not been able to provide enough serviced plots to meet the demand, and therefore there is a significant shortage of opportunities for self-builders to secure serviced plots against the number of submissions on the self-build register.

8.0 Recently approved scheme in close proximity to the application.

8.1 In May 2025 Wokingham council approved a planning in principle application for up to 9 dwellings on land which adjoins the application site, which falls under application ref number 250407.

8.2 In the planning committee report stated that ;

“in recognising paragraph 11d of the NPPF and the tilted balance is engaged due to the councils failure to meet its required housing land supply, and the provision would perform a positive social, economic and environmental role”

“in weighing up the conflict with the development plan in principle and the limited landscape harm, it has been concluded that those adverse impacts would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits of the scheme when assessed against the policies in the framework when taken as a whole. This permission in principle application is therefore recommended for approval”

“In terms of locational sustainability, officers do not deem this site an unsustainable location for up to an additional 9 dwellings. These factors moderate any in principle conflict with the local plan for development in this location.”

“In addition, The council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing and therefore the tilted balance and presumption of sustainable development is engaged.

## 7.0 Summary and Conclusions

- This application promotes the using a site for 100% custom build housing.
- This application conforms to the local planning policies in terms of providing a lower density scheme, which is more sensitive to the local character area
- Policy H6 of the proposed new local plan update 2023-2040 supports the 100% custom build schemes, which is being promoted within this application.
- H6 of the proposed new local plan update 2023-2040 highlights the councils willingness to work with developers and land owners to help meet and support the needs of the councils self- build register and that The council recognises that a development may need to be phased differently to incorporate self-build plots. The plot provider will need to work with the council to progress the most appropriate way for the proposed sites, taking reasonable account of the location of the plots within the site and the phasing of the surrounding development.
- NPPF supports the need to provide for serviced plots to meet local demand via self-build registers.
- Wokingham Council has previously admitted to falling significantly short in providing enough serviced plots to meet the demand of the self- build register.
- The NPPF stresses the need to support Small to medium sized sites to help bolster housing supply especially where it can help deliver for the self and custom build sector.
- A recent appeal highlighted that due to the councils failings to meet the demand of the register, and fall significantly short of the targets set by the self-build register paragraph 11 (d) should be engaged when determining an application for self and custom build.

This application provides much needed serviced plots for up to 6 custom build dwellings on land which is deemed as per the NPPF to be previously developed land, and although there would still be a significant shortfall against the demand of the register, this proposal would go some way towards addressing this significant need for serviced plots within Wokingham Council