

PLANNING STATEMENT

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION IN
PRINCIPLE FOR RESIDENTIAL
DEVELOPMENT OF A MINIMUM OF TWO
AND MAXIMUM OF FOUR DWELLINGS

LAND TO THE NORTH OF
6 WOODLANDS ROAD
WOODLEY
READING
RG5 3HJ

Prepared by:

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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 two and a maximum of four dwellings on land to the north of 6 Woodlands Road, Woodley, Reading, RG5 3HJ.
- 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:
 - This supporting statement
 - Application form
 - Drawing no.842/02-00 Rev C: Location Plan
 - Drawing no.842/02-01 Rev B: Existing Block Plan
 - Drawing no.842/02-10 Rev B: Illustrative Proposed Site Plan
- 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 main part of the site comprises a rectangle of land of around 400 square metres on the west side of Lytham Road, directly south of Nos.1 / 3 Lytham Road, and to north & rear of Nos. 4 and 6 Woodland Avenue in Woodley. Directly to the east is Woodley town centre (on the opposite side of Lytham Road) with residential dwellings / development to the north, west and south.
- 2.2. The site also includes a strip for access along the fronts of nos.1 to 11 (even) Lytham Road (bringing the total site area to 724sqm). This will allow the development to make use of the existing access to nos.1 to 11 (even) Lytham Road. This established access has good visibility in both directions.



Location Plan (extract)



Site to the south of Nos. 1 / 3 Lytham Road

- 2.3. The site is separated from Nos. 4 & 6 Woodland Avenue (to the south) by a fence.



Fence on the south side of the site

- 2.4. In addition to the site's close proximity to Woodley Town Centre Shopping Precinct (the centre of which is only around 150m from the site) there are bus stops around 300m away on Beachwood Avenue (to the north). These provide frequent services to Central Reading, with other services to Wokingham and Maidenhead Town Centres. The site is therefore in a highly sustainable location in terms of access to shops, services and public transport. The below image confirms the site's proximity to the town centre including via a pedestrian access.



Pedestrian access from Lytham Road to the Shopping Precinct

- 2.5. Wokingham Council's online 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.
- 2.6. Council mapping does show that there are three trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) close to the site's boundary. A tree survey and tree protection plan will therefore be included with the technical details stage application.



TPO trees near the site

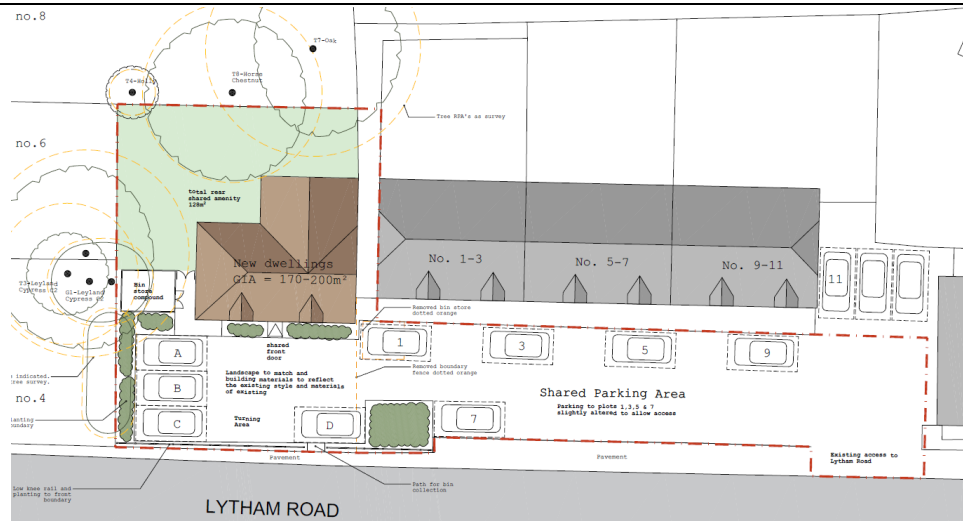
- 2.7. The site is situated within Flood Zone 1, according to the Environment Agency flood maps, meaning a low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea.

Planning History

- 2.8. The Council's online database shows two applications on this site.
- 2.9. Application reference number: 232172 was for the *proposed "insertion of 1 no. front dormer and 1 no. side dormer"* at No.6 Woodlands Avenue, and was approved 30th October 2023. Given the clear separation of the site from the curtilage of No.6 Woodlands Avenue, this application appears to be imprecise in implying that part of the site falls within the curtilage of No.6. Otherwise, this application is not particularly relevant to the subject PiP application.
- 2.10. An earlier application reference number: 222354 was an *"Outline application with some matters reserved for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling with access off Lytham Road. (Access to be considered.)"* This application was withdrawn and therefore, while it was for residential development on the same parcel of land, it is not particularly informative in relation to this PiP application.

3. THE PROPOSAL

- 3.1. The application is for Permission in Principle and is a proposal for a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 dwellings (including demolition of an existing bin store).
- 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, trees, 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 in 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 north of 6 Woodlands Road, Woodley, and the land use is for residential development. The proposal is for a minimum of two and a maximum of four 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 be in the form of a block of between two and four flats, with ridge and eaves heights similar to neighbouring properties to the north of the site.



Illustrative Proposed Site Layout (extract)

- 3.5. For clarity, this illustrative drawing is provided for contextual purposes only. The only determining drawing relevant to the application is the submitted Location Plan. The illustrative Layout Plan however does confirm some further points which include the provision of a well sized west and south facing amenity area, a scheme that respects the prevailing building line on Lytham Road and the provision of 4 parking spaces in front of the properties. It also illustrates the necessary removal of the adjacent bin store and associated re-landscaping. Finally, an appropriate flank to rear relationship can be secured with the properties to the south located on Woodlands Road.

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
- 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 free of policy designation restrictions. The site is also adjacent to the Woodley town centre, which lies directly to the east of the site on the opposite side of Lytham Road.
- 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 and 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 paragraph 2.4, above. It can be reasonably concluded that any forthcoming development will comply fully with Policy CP1.

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- 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
- 4.6. 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 surroundings can be achieved on the site without any adverse effects upon the built or natural environments in accordance with this policy.
- 4.7. 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.
- 4.8. 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. In any case, affordable housing is a matter for the technical detail stage and can be secured by legal agreement.
- 4.9. 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. Parking provision is a matter for the technical details consent stage. Locational sustainability has been positively addressed in paragraph 2.4 above.

¹ PINS Ref: APP/X0360/W/23/3331651 + PINS Ref: APP/X0360/W/22/3300991 & PINS Ref: APP/X0360/W/19/3224032

- 4.10. 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.
- 4.11. 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. It identifies Woodley as one of several major development locations and therefore offers clear support for the principle of additional housing development in this location.

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
 - CC09: Development and Flood Risk
 - TB04: Development in vicinity of Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE), Burghfield
 - TB07: Internal Space Standards
- 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 further 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. However, in this

instance the relevant policies actively encourage additional development in Woodley in any event.

- 4.15. Policy CC02 supplements Policies CP9 of the Core Strategy by defining settlement boundaries and other acceptable locations for development. The proposed development is well within the settlement boundary and indeed close to the town centre.
- 4.16. Policy CC09 pertains to flood risks that may affect development. Environment Agency mapping confirms that the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1.
- 4.17. The applicant is also aware that the Council's parking standards indicate that as many as 4 parking spaces could be required for 4 flats. Again, this matter can be addressed at the technical details consent stage and provision for 4 spaces is available.
- 4.18. TB04 is identified on the Council's interactive mapping as being relevant because the site is within 12km of Atomic Weapons Establishment Burghfield. However, this 12km zone is a consultation zone and the site is well outside the 5km radius at which the TB04 indicates the AWE would become a potential constraint on development. (For the avoidance of doubt the site is also outside the AWE Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ), within which development would also be constrained.)
- 4.19. 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 up to 4 dwellings with floor spaces exceeding nationally described space standards (relative to their proposed size) can be comfortably accommodated on the site.
- 4.20. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan contains numerous other policies pertaining to design, layout, trees, ecology, amenity and energy efficiency which are not applicable at this stage.

Central & Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals & Waste Plan

- 4.21. 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.
- 4.22. The supporting policies map shows that the application site falls within a Sharp Sand and Gravel Mineral Safeguarding Area.
- 4.23. 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”

- 4.24. 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.” (emphasis added)**

- 4.25. The application site measures 724 square metres. As such, in accordance with the methodology detailed above, the site is too small to be considered economically viable for mineral extraction. For this reason, the proposal would not result in adverse impacts upon the Minerals Safeguarding Area. 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, with minor revisions February 2025)

- 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, 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'*. (emphasis added)
- 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 decision² in which the Inspector, at paragraph 4, said:

² PINS Ref: APP/R0660/W/24/3339806

“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 very positive policy context.

5. THE NEED FOR HOUSING IN THE BOROUGH

- 5.1. The Council's latest published housing land supply position statement³ 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 emerging Wokingham Local Plan Update has been submitted for Examination, however it the process has already fallen behind the schedule set out in the latest Local Development Scheme. As a result, the anticipated adoption of the Local Plan in May 2026 now looks unlikely.
- 5.4. 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.

³ Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement at 31 March 2024 (Published 30th 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 north of 6 Woodlands Road, Woodley.
- 6.2. As set out 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. The Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and, 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.
- 6.4. There are no policies in the Development Plan, or NPPF that provide a clear reason for refusing permission in principle. The application site is in a highly sustainable location, adjacent to Woodley Town Centre and with excellent public transport connections.
- 6.5. 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.
- 6.6. 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.
- 6.7. 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 Woodley Town Centre and local bus services.

- 6.8. 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 Woodley and the wider Borough at a time of substantial housing land supply deficit.
- 6.9. 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 partially screened by existing vegetation. Subject to the TDC stage and the delivery of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, the proposal is therefore not considered likely to have any adverse effect on the natural environment.
- 6.10. In relation to access; the width, capacity, and visibility available are to be considered at the technical details consent stage. Car parking and cycle parking will also be addressed at that stage.
- 6.11. As discussed at paragraph 2.4 of this statement, the site can be described as located in a highly sustainable and accessible location given its proximity to Woodley Town Centre and a choice of frequent bus services.
- 6.12. 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.
- 6.13. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is therefore classified as being of low risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.
- 6.14. The site is not of high environmental value. As discussed, the site is bound on three sides by residential development, with Woodley Town Centre being to the east on the opposite side of Lytham Road (on the fourth side).

- 6.15. Overall, it has been demonstrated that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the scope of PiP (location, land use and amount).
- 6.16. In respect of land use, the proposed development would comprise a minimum of two and a maximum of four new dwellings which will contribute towards the Borough's housing supply. Residential use in this location would wholly in keeping with the character of the area, which is characterised by urban residential development.
- 6.17. In relation to amount, the development of a maximum four new dwellings is minor in terms of its scale and extent. It can be comfortably accommodated at the site without being disproportionate to the character of the local area. Further, the existing scale and pattern of development along Lytham Road can be respected.

Summary: Development Plan Policy

- 6.18. 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

- 6.19. 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.
- 6.20. 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

6.21. 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 quickly.
- 3) For the economy to function, sufficient housing is required in the right locations and at the right time. This site is accessible to the many services in the town of Woodley and is therefore a highly sustainable location.
- 4) Create or support direct, indirect and induced jobs from the homes built on the site⁴.
- 5) Helping to deliver a significant boost to the local economy through ‘first occupation’ expenditure of up to £30,252⁵. 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 2021-23⁶ shows that the ‘average UK household spend’ is

⁴ See page 8 of the Homes Builders Federation/ “Economic Footprint of UK Housebuilding” (Sept 2024)- https://www.hbf.co.uk/documents/13965/The_Economic_Footprint_of_Home_Building_in_England_and_Wales_report_-_September_2024_v.pdf

⁵ Research carried out by OnePoll on behalf of Barratt Homes (August 2014) indicates an average spend of £5,462 per dwelling – updated to May 2025 via the Bank of England Inflation Calculator this equates to £7,563 per dwelling.

⁶ Family spending workbook 3: expenditure by region - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk).

£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 £127,379 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, primarily in Woodley. 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 week).⁷ 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.

6.22. By providing land of the right type, in the right place, and at the right time to support economic growth, the development of up to four 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).

6.23. 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

6.24. 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

⁷ Figures based upon SE Regional data in Table A33

by providing high-quality housing required to meet identified needs. The benefits are:

- 1) The provision of up to four 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 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 scheme would enable the delivery of high-quality residential accommodation in a landscaped setting with appropriate garden and parking provision.
- 6) These will be smaller dwellings that will help people get on the housing ladder, or alternatively help older people downsize, thereby freeing up family sized homes.

6.25. 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**”⁸.

⁸ Rt. Honorable James Brokenshire Secretary of State, MHCLG Local Government Association Annual Conference 2018 Speech.

- 6.26. 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.
- 6.27. 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 years⁹.
- 6.28. Overall, the social benefits of the scheme attract **substantial weight** in the overall planning balance.

Environmental Considerations

- 6.29. In terms of the environmental role, the scheme would deliver a high-quality residential environment, making the best use of a vacant parcel of land in a manner commensurate and respectful to its setting and location adjacent to the town centre. The benefits are:

- 1) The provision of a well-designed, high-density design in keeping with the site's surroundings and providing a high-quality layout.
- 2) Delivery of new housing in a highly sustainable edge-of-centre location, where reliance on private cars will be minimised.

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

⁹ Crondall Parish Council v SOSHCLG [2019]CO/3900/2018 EWHC1211(Admin) paragraph 108

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

Economic Considerations	Weighting
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
Social Considerations	
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
Environmental Considerations	
Development in a highly sustainable edge-of-centre location	Significant
An enhancement to the design quality of the area	Significant
The efficient development of a currently disused site	Significant

6.31. 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.

- 6.32. As the analysis undertaken throughout this statement has demonstrated, whilst the application site is in a highly sustainable edge of town centre location, such that 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

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

Location

- 6.34. The site is within the urban area of Woodley, in close proximity to the Town Centre. Future residents of the proposed dwellings would benefit from the close proximity of local job opportunities, services, and facilities accessible by foot and by public transport (nearest bus stops are on Beechwood Avenue, less than five minutes' walk from the site). The proposed development would help sustain local services and facilities within Woodley, in accordance with paragraph 83 of the Framework. Its relationship to existing dwellings on Lytham Road ensures it will form a pattern of development compatible with the site's surroundings.
- 6.35. The location of the residential development would be situated within Flood Zone 1 (low probability of flooding from rivers or the sea).
- 6.36. The redevelopment of this unkempt site offers a real opportunity to delivery sustainable housing development in a location with a clear shortfall in housing land supply.
- 6.37. The site is screened by existing vegetation to the south and west, while there are no habitable room windows on the end elevation of No.1 Lytham Road. This will provide good levels of amenity and screening for neighbours and future

occupiers (which can be confirmed at the TDC stage).

Land Use

- 6.38. The residential land use is compatible with the predominate character and land use along Lytham Road.
- 6.39. 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

- 6.40. Spatially, the plot is sufficient in size with enough land to accommodate the erection of a building containing up to four 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 demonstrated on the Illustrative Site Plan.

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 town centre uses, and the site's location within the urban area.
- 7.2. Section 3 provides a summary of the proposed development that would enable four new residential dwellings at a relatively high density, commensurate with this urban, edge of town centre location. The scheme would respect and assimilate into the existing built form and building line located to the immediate north of the site, which was a fairly recent development of surplus garden land, similar in character to the proposal.
- 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 this highly sustainable location, which dictate the benefits of the scheme outweigh any harms conceivable (at this PiP stage) in accordance with paragraph 11 (d) of the NPPF.
- 7.4. This proposal is for minor development (four 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 highly sustainable form of residential development that accords with the Framework and that helps 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.
