

**TOWN & COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

**MR AND MRS WARD**

**PLANNING AND HERITAGE STATEMENT**

**LAND ADJACENT TO MEADOW VIEW  
BLAGROVE LANE  
WOKINGHAM  
RG41 4AU**

**Proposed erection of 5no. detached dwellings with associated parking and access  
(Outline application to consider layout and means of access)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This planning and heritage statement is submitted in support of an outline planning application by Mr and Mrs Ward for the following:

*'Proposed erection of 5no. detached dwellings with associated parking and access – outline application to consider layout and means of access'*

1.2 The application proposes at this stage to consider layout and means of access.

1.3 The statement is divided into the following chapters:

- Introduction
- Site and Surrounding Area
- Planning Policy Context
- The Application Proposal
- Summary and Conclusions

1.4 This statement will examine all relevant planning policies both local and national and will demonstrate that the application proposal is both sustainable and in full compliance with policy guidance.

1.5 Reference will be made in particular to the fact that the Council does not have a five year supply of housing. The most recent published figure contained within the Wokingham Borough Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement of 31 March 2024 (published 30 January 2025) is that on 31 March 2024, the Council could only demonstrate a 1.7 year housing land supply. As a result, the tilted balance is engaged. This proposal would provide substantial benefits including much needed housing (5no. additional units) and a policy compliant affordable housing contribution. Therefore, when applying the tilted balance, the adverse impacts are

not of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.

1.6 In addition to providing housing, this particular proposal will provide for the following substantial benefits:

- Provision of a low-density form of development that reflects the transitional character of the area and that would also provide a natural continuation of the existing settlement built form at a lower density;
- High quality and sustainable dwellings;
- Retention and enhancement of the boundary screening along Blagrove Lane;
- Biodiversity enhancements.

1.7 The following consultant reports accompany the submission:

Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Arboricultural Method Statement – ROAVR Group

Ecological Impact Assessment and BNG Assessment – Darwin Ecology

Design and Access Statement – Paul Edwards Architecture

Transport Statement – Highway Planning Ltd

## 2 THE APPLICATION SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

- 2.1 The application site lies on the eastern side of Blagrove Lane within land defined as being 'Countryside' in the planning policy Proposals Map. The application site is immediately adjacent to the defined settlement boundary of Wokingham, with the adjacent dwelling to the south-east, Meadow View, falling within the settlement (see Proposals Map extract below).
- 2.2 The application site comprises a former paddock containing two sheds including a large Nissan hut towards its northern boundary. The site is generally well screened from Blagrove Lane by existing trees and hedging and there is an existing access into the site from Blagrove Lane.
- 2.3 The surrounding area is characterised by detached properties, paddocks and open fields. Immediately to the north-west of the site is Huts Farmhouse, a barn and cattle shelter (now in use as a domestic garage) which are all Statutory listed (Grade II) and individually listed as part of an historic farmstead (see Historic England map extract below showing their location).
- 2.4 The host property, Meadow View, together with the adjacent property, Viewlands, comprise of two storey detached dwellings granted permission in 2005. Both properties fall within the defined settlement and importantly there is a footway running to the front of both properties. Beyond the host property (Meadow View), to the south-east of the site is a row of modern terraced dwellings also fronting onto Blagrove Lane. The dwellings further east along the adjoining Evendons Lane are highly mixed in character and appearance, comprising of older style traditional detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings.
- 2.5 Whilst within the countryside, the site is not isolated being located immediately adjacent to the settlement edge of Wokingham (see Proposals Map extract below) which is defined as the most sustainable settlement in the Borough i.e. it is a Major

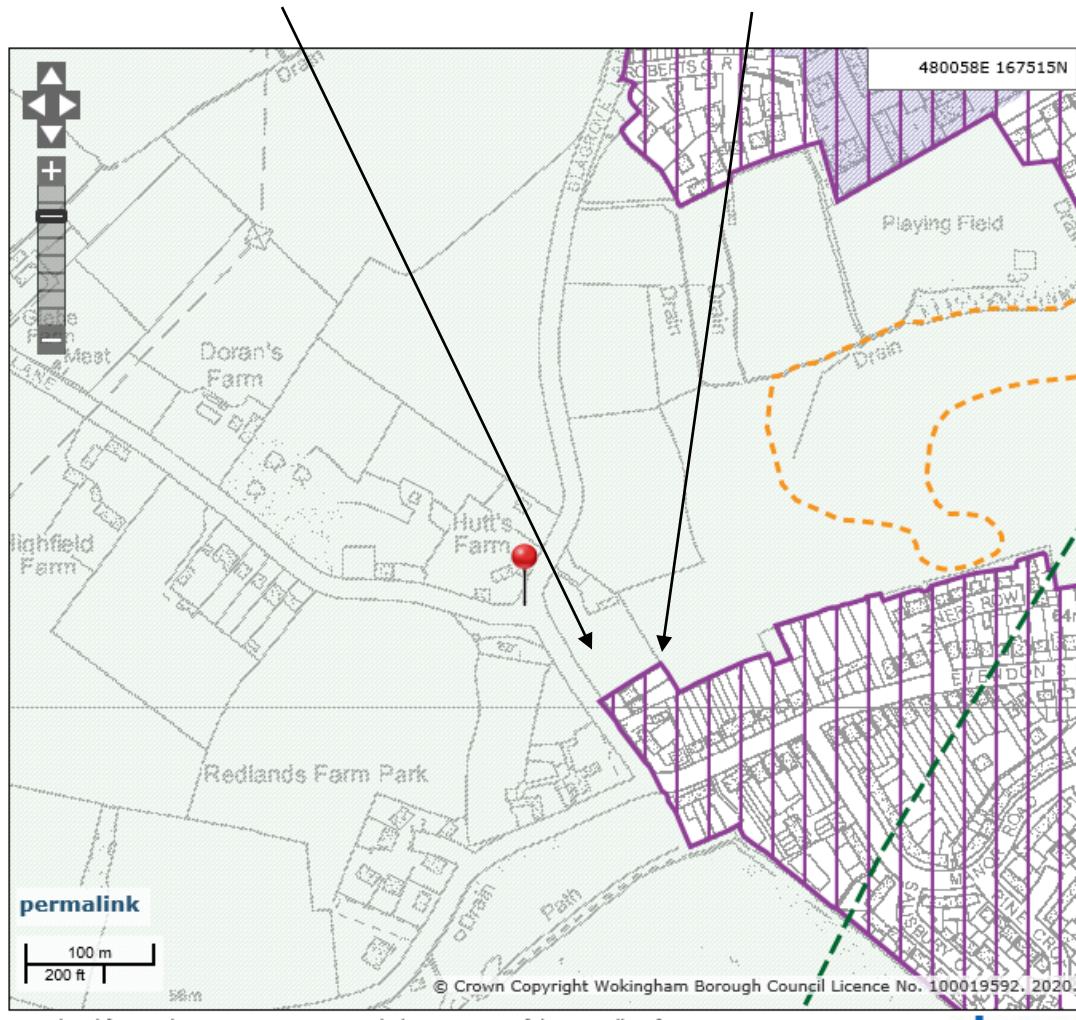
Development Location (MDL). The Core Strategy defines MDLs as the locations which have the 'greatest range of facilities and services'.

- 2.6 The site is therefore highly accessible to the bus services and school along the nearby Finchampstead Road. The pedestrian route to Finchampstead Road from the application site would connect with the existing footway which currently finishes at Meadow View. Within about 100m of the application site and along the route leading to Finchampstead Road is an existing retail unit divided into a barbers and community café.
- 2.7 The open land immediately to the east of the application site forms part of the site that has recently been granted planning permission at appeal for up to 350 dwellings and a care home (ref.222306). An extract of the approved layout is set out below (site masterplan).
- 2.8 Directly to the west of the site is 171 Evendons Lane which was granted outline planning permission by the Council in November 2024 (ref.231351) for a 64 bed care home with its main vehicular access directly opposite the existing host property, Meadow View. The proposals provide for a substantial single building over three floors. An extract of the approved site is set out below.
- 2.9 Clearly in respect to both of these consents, they are of a scale and intensity to have result in a substantial change to the character of this particular area.

Development Plan Proposals Map extract

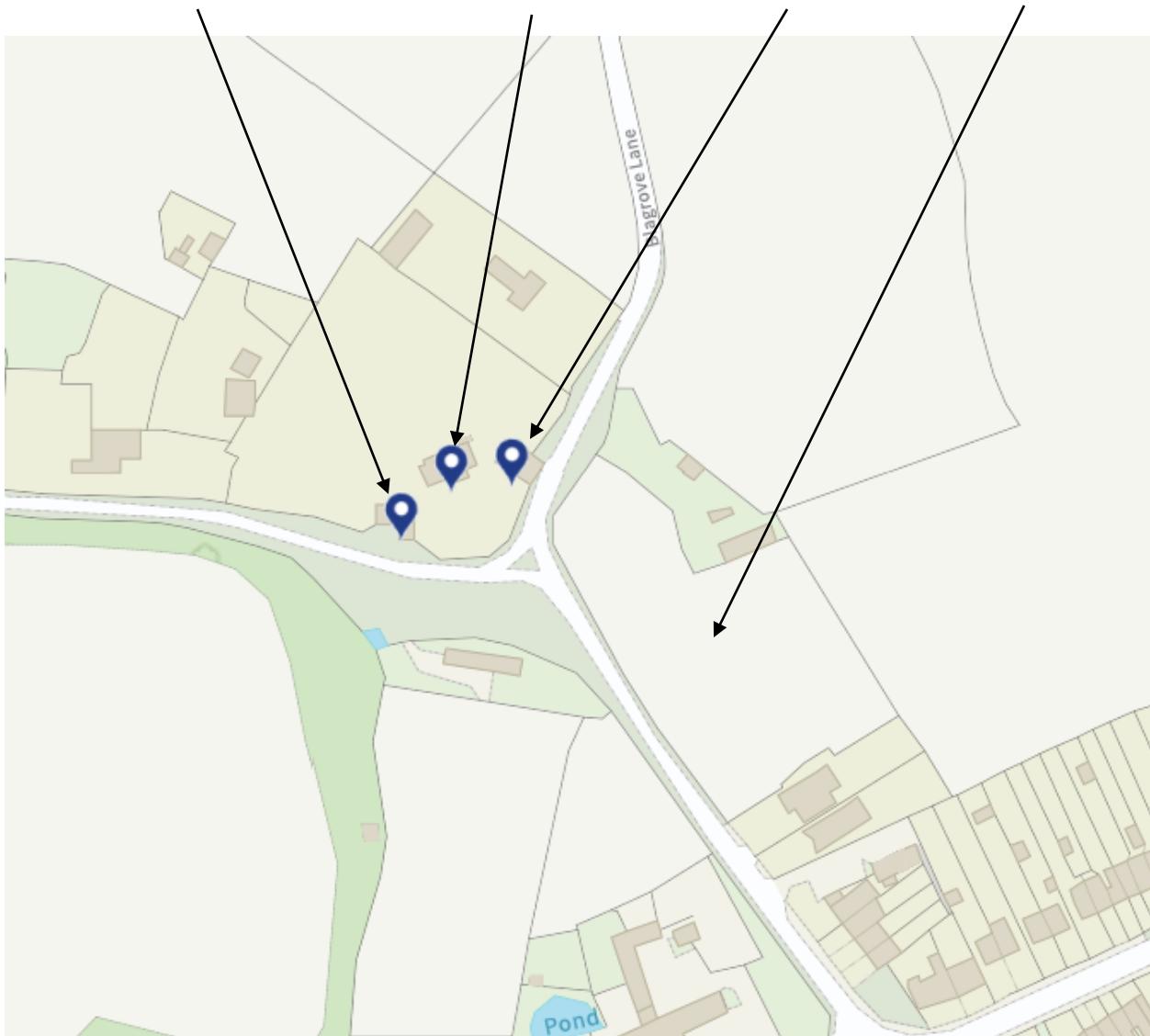
Application site

Defined settlement of Wokingham



Historic England Search Map extract

Barn to SW of Hutt's Farmhouse   Hutt's Farmhouse   Former cattle shelter   Application site



Site layout in respect to 'land adjacent to Blagrove Lane' Ref.222306



Site layout in respect to '171 Evendons Lane' Ref.231351

Application site



### **3 PLANNING HISTORY**

3.1 There is no relevant planning history relating directly to the site. Relevant planning history relating to the pair of detached dwellings to the south-east of the site is set out below:

041625 – Proposed erection of 5 new dwellings and demolition of existing dwelling.  
Withdrawn 21.12.04.

052068 – Proposed erection of 2 dwellings and demolition of existing dwelling.  
Approved 21.09.05.

061147 – Proposed erection of two five bedroom detached dwellings with garages.  
Refused 20.04.06.

200261 – Proposed erection of a single storey rear extension with 1no roof light and  
part conversion of existing double garage to create habitable accommodation.  
Changes to fenestration. Approved 28.02.2020.

## 4 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

4.1 Relevant planning policy guidance falls within the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and the Development Plan which comprises of the Wokingham Core Strategy and the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan. The site is not covered by a 'made' neighbourhood plan.

i) **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)**

4.2 The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies and how these should be applied. It confirms that applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (paragraph 2). The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of the development plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 231 of the NPPF confirms that the policies in the Framework are material considerations which should be taken into account in dealing with applications from the day of its publication.

4.3 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to achieve sustainable development, including the provision of homes. There are three overarching objectives to sustainable development (paragraph 8) which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways: economic, social and environmental objectives. The environmental objective includes the need to make efficient use of land and to improve biodiversity. So that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way, at the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10).

4.4 Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF states that "where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i) The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed, or
- ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and proving affordable homes, individually or in combination.'

4.5 Paragraph 39 states that Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and that decision makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

4.6 Paragraph 73 states that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built out relatively quickly. To promote the development of a good mix of sites, local planning authorities should support the development of windfall sites through their policies and decisions (paragraph d).

4.7 Chapter 11 is concerned with making effective use of land. Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

4.8 Paragraph 129 states that planning policies and decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account:

- The identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the availability of land suitable for accommodating it;
- Local market conditions and viability;

- The availability and capacity of infrastructure and services – both existing and proposed – as well as their potential for further improvement and the scope to promote sustainable travel modes that limit future car use;
- The desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), or of promoting regeneration and change; and
- The importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places.

4.9 Paragraphs 131 - 141 are concerned with achieving well-designed and beautiful places. Paragraph 131 states that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

4.10 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;
- Are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increase densities);
- Establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;

- Optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development;
- Create safe and accessible environments which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

4.11 Section 16 of the NPPF is concerned with conserving and enhancing the historic environment. Paragraph 202 confirms that these assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

4.12 Paragraph 212 of the Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

4.13 Paragraph 215 of the Framework confirms that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

ii) **The Development Plan**

a) Wokingham Core Strategy (2010)

4.14 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CP1:** Requires that a number of criteria are met. These include: maintaining or enhancing the high quality of the environment; providing attractive, functional, accessible, safe, secure and adaptable schemes; demonstrate how they support opportunities for reducing the need to travel particularly by the car; and contribute towards reaching zero – carbon development as soon as possible.

- **Policy CP3:** Requires, amongst other matters, that new development is of an appropriate scale, mass, activity, built form, height, materials, character and design quality. Proposals should not adversely affect the amenities of neighbouring land uses. Paragraph c) requires that sites are used to their full potential.
- **Policy CP5:** Requires in respect to sites located outside a development that provision is made for affordable housing on sites of 5 dwellings or more or 0.16Ha and larger. The requirement is for a contribution equating to 40%.
- **Policy CP6:** The policy is concerned with managing travel demand. It states that proposals will be granted for schemes that:
  - o Provide for sustainable forms of transport to allow choice;
  - o Are located where there is a choice of transport modes available;
  - o Improve existing infrastructure;
  - o Provide appropriate parking;
  - o Mitigate any adverse effects upon the highway network;
  - o Enhance road safety;
  - o Do not cause highway problems.
- **Policy CP11:** Is concerned with proposals for development on sites located outside of the Development Limit (including Countryside). The policy sets a series of criteria which new developments are required to meet including the following:
  - It does not lead to excessive encroachment or expansion of development away from the original buildings;
  - It is contained within suitably located buildings which are appropriate for conversion, or in the case of replacement buildings would bring about environmental improvements;

- In the case of replacement dwellings the proposal must:
  - i) Bring about environmental improvements; or
  - ii) Not result in inappropriate increases in the scale, form or footprint of the original building
- **Policy CP17:** Policy CP17 states that the Borough requires at least 13,230 dwellings in the period 2006-2026. This housing target is based on achieving the overall requirements (South East Plan) which has since been revoked.

b) Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (2014)

4.15 Relevant policies include:

- **Policy CC01:** Policy CC01 states that there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Planning applications that accord with policies in the Development Plan will be approved without delay unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where there are no policies relevant to the application or relevant policies are out of date the Council will grant permission unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- **Policy CC02:** Policy CC02 confirms that the development limits are defined on the Policies Map.
- **Policy CC03:** Policy CC03 is concerned with Green Infrastructure, trees and landscaping. It states that development proposals should protect and retain existing trees, hedges and other landscape features.
- **Policy TB21:** Policy TB21 states that proposals must demonstrate how they have addressed the requirement of the Council's Landscape Character Assessment including landscape quality, landscape strategy, landscape sensitivity and key issues.

iii) **Supplementary Planning Documents**

**Borough Design Guide SPD**

4.16 The purpose of the guide is to provide general design guidance for all development sites and detailed design guidance for certain topics, these being, residential, streets and spaces, car parking and non-residential development issues. The revised guidance has now been adopted by the Council.

4.17 The guidance sets out a number of key urban design objectives, as follows:

- Context and character;
- Connection and accessibility;
- Sustainable communities;
- Sustainable development;
- Inclusive design process.

4.18 In terms of Character and context, it is stated that new development should relate well to its surroundings, including topography and orientation of the site; existing natural and landscape features of value; heritage assets and their setting; the local settlement pattern and network of routes and neighbouring properties.

4.19 Section 4 concerns residential development. Garden size should relate to the house type and to the proposed number of occupants. The guidance states that the Council's minimum garden length of 11m is a generally accepted guideline for private garden space, provided that space is useable. Useable gardens should be roughly rectangular in shape; receive direct sunlight for some of the day; be capable of accommodating activities such as sitting, play, clothes drying and outside storage space; and should provide a secure external access to the rear garden for cycle storage. The application proposal meets these requirements in full.

4.20 The guidance sets out the minimum privacy and amenity distances as follows:

- Front to front across a street: 10m
- Rear to rear of dwellings: 22m
- Flank to boundary: 1m
- Flank wall to rear of dwelling: 12m

4.21 These lengths are increased where development is over a two storey height although it should be noted that this is measured to eaves. The proposed development meets all of the above standards both for 2 and over two storey development.

4.22 The guidance also states that all dwellings must provide adequate internal space in an appropriate layout to accommodate a range of lifestyles. Living areas and bedrooms should be large enough to accommodate a range of private and communal activities. The standard for minimum combined floor area of living, dining and kitchen space is 31sq.m (based on 6 bed spaces). Double bedrooms should be a minimum of 12sq.m and single bedrooms a minimum of 8sq.m. Guidance is also given regarding storage space and room configurations. The proposal comfortably meets all of the above standards.

4.23 The guidance states that dwellings must be designed to provide appropriate levels of daylight and sunlight for new and existing properties. New housing should be designed to provide a reasonable outlook for each dwelling; be dual aspect where possible; avoid north facing, single aspect flats; and to have no material impact on levels of daylight in the habitable rooms of adjoining properties. This can be assessed using the methodology set out in report BRE 209 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight'.

## 5 THE PLANNING APPLICATION

5.1 The application proposal is for the development of the site to provide 5no. detached dwellings. The application is in outline form to consider means of access and layout at this stage.

5.2 This chapter of the statement assesses the proposal against relevant national and local planning policies and specifically against the following considerations which are set out below:

- The principle of development and housing land supply;
- Impact on the landscape character of the surrounding area;
- Trees;
- Biodiversity;
- Impact on amenity
- Highways and transportation;
- Planning balance and conclusions

### i) The Principle of Development and housing land supply

5.3 The south-eastern boundary of the application site is located directly adjacent to the settlement boundary of Wokingham within an area defined as 'countryside'. Wokingham is identified in the Core Strategy as being the most sustainable settlement in the Borough (i.e. it is a Major Development Location – MDLs). The Core Strategy defines MDLs as the locations which have the 'greatest range of facilities and services'. Whilst within the countryside, the site is clearly not isolated, being adjacent to other dwellings located next to existing settlement areas along

Evendons Lane and Blagrove Lane and therefore accessible to the bus services along the nearby Finchampstead Road (see Transport Statement).

- 5.4 The policies that establish the development limits are out of date due to the fact that the Council do not have a NPPF compliant housing land supply. The latest published figure is that the Council at 31 March 2024 could only demonstrate a 1.7 year supply of deliverable housing sites. This factor alone reduces the weight that can be applied to the conflict with the Council's locational policies.
- 5.5 The updated Standard Method confirms that the revised annual supply now equates to 1,336 dwellings per annum. In line with footnote 8 to paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are therefore deemed out of date and the 'tilted balance' set out in paragraph 11(d) (ii) of the NPPF is engaged in respect of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
- 5.8 In respect to this proposal, the adverse impacts of permitting this development are not considered to be of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits associated with this proposal. As set out below, this proposal is a well-designed and sustainable form of development which will not result in material harm to the landscape character of the area. It is also located conveniently to the settlement edge in a sustainable location and existing pedestrian access point can be conveniently connected into through the provision of a footway for the new residents. Therefore, in applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the proposal would not result in a level of harm that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.

**ii) Impact on the character of the area**

5.13 The proposed new dwellings would all have a frontage onto Blagrove Lane, reflecting the existing linear pattern of development within the adjoining settlement to the south-east of the site. The houses would all be set back generously from Blagrove Lane, allowing trees, hedging and other natural screening to be retained and supplemented where necessary. The only removal of existing vegetation relates to partial removal of the existing hedgerow and some small trees to make way for the construction of a new shared access serving plots 3, 4 and 5 along the Blagrove Lane frontage (see Tree Report). A new 2m wide footpath would be provided behind the existing hedgerow which will maintain the existing verdant nature of the street scene.

5.14 The proposed dwellings would be two storey in height (8.4m) and would be spaciously located within a low density landscaped setting. The density will be lower than existing development to the south-east (Meadow View and Viewlands) in order to provide a transitional form of development on the approach into the defined settlement.

5.15 The site is bounded by Blagrove Lane on two sides and also adjoins other residential dwellings adjacent to its south-eastern boundary. Furthermore, the site is bounded on its north-eastern side by the Berkeley Homes site, which has recently been granted outline planning permission on appeal (LPA ref. 222306) for the erection of up to 350 dwellings (use class C3) and care home (use class C2) with a new access onto Barkham Road and Blagrove Lane.

5.16 Given their setback from the road and well screened and contained nature, the proposed dwellings would be viewed from Blagrove Lane in a similar manner to that of other existing houses in the area. These include the dwellings to the south-east, and others such as Hutt's Farm and Hutt's Farm Cottage. The annex building to the rear of Hutt's Farm Cottage has recently been extended and converted to an independent dwelling (granted at appeal in 2023). The proposal would not therefore have any significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of Blagrove Lane and the wider area.

5.17 Other views of the proposed dwellings would be generally localised and limited in extent. With suitable mitigation, it is considered that the proposal would have a minor visual impact and a minor/negligible landscape impact (i.e. not a material change).

5.18 In addition to the Berkley Homes site, the Council has recently granted outline planning consent for the erection of a 64 bed care home (Use Class C2) in the countryside close to the site at 171 Evendons Lane (ref. 231351). It is acknowledged that this site was in part previously developed, however the consented care house is likely to have an urbanising effect on the character and appearance of the land and the wider area in general given the scale of development (3 storeys), the large expanse of open car parking, and the location of the main vehicular entrance which directly faces Meadow View on Blagrove Lane.

5.19 Therefore, in conclusion, the proposal is sympathetic to the site's location and transitional role adjacent to the settlement edge of which it adjoins. It will not be in conflict with CS Policies CP1 and CP3 and MDD Policy TB21, which requires a proportionate assessment of landscape quality.

### **iii) Trees**

5.20 The application is accompanied by a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Arboricultural Method Statement. This confirms that of the 57 individual trees and two groups of trees surveyed only category U (unsuitable for retention) and C (low quality) trees would be removed. All category A (High quality) and B (moderate quality) trees would be retained. Mitigation planting would be required to compensate for the loss of the 13 category C (low quality) trees. The report concludes that the scheme demonstrates a 'balanced approach' to development and tree retention, with potential impacts being both limited and manageable through standard arboricultural best practices.

5.21 The proposals therefore meet MDDLP Policy CC03 as the proposal will protect and retain existing trees, hedges and landscape features.

**iv) Biodiversity**

5.22 The application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment (August 2025) (Darwin Ecology). The EIA confirms that the site is comprised of modified grassland, broadleaved woodland, buildings, hardstanding, native hedgerows, and hedgerows with trees. The site was assessed to provide suitable habitats to support low numbers of common species of reptile, great crested newts during their terrestrial phase, dormouse, and badger commuting and foraging habitat for hedgehog, nesting and foraging habitat for birds and limited resources for invertebrates. As these species are only likely to be present in very low numbers if at all, further survey work is considered to be disproportionate. Precautionary mitigation has been recommended, and these measures are set out in detail in the EIA.

5.23 The proposal is accompanied by a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and Biodiversity Metric which concludes that at least 0.62 habitat units and 0.56 hedgerow units will need to be acquired through an off-site scheme to achieve 10% net gain for the project.

**v) Impact on amenity**

5.24 The siting of the proposed dwellings respects the siting of the closest residential dwelling, Meadow View. The dwelling on Plot 5 would be sited broadly level with Meadow View and would not therefore result in any material overshadowing or overlooking of that dwelling.

5.25 Hutt's Farmhouse lies to the north west of the site on the opposite side of Blagrove Lane. The closest building at Hutt's Farm is a garage / outbuilding of modern construction adjacent to the road frontage (former cattle shelter). The main Hutt's Farmhouse (Grade II listed) is set deeper into its plot, and the siting of the proposed dwellings would not result in any loss of amenity to the occupants of that dwelling. Similarly, Hutt's Farm Cottage also sits deep into its plot and the living conditions of the occupiers of that dwelling would also be unaffected by the proposed development particularly as it is more distant.

5.26 Other residential dwellings along Blagrove Lane are considerably further from the site and would not be affected by the proposal. The proposed siting would not affect the wider redevelopment of the 350 dwelling site which lies to the east of the application site. The Masterplan indicates that dwellings would be behind a buffer strip with mainly side elevations facing the application site. The proposed garden depths are in any event very deep for the dwellings that have their rear elevations facing the larger site (up to 30m in depth in respect to plots 3-5) so even if the orientation changed at full application stage on the adjoining Berkeley site this would not in any way impact their amenity. The proposal would therefore comply with CS Policy CP3 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF as a high standard of amenity for existing and future users would be provided.

**vi) Highways and Transportation**

5.27 The existing access into the site from Blagrove Lane would be modified to a width of 5m with the provision of suitable visibility splays and would serve plots 1 and 2. Visibility splays of 2.4m x 40m in both directions would be provided. A new shared access onto Blagrove Lane would also be formed to serve Plots 3, 4 and 5 providing visibility splays of 2.4m x 40m to reflect the earlier speed survey.

5.28 A policy compliant level of parking would be provided, equating to at least 3no. spaces for each property with opportunities for visitor cars to be parked within the driveway layout. The layout of the private drive for plots 3-5 is to be designed to accommodate a fire appliance and delivery vehicle (see swept paths in the Transport Statement).

5.29 A new 2m wide footpath would also be created along the front of plots 1 and 2 which would link to the private drive through plots 3-5 before finally linking into the existing footpath to the front of Meadow View, ensuring that pedestrian traffic generated by the development will not be required to traverse the carriageway.

5.30 The approved 350 dwelling development will close off Blagrove Lane to through traffic 100m to the north of the site boundary which will further reduce traffic flows making it safer and more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed

footpath link through the application site will provide an immediate benefit to the proposals complementing the 350 dwelling approval.

5.31 Given the fact that the development can be accommodated without raising any transportation or highway issues, the proposal is considered to be compliant with CS Policy CP6. This is expanded upon in the Transport Statement (Highway Planning Ltd) which accompanies this submission.

#### **vii) Planning balance and conclusions**

5.32 Importantly, the Council accepts that it does not currently have a 5-year housing land supply and that the tilted balance is engaged as a result (1.7 years which represents a substantial shortfall). Paragraph 125 (d) of the NPPF confirms that planning decisions should promote and support the development of underutilised land and buildings especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained. The Government acknowledges that small to medium sized sites are especially important as they tend to be built out quickly. These factors weigh heavily in favour of this submission and the acute need for housing in the Borough. This factor also contributes towards the 'wider benefits to the community' requirements and is sufficient to outweigh the very limited harm caused through constructing housing in land that is defined as 'countryside'.

5.33 In summary, the proposal provides for 5no. dwellings that can be accommodated on the site without materially harming the landscape character of the wider area. The proposal would result in minimal loss of existing landscape features and will achieve numerous biodiversity enhancements through off-site payments via BNG credits. The site can be accessed safely and meets all highway and parking standards. The existing site is of low ecological value, and no further survey work has been recommended.

5.34 Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives. This proposal would secure net gain across each objective:

5.35 Economic objective: The redevelopment of the site to provide for 5no. new dwellings will provide benefits to local businesses in the immediate vicinity including local shops. In addition, the development would provide initial short-term employment in the construction industry followed by longer term benefits in terms of additional support for a variety of local business including pubs, restaurants, shops, local trades and private leisure and recreational establishments. None of the land is in active use as agricultural land.

5.36 Social objective: The application would make a meaningful contribution to the local housing stock. Noting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, this contribution towards the Borough's identified shortfall in housing land supply should be afforded substantial weight. The occupants of the properties would contribute towards the local community, and the proposal would fulfill a positive social role. The proposal will generate a requirement for an affordable housing contribution equating to 40% in line with CS Policy CP5. This will be provided by way of an affordable housing contribution.

5.37 Environmental objective: The site will make effective use of land in accordance with paragraph 11 and Chapter 11 of the NPPF. Whilst the site is located on land defined as 'countryside', it is not in an area which contains or affects assets of particular environmental importance and is not protected land. Existing trees of moderate and high quality will be retained and protected. The proposals are therefore considered to enhance the 'high quality' of the environment in line with CS Policy CP1. The proposal is not considered to harm the setting of the Grade II listed buildings which form part of the historic former farmyard at Hutt's Farm.

5.38 Having regard to the above considerations, the policies in the NPPF that protect areas or assets of particular importance do not provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. There are no significant adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal' and the proposal would make a meaningful contribution to the supply of housing in the Borough where there is a substantial shortfall.

5.39 As a result, the adverse impacts of permitting this development are not considered to be of such magnitude that they would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits associated with this proposal.

## 6 HERITAGE STATEMENT

- 6.1 There are a group of Grade II listed buildings at Hutt's Farm, to the north-west of the site at the junction of Blagrove Lane and Doles Lane. This group comprises Hutt's Farmhouse, a former cattle shelter to the east of the farmhouse and a former barn to the southwest of the farmhouse. The two ancillary features lie either side of the central residential building, the farmhouse. As they all hold architectural and historic interest they are all individually Grade II listed. The farmhouse dates from the 16th century and has later 17th and 20th century extensions. The cattle shelter is late 17th century whilst the barn is late 16th century altered in the 20th century. It is considered that the historic interest of the cattle shelter has been diminished as it is now used as a garage with a roller shutter door and modern rooflights.
- 6.2 All of the buildings are timber-framed with brick infill panels and in general retain their original features. The buildings are typical of rural southern England and are all now in residential use and historically part of a small farmstead confirming their collective functional use. As such, they hold group value due to their relationship with one another.
- 6.3 The closest new dwelling to this listed group would be to the former cattle shelter (now a domestic garage) which abuts the boundary with the highway verge. It is understood that the former cattle shelter has been reconstructed to a degree at some point as there is a roller shutter garage door on the road frontage. Plot 2 is the closest dwelling to all of the listed buildings and has the most potential to impact on their setting etc. In terms of distance, the closest part of plot 2 would be circa 24m from the cattle shelter, 40m from the farmhouse and 50m from the barn. Lying in between the two end properties, plots 1 and 2 is a retained hedge and the highway.
- 6.4 Given the distances involved, the intervening features and the grading of the listed buildings, paragraph 215 of the Framework is not considered to be engaged as the harm to their setting would not be 'material'. As it would be below the 'less than

substantial harm' impact, there is no requirement to consider any public benefits arising from the proposal.

## 7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The application (outline) should be supported for the following reasons:

- i) The Council remain unable to demonstrate an adequate housing land supply (i.e. 1.7 year supply) and there is a consistent history of under delivery in the Borough. The updated Standard Method now requires an annual supply of 1,336 dwellings in the Borough. There are no significant adverse impacts that would 'significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal'. The proposal would make a meaningful contribution to addressing this shortfall by providing five new dwellings in a sustainable location adjacent to the settlement edge with numerous other planning benefits. CS Policies CP1, CP3, CP7 and CP11 are either out-of-date or at the very least should be afforded reduced weight.
- ii) When assessed against other policies in the NPPF there is not considered to be any conflict. The proposal meets each of the three objectives to sustainable development (i.e. the economic, social and environmental objectives). The additional householder expenditure has the potential to provide significant benefit to existing businesses in the area. The proposal would provide for a policy compliant contribution towards affordable housing.
- iii) The proposal would not result in a material change to the landscape character of the site thereby ensuring that there is no conflict with MDDLP Policy TB21. The area is undergoing substantial change due to the recent approval of large scale residential developments which adjoin this site.
- iv) The proposal would result in minimal tree and hedge loss which will be replaced on-site with a greater number of replacement specimens. All other trees (categories A and B) can be adequately retained and protected, and new planting is recommended in addition to be dealt with through planning conditions. There are no substantive reasons to oppose the proposals on

arboricultural grounds, and the proposals meet the requirements of MDDLP Policy CC03.

- v) The proposal is for a low-density, high-quality development that will provide generous new space for landscaping as well as retaining and enhancing existing landscape buffers. The proposals meet the design requirements set down with CS Policies CP1 and CP3, the Borough Design Guide and paragraphs 131-141 of the NPPF.
- vi) The proposed built form is relatively distant from the Grade II listed buildings at Hutt's Farm and separated by landscape features and the neighbouring highway. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF is not considered to be engaged as any harm falls below the 'less than substantial harm' trigger which would initiate an assessment of 'public benefits'.
- vii) The proposal will not harm existing habitats on the site which is comprised of modified grassland, broadleaved woodland, buildings, hardstanding, native hedgerows, and hedgerows with trees. The site was assessed to provide suitable habitats to support low numbers of common species and therefore further survey work was considered to be disproportionate. A range of mitigation measures is recommended. The BNG Assessment confirms that off-site biodiversity net gain will be required.
- viii) The proposed development would not harm the living conditions of occupiers of the closest properties to the site which comprise Meadow View, Hutt's Farm and Hutt's Farm Cottage. The proposals would provide for a high-quality living environment for future residents. The proposals meet CS Policy CP3 and paragraph 135 of the NPPF as a high standard of amenity for existing and future users will be provided.
- ix) Parking and access are provided in accordance with adopted standards. A new footpath would be constructed to enable residents to access the existing footway which currently finishes at the adjoining property (Meadow View). The proposals are consistent with the requirements of CS Policy CP6.