

**OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION  
FOR THE ERECTION OF 45 DWELLINGS,  
INCLUDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING,  
WITH ASSOCIATED PUBLIC OPEN  
SPACE AND LANDSCAPING,  
TOGETHER WITH MEANS OF ACCESS  
FROM THE B3051**

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**Land south of Holt Cottages, Ashford  
Hill**

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**Planning Statement**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

- 1.1. This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an outline planning application for the erection of 45 dwellings, including affordable housing, on land south of Holt Cottages, Ashford Hill, with associated open space and landscaping, together with means of access from the B3051.
- 1.2. This Statement sets out the characteristics of the site and surrounding area, provides information on the planning history for the site, and sets out an analysis of the proposal against the relevant planning policy context.
- 1.3. The application is accompanied by a number of supporting reports including a Design and Access Statement, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, and a Transport Statement. The proposal has been subject to a constructive public consultation exercise, the findings of which are summarised in a Statement of Community Involvement. The full list of supporting documents is set out in the covering letter accompanying this planning application.

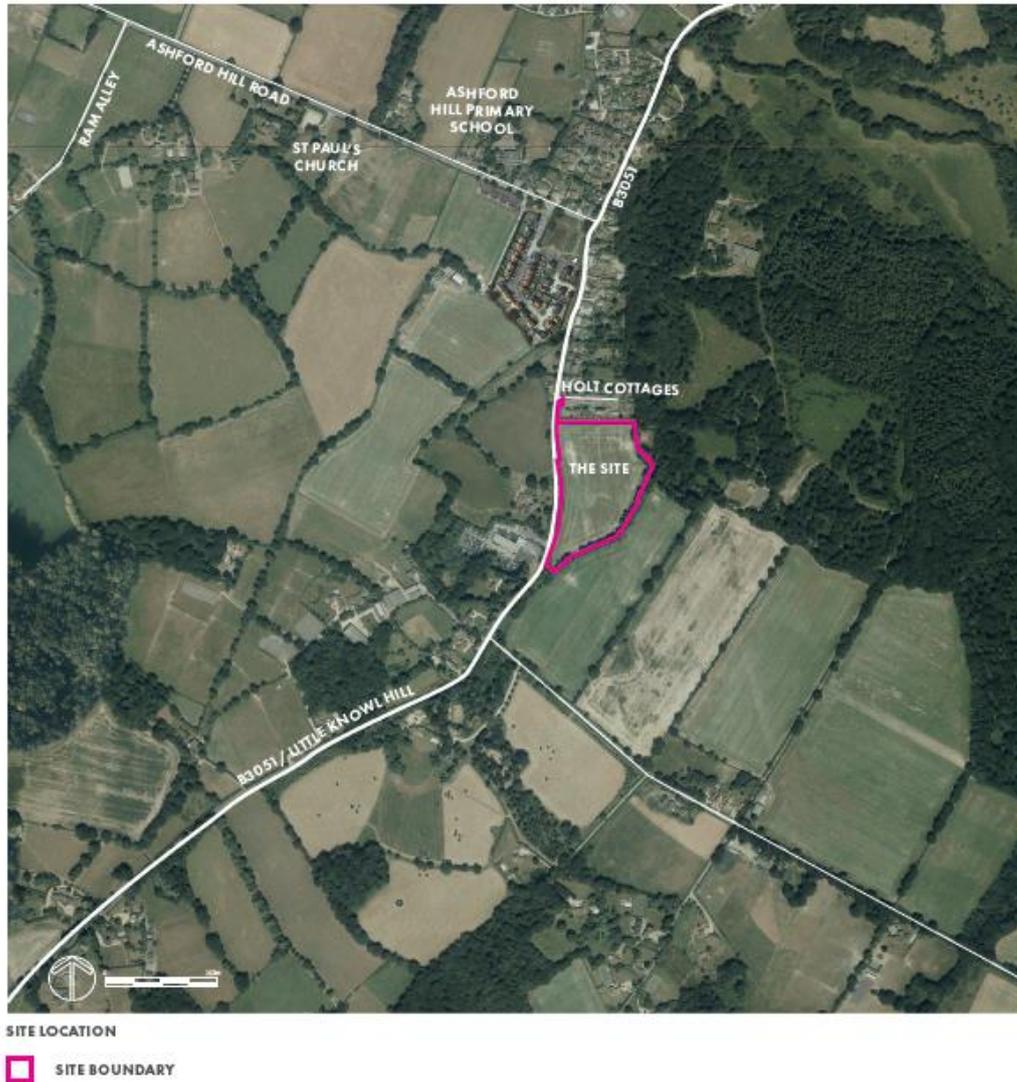
### *Summary*

- 1.4. Planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise (section 38(6)). The NPPF is a material consideration as is a five-year housing land supply deficit. Owing to the existence of a five-year housing land supply deficit, policies SS1 and SS6 are out of date and carry less weight. Accordingly, any conflict with these policies should not be determinative of the application subject to the degree of any adverse effects of the proposal. With the acknowledged engagement of the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF, planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This statement confirms that there are no adverse effects arising from the proposal. If there are any, these do not come close to significantly and demonstrably outweighing the benefits of the proposal.

- 1.5. This Planning Statement considers with the support of technical documents the impacts that would arise from the delivery of residential development on this site and demonstrates that any impacts that would arise from the scheme can be addressed and are not any event significant. Moreover, if any impacts are identified, they are outweighed by the benefits that would arise from the proposal in the planning balance. On this basis, the proposal delivers “sustainable development” within the terms of the NPPF, and planning permission should therefore be granted.

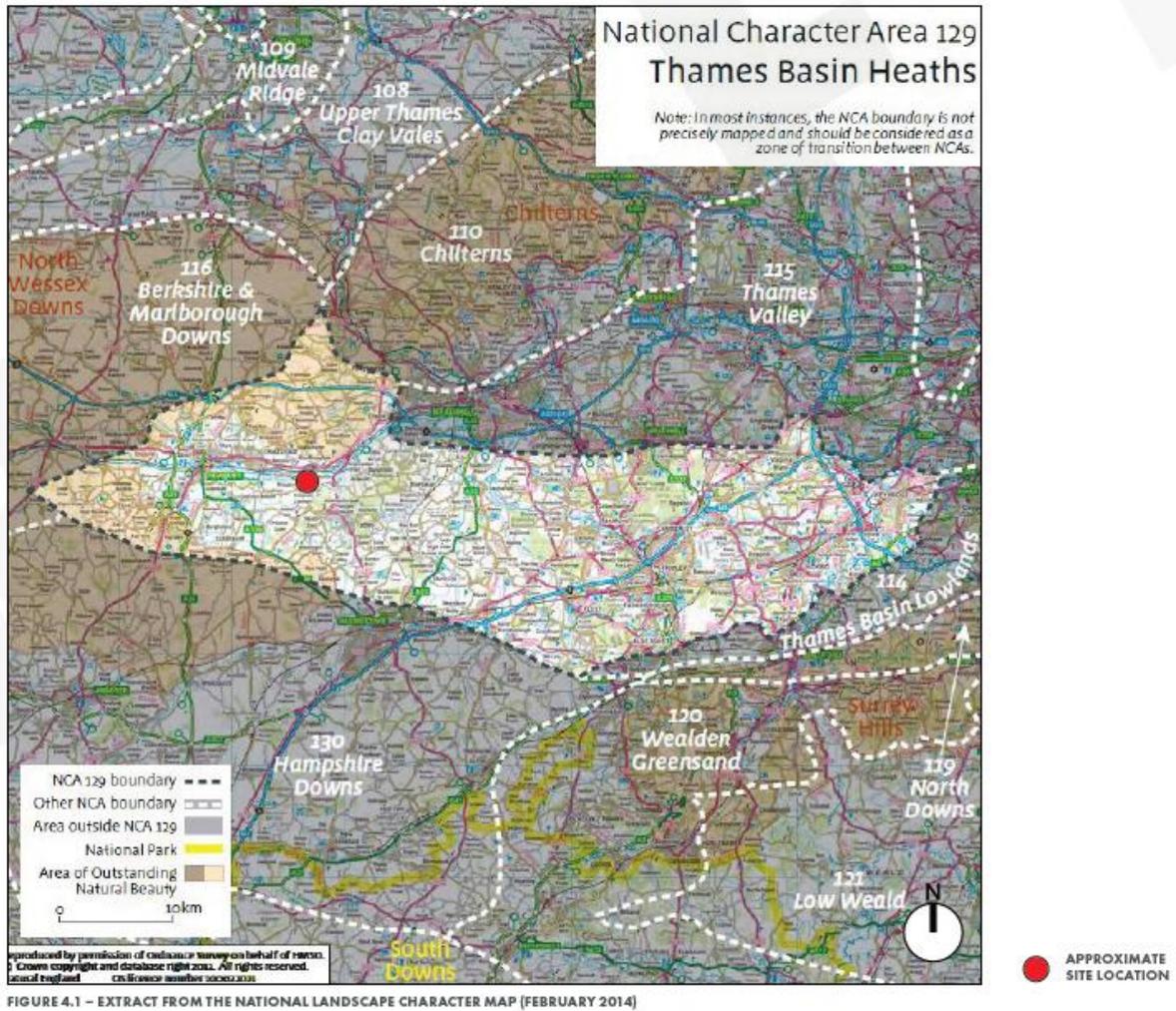
## 2. THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

2.1. The site is located on the southern edge of the village of Ashford Hill. Development is clustered along both sides of the B3051 running north-south in a valley setting. This is illustrated on the extract from Google Maps below.



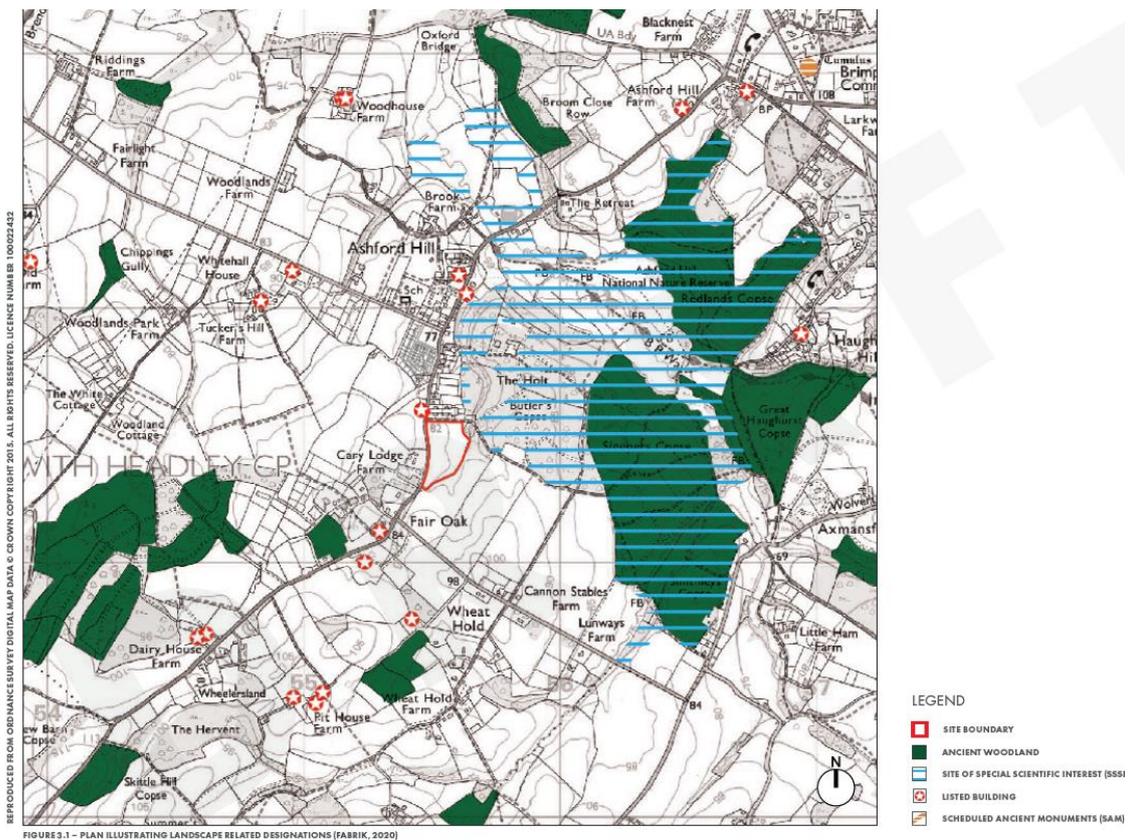
Extract from Google Maps, 2021, showing Ashford Hill and application site

2.2. The extract from the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment below shows the landscape designations for the site and its surroundings.



Extract from LVIA illustrating landscape designations, Fabrik, 2021

- 2.3. The application site is located to the east of the B3051, enclosed by existing residential development to the north at Holt Cottages. There is a ribbon of sporadic built form opposite the site, to the west, comprising residential and industrial uses. This is illustrated on the extract from the planning context plan, reproduced below.



Extract from Planning Context Plan, Fabrik, 2021

- 2.4. The site in its current form comprises a field which is bound by a mixture of existing mature woodland, trees and hedging.
- 2.5. Ashford Hill is notated with a Settlement Policy Boundary in the adopted Local Plan. However, the Settlement Policy Boundary is out of date as it does not reflect residential development permitted and constructed to the south of Ashford Hill Road. The application site falls outside, but adjoining, the notated Settlement Policy Boundary for Ashford Hill, as illustrated on the extract from the Local Plan Policies Map, Inset no 10.



Extract from the Local Plan Policies Map Inset 10, showing Settlement Policy Boundary for Ashford Hill

- 2.6. As detailed in the Transport Statement accompanying this planning application, the site is well located in relation to public transport, with bus stops within close vicinity of the site. Furthermore, the Council's consideration of other applications at Ashford Hill confirm that it represents a sustainable location for new residential development.

### 3. THE PROPOSAL

3.1. The proposal is an outline application which seeks to establish the principle of development on the site, including general form and location, for 45 residential units, with a 40% tenure blind affordable housing provision.

3.2. The proposed mix of tenure and dwelling size is summarised in the table below. The tenure split of the affordable housing would be 70% rented and 30% intermediate as required by Policy CN1 of the Local Plan.

	1 BED		2 BED		3 BED		4 BED+	
	REQ	PROV	REQ	PROV	REQ	PROV	REQ	PROV
MARKET NO.			7	7	12	12	8	8
MARKET %			-	26%	-	44%	30%	30%
AFFORDABLE NO.	6	6	8	8	3	3	1	1
AFFORDABLE %	36%	36%	43%	43%	16%	16%	5%	5%

#### Proposed Housing Mix

3.3. The proposed housing mix meets the Council’s policy requirements in respect of both market and affordable housing, reinforcing the quality of the scheme in respect of meeting identified needs. The emphasis is on smaller dwellings with a total of 36 of the 45 dwellings proposed being 1-bed, 2-bed and 3-bed dwellings. That is 80% of the scheme.

3.4. It should be noted that the Council’s Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 2018, requires applicants to submit an affordable housing statement that includes the following:

- Headline details about the overall level of affordable housing provision and the tenure mix proposed;
- An indicative overall affordable housing mix by bedroom size; and
- A commitment to comply with the detailed requirements of Local Plan Policy CN1 and this SPD, including principles about how the affordable provision will be integrated with the market housing.

- 3.5. The split between market and affordable housing, housing mix by bedroom size, and tenure, as documented above, has been drawn up and shown on the illustrative masterplan that accompanies this application to respond to the planning policy framework provided by the Local Plan, as elucidated in the Housing SPD.
- 3.6. As required by the SPD, the points to be covered by an affordable housing statement are addressed in the above paragraphs of the Planning Statement. The first two bullets set out in paragraph 3.4 are provided by the description of the proposal in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 and the Housing Mix table above. It should be noted that this is supported by the information provided by the illustrative layout that accompanies this application, which makes it clear that the affordable housing units are integrated within the overall layout, thereby satisfying the third bullet above.
- 3.7. Details of the scheme are set out in the technical reports submitted in support of this planning application, including the Design and Access Statement and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. The application is supported by an illustrative masterplan that shows how the scheme could be delivered sympathetically in its setting.



Extract from the Illustrative Masterplan

- 3.8. The full suite of supporting technical reports should be referred to in the consideration of the application.

**4. SITE PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1. There is no relevant planning history for the site.

## **5. PRE-APPLICATION ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1. The applicant has engaged in pre-application consultation with residents and businesses of Ashford Hill Village, and Borough and Parish Councillors. This is summarised below, but the Statement of Community Involvement that accompanies the application should be referred to for full details of the consultation process and feedback.
- 5.2. The engagement included the delivery of a colour notice to all premises in the village, with details of the on-line consultation hub via a website link, and a place for feedback.
- 5.3. In summary, 66% of respondents have answered positively to the principle of new homes being provided, of which 22% indicated they should be in Ashford Hill, when answers to all the questions are considered holistically.
- 5.4. The feedback provided through public consultation process has enabled matters raised to be addressed in this Planning Statement, supported where necessary by specialist technical reports which set out the detailed analysis of, and response to, these issues. In addition, it has provided the evidence to inform the policy requirement to understand local housing needs, notwithstanding the evidenced need across the Borough as a whole. This is directly in response to the Council's informal guidance note, New Homes in the Countryside to Meet a Locally Agreed Need, which provides advice on the interpretation of Policy SS6(e). This is returned to in Sections 6 and 9 of this Planning Statement.

## **6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

6.1. 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 comprises the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 – 2029. There is no Made Neighbourhood Plan for Ashford Hill.

6.2. The key policies against which the application should be considered are set out below:

- Policy SD1 (Presumption on Favour of Sustainable Development)
- Policy SS1 (Scale and Distribution of New Housing)
- Policy SS6 (New Housing in the Countryside)
- Policy CN1 (Affordable Housing)
- Policy CN3 (Housing Mix for Market Housing)
- Policy CN6 (Infrastructure)
- Policy CN9 (Transport)
- Policy EM1 (Landscape)
- Policy EM4 (Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation)
- Policy EM9 (Sustainable Water Use)
- Policy EM10 (Delivering High Quality Development)
- Policy EM12 (Pollution)

6.3. The Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan was adopted on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2016 and is therefore over five years old. National Planning Practice Guidance sets out that local planning authorities must review local plans at least every five years from their adoption date to ensure that policies remain relevant. Whilst a Local Plan does not automatically become out of date if it has not been reviewed within five years of its adoption, nevertheless, due weight should be given to relevant policies according to their consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework.

6.4. The weight to be afforded to these policies will also be influenced by whether the LPA can demonstrate a five-year supply of housing. This is discussed in more detail below in Section 9 of this Statement.

6.5. The site is located outside the Ashford Hill Settlement Boundary Policy and is within part of the Borough which is designated as countryside, as established by Policy SS1 (Scale and

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Distribution of New Housing). The site lies beyond the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that characterises other parts of the Borough. The Local Plan notes that Settlement Policy Boundaries will be reviewed through a future Development Plan Document.

6.6. The Local Plan (paragraph 4.70) is explicit in its aims to:

**“...direct development to within the identified Settlement Policy Boundaries and specific site allocations. Within the countryside it is the intention to maintain the existing open nature of the borough's countryside, prevent the coalescence of settlements and resist the encroachment of development into rural areas. The countryside is therefore subject to a more restrictive policy”.**

6.7. This aim is accepted. However, where the local plan cannot demonstrate a sufficient supply of housing, when set against the minimum five-year housing requirement, those identified settlement policy boundaries and the associated designated countryside areas become out of date as they are insufficient in scope and extent to allow sufficient new homes to come forward to meet the minimum identified housing requirements.

6.8. Policy SS1 (Scale and Distribution of New Housing) sets out the local strategy for housing delivery, supporting development on appropriate brownfield sites and within Settlement Policy Boundaries as defined on the Policies Map. Criterion f) of Policy SS1 only permits exception sites outside defined Settlement Policy Boundaries where it meets criteria set out in the other policies in the Plan or it is essential for the proposal to be located in the countryside.

6.9. Policy SS6 (New Housing in the Countryside) sets out the criteria whereby new housing outside Settlement Boundary Policies will be permitted. Policy SS6(e) gives support for new housing within the countryside only where they are:

**“e) Small scale<sup>8</sup> residential proposals of a scale and type that meet a locally agreed need provided that:**

**ix) It is well related to the existing settlement and would not result in an isolated form of development; and**

**x) The development will respect the qualities of the local landscape and be sympathetic to its character and visual quality; and**

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**xi) The development will respect and relate to the character, form and appearance of surrounding development, and respect the amenities of the residents of neighbouring properties; or”**

**The local plan footnote reference 8 confirms the meaning of ‘small scale’ stating: “Four dwellings or fewer (net).”**

6.10. The supporting text at paragraph 4.77 explains that the policy allows small-scale new residential development in the countryside in limited circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that it would meet a local need, as agreed in consultation with the parish/town Council. It also notes that such developments should be 4 dwellings or fewer (net) to fall below the size threshold of sites that could be allocated through neighbourhood plans. It will also be necessary for such developments to be well-related to existing settlements and be suitably designed to respect the landscape setting and relates well to surrounding development.

6.11. Policy CN1 (Affordable Housing) sets out that on-site provision of 40% affordable housing will be required for 5 or more net residential units, and tenure split of affordable homes should be 70% rented and 30% intermediate. It should be noted that this policy has been updated through the Council’s Housing SPD, as set out below.

6.12. Policy CN3 (Housing Mix for Market Housing) sets out that Development will be permitted where the mix of market housing:

**“a) includes a range of house type and size to address local requirements;  
and**

**b) Is appropriate to the size, location and characteristics of the site; and**

**c) Is appropriate to the established character and density of the neighbourhood; and**

**d) Provides 15% accessible and adaptable homes to enable people to stay in their homes as their needs change.**

**Development proposals will be required to provide evidence, proportionate to the scale of development proposed, to justify the mix of housing proposed.”**

6.13. In terms of the natural environment, approximately 30% of the Borough falls within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Policy EM1 (Landscape) sets out that

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development will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that the proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area concerned.

- 6.14. Policy EM4 (Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation) sets out that development proposals will only be permitted if significant harm to biodiversity can be avoided, or if that is not possible, adequately mitigated. The policy also seeks to secure opportunities for biodiversity improvement including net gain through creation, restoration, enhancement and management of habitats and features.
- 6.15. Policy EM10 seeks to ensure that all proposals will be of high quality, based on a robust design-led approach.

Supplementary Planning Documents and other guidance

- 6.16. In addition, capable of being considered as material considerations are the following:
- Design and Sustainability SPD (2018)
  - Planning Obligations for Infrastructure SPD (2018)
  - Housing SPD (2018)
  - New homes in the countryside to meet a locally agreed need (2019)
  - Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD (2018)
  - Parking SPD (2018)
  - Highclere and Penwood Village Design Statement, 2002
  - North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 – 2024

Housing SPD

- 6.17. The Housing Supplementary Planning Document has been produced to expand upon the housing policies in the Local Plan. It comprises a number of individual chapters relating to affordable housing; housing mix for market housing; housing for older people and those in need of care; and self-build and custom housebuilding.
- 6.18. In respect of the threshold for the provision of affordable housing, the Council's website notes that, following the publication of the 2019 version of the NPPF, on-site affordable housing provision will be sought for all schemes of 10+ residential units.
- 6.19. With regard to the proposed mix of affordable housing, the SPD sets out the following:

Size mix

2.37 As a general borough-wide guide, the council will seek the following size mix of affordable housing however individual proposals will be influenced by site specific and delivery considerations, and local housing need evidence taken from housing registers, strategic information published by the council, or local housing needs studies undertaken to a methodology that is agreed with the council (and that has taken wider housing need and demand factors into account).

	<b>1 bedroom</b>	<b>2 bedrooms</b>	<b>3 bedrooms</b>	<b>4+ bedrooms</b>	<b>Total</b>
Affordable Housing	36%	43%	16%	5%	100%

Table 2.2 Affordable housing size mix (Source: BDBC Housing Register and Help to Buy South Register)

6.20. In terms of market type and size mix, the SPD requires the following:

**3.3.1. Type and size mix**

**Principle 3.1 Market housing type and size mix**

- In order to deliver balanced and sustainable communities, the council will seek a range of dwelling types and sizes that meet the requirements of Local Plan Policy CN3 and made Neighbourhood Plan policies, having regard to the location and accessibility of the development, and the character and context of the site and surrounding area.
- The evidence highlights a borough-wide need for small family homes and homes suitable for older people wishing to downsize. Development should therefore principally focus upon a mix of two and three bedroom dwellings (particularly houses), with only a limited requirement for homes with four bedrooms or more, which should normally comprise no more than 30% of the market homes in the development.
- The mix and type of housing shall be justified as part of any submission.

6.21. The SPD requires an Affordable Housing Statement to be submitted with an outline planning application, to include:

- Headline details about the overall level of affordable housing provision and the tenure mix proposed;
- An indicative overall affordable housing mix by bedroom size;
- A commitment to comply with the detailed requirements of Local Plan Policy CN1 and this SPD, including principles about how the affordable provision will be integrated with the market housing; and
- Any associated evidence supporting deviations from policy requirements

6.22. This information is provided in section 3 of this Planning Statement, as set out above. However, noting the publication of the Ministerial Statement on First Homes on 24<sup>th</sup> May

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2021<sup>1</sup>, and the relevant updates to National Planning Practice Guidance<sup>2</sup>, the applicant is willing to work with the Council to determine the appropriate mix and tenure of affordable housing to meet its requirements, including the provision of 25% First Homes as part of the affordable housing provision if required.

*New homes in the countryside to meet a locally agreed need*

- 6.23. This is an **informal Guidance** Note published by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to provide advice on the interpretation of Policy SS6(e) of the Local Plan, which permits new homes in the countryside that meet a locally agreed need. It is not part of the development plan, nor has it been through a consultation process that would be required as part of the preparation of development plan documents or supplementary planning documents. Whilst it is therefore used by the Council as informal guidance in relation to Policy SS6(e), it should be noted that it is not afforded any material weight as a statutory or supplementary planning document. Moreover, any weight that might be afforded to it is de minimis in the light of the fact that the Council accepts that Policy SS6 of the Local Plan is out-of-date, and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable applies, and little weight is afforded to Policy SS6 of the Local Plan. By association therefore, the informal Guidance Note relating to the interpretation of Policy SS6(e) should therefore be afforded little weight.
- 6.24. Noting this context, whilst little weight is afforded to this informal Guidance Note, the tests in criterion SS6e are in two parts. The first part (e) sets out the overall limits of the exception (small scale, of four dwellings or less of a scale and type that meet a locally agreed need) whilst the second part (criteria ix – xi) then sets out detailed criteria for proposals that are within that exception. Therefore, a proposal that can satisfy the first part of criterion (e) will fall within the exception as a matter of principle, but the specific details then need to be considered in terms of the criteria of the second part of the policy.
- 6.25. The Note sets out that a proposal which could not satisfy the exception should not therefore be accepted even if it might otherwise comply with the detailed criteria in the policy.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-statements/detail/2021-05-24/hlws48>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes>

However, as noted above (and discussed in more detail in Section 9 of this Planning Statement), Policy SS6 of the Local Plan is out-of-date, and limited weight is afforded to the criterion therein, in particular the dwelling threshold of 4 dwellings. On the basis that the local plan, viewed as a whole, is failing to deliver sufficient housing to meet the minimum five-year housing land supply requirement, the four dwelling threshold cap on new homes in countryside areas as set out in policy SS6 is out of date such that a scheme above this stated threshold should not be a reason for refusing the planning application.

- 6.26. Whilst the informal Guidance Note states that a statement should be provided with each application to clearly demonstrate how the policy requirement would be met, and this should be supported by a local housing needs assessment commissioned by the applicant, or up-to-date evidence published by the Borough Council or the Parish Council, which is related to the local area, the status of this Note is limited.
- 6.27. In terms of guidance relating to the requirements for information on local housing need to support planning applications, the Note sets out the type of information that should be provided, including that the proposal would meet a specific and clearly identified unmet housing need in the local area in terms of number, size type and tenure. The evidence should seek the views of local residents and the Parish Council.

Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD

- 6.28. The Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD adds further detail to the Local Plan policies, in particular Policy EM1 (Landscape). The SPD offers further detail on the evidence base that should be used to inform the design of development proposals in connection with landscape character and visual amenity matters:

**Box L1: Key local planning policy and evidence base documents that should inform the design of development proposals**

- Design and Sustainability SPD<sup>4</sup> (BDBC, 2018)
- Borough Landscape Assessment<sup>5</sup> (BDBC, July 2001)
- Countryside Design Summary (BDBC, **Appendix 4.1** of this document)
- Urban Character Study for Basingstoke<sup>6</sup> (BDBC, 2008)
- North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan<sup>7</sup>
- Made and emerging Neighbourhood Plans<sup>8</sup>
- Historic Landscape Characterisations<sup>9</sup>
- Conservation area appraisal SPDs
- Village Design Statements<sup>10</sup>

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6.29. The SPD contains a number of other principles that are addressed in the supporting information submitted with this application, in particular, the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Ecological Appraisal and Tree Reports.

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

6.30. The National Planning Policy Framework is also a relevant 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...”**

6.31. 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.

6.32. Paragraph 11 of the NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Paragraph 11 (c) notes that development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay.

6.33. However, relevant to this proposal, the NPPF makes it clear at paragraph 11(d) that where a Local Planning Authority cannot demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, the presumption in favour of sustainable development (the tilted balance) should apply, and planning permission should be granted unless the application of the policies in the NPPF provide a clear

reason for refusing the development, or any adverse impacts of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF when taken as a whole.

6.34. As set out in paragraph 60, the NPPF is clear that the Government's objective is to boost significantly the supply of homes, and in doing so, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.

6.35. In this context, it is clear that Councils should take every opportunity to boost the supply of housing within their administrative areas.

6.36. Paragraph 78 of the NPPF notes that in rural areas, planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs:

**"...planning policies and decisions should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. Local planning authorities should support opportunities to bring forward rural exception sites that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs, and consider whether allowing some market housing on these sites would help to facilitate this."**

6.37. Paragraph 79 notes that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities:

**"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."**

6.38. Paragraph 81 of the NPPF also makes it clear that:

**"Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development."**

6.39. With regard to transport, paragraph 105 states:

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**“The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”** (My underlining)

6.40. Paragraph 110 of the NPPF sets out that in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be taken up, given the type of development proposed and its location.

6.41. Paragraph 111 goes on to state that:

**“Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts of the road network would be severe.”**

6.42. With regard to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, the NPPF states at paragraph 174f that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other measures, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

#### Emerging Local Plan

6.43. The Council has recently undertaken an Issues and Options consultation to inform the Local Plan Update, with consultation closing on 9th November 2020.

6.44. The consultation is supported by various technical documents, including a Settlement Study Part 1. The purpose of this Study is to consider the sustainability of different settlements across the Borough and group them into five Categories. The Categories reflect the relative size, availability of local services and facilities and accessibility to public transport and larger facilities, perhaps in nearby settlements, and are defined as: 1. Principal Service Centre; 2. Large Local Service Centre; 3. Small Local Service Centre; 4. Large Village; and 5. Small Village. Highclere is identified as falling within Category 5, Small Village. The Study notes that some limited growth could potentially be considered as suitable in Category 5 settlements in order

to meet local social, economic and community needs and to maintain the vitality of these rural communities. The suitability of different levels of growth is to be considered through Part 2 of the Study.

- 6.45. Section 2 of Part 1 of the Study reviews relevant national planning policy and recognises that the NPPF identifies that in rural areas, planning policies should be responsive to local circumstances and support housing developments that reflect local needs. It notes the importance of locating housing in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. In doing so, it recognises that planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.
- 6.46. Importantly, the Study notes at paragraph 2.2.8 those aspects of national planning policy (particularly paragraphs 78, 79 and 80) suggest that the Local Plan Update should plan for additional development in rural areas where it would meet needs and enhance or maintain rural communities (emphasis added).
- 6.47. Paragraph 2.3.2 of the Study goes on to recognise that the current adopted Local Plan does not explicitly categorise the settlements within the Borough into tiers based on sustainability principles. Paragraph 2.3.4 explains that the Study therefore provides an evidence base to review and update the Council's current approach to categorising settlements, based on their sustainability, and to reflect latest national guidance and best practice.
- 6.48. In terms of identifying the settlements to be assessed, the aim of the Study was to focus on the largest and most sustainable settlements. Paragraph 3.2.3 notes that the approach captures all existing towns and villages which have a Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) and also a number of other rural villages which do not currently have defined boundaries, but which do have sizeable populations and where opportunities may exist to enhance and sustain their community into the future. Based on the approach, 24 settlements were considered as part of the Study, including six which do not currently have defined SPBs in the adopted Local Plan.
- 6.49. The Study sets out the relevant characteristics that justify the identification of Ashford Hill as a Category 5 Small Village:

Settlement	Summary
Ashford Hill	<p>Ashford Hill meets the characteristics of Category 5 in respect of population and service and facility provision, as it has a population size of 190 residents and meets the requirement of providing Key Services and Facilities that provide at least two different functions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community/village hall;</li> <li>• A primary school; and</li> <li>• A Public House.</li> </ul> <p>As the settlement includes Key Services and Facilities providing three functions it is not required to be within accessible distance (5 km) of any other key service or facility.</p>

6.50. In summary, the Study notes at paragraph 2.2.8 that:

**“These aspects of national policy suggest that the LPU should plan for additional development in the rural areas where it would meet needs and enhance or maintain rural communities. Service provision and accessibility are key elements of sustainability and should inform the role of different settlements as part of a future development strategy. This has provided a fundamental basis for the settlement study.”**

Local Plan Issues and Options Consultation

6.51. In considering the key elements of a spatial strategy for the Borough, the Issues and Options consultation notes that with regard to the number of new homes required, the need for 884 new homes a year up to 2038 would lead to a requirement of around 6,000 to 7,000 more new homes. The Local Plan Update will need to allocate new sites for these homes. Whilst there is a recognition that the starting point for the delivery of these new homes will be focusing on brownfield sites within settlement boundaries, the consultation document accepts at paragraph 7.4.5 that new greenfield sites will be required.

6.52. In terms of the options for accommodating development on greenfield sites, one option presented is that the proportion of development taking place in and around the Borough’s smaller and more rural settlements (Category 4 and 5) should be increased. Ashford Hill is identified as a Category 5 settlement (Small Village) and is already designated with a

Settlement Policy Boundary in the adopted Local Plan. This is in recognition of the fact that these Categories are identified as the more sustainable locations for new development in the Settlement Study Part 1.

- 6.53. Section 7.9 of the Issues and Options consultation sets out the approach to new homes in the countryside. Paragraph 7.9.2 notes that some flexibility is needed to enable new homes to be built where there are local needs and the vitality of rural communities will be enhanced.
- 6.54. Paragraph 10.2.1 acknowledges that there is a high level of affordable housing need in the Borough, with more than 4,000 households on the Council's housing register.

### Summary

- 6.55. With regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development, notwithstanding the fact that the Local Plan was adopted over five years ago, given the five-year housing land supply deficit, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the NPPF 11d applies. There are new footnote 6 constraints to disengage the application of the tilted planning balance. In the event of any adverse impacts were to arise from the proposal, these should be weighed against the benefits arising from the proposal. Provided any adverse effects do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the clear benefits of the scheme, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply, and planning permission should be granted. The benefits that would arise from the scheme should be weighed into the planning balance when considering the impact of the proposal and its benefits. The weight of these in the planning balance is discussed in the conclusion section of this Statement.
- 6.56. Firstly however, the next section of this Statement considers in more detail the housing need and supply, including the need for affordable housing, in Basingstoke and Deane Borough.

## 7. HOUSING NEED AND SUPPLY

7.1. This Section provides an overview of the housing context in Basingstoke and Deane Borough in relation to the following elements:

- Rate of housing delivery against the adopted Local Plan 2011-29 housing requirements;
- Maintaining a five-year supply of housing;
- Relevance and weight to be attached to past under delivery; and
- Affordable housing need and supply, including evidence of local need.

7.2. The application site located within north Hampshire forms part of the key area lying to the south-west of London as acknowledged by Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership. The area fulfils an important economic role and with it should provide a healthy supply of housing to support the local and regional economy.

### **Rate of Housing Delivery against the adopted Local Plan 2011-29 requirements, including five-year housing land supply and past under delivery**

7.3. The first three bullet points listed in paragraph 7.1 above are dealt with under this section. Despite the economic and housing pressures affecting Basingstoke and Deane Borough, housing delivery has varied over recent years, and as illustrated in Table 1 below, has not resolved the deficit which has arisen against its Local Plan.

**Table 1 – Comparison of housing delivery in Basingstoke & Deane Borough over lifespan of Local Plan 2011-29 using trajectories of adopted Plan and the 2018/19 AMR**

Year	Cumulative target in policy SS2 (850dpa)	Adopted Local Plan forecasted completions			Forecasted completions in AMR 2018/19		
		Annual	Cumulative	Extent of shortfall/ surplus compared to Cumulative target	Annual	Cumulative	Extent of shortfall/ surplus compared to Cumulative target
2011-12	850	693	693	-157	693	693	-157
2012-13	1,700	303	996	-704	303	996	-704
2013-14	2,550	531	1,527	-1,023	531	1,527	-1,023
2014-15	3,400	424	1,951	-1,449	424	1,951	-1,449
2015-16	4,250	520	2,471	-1,779	471	2,422	-1,828
2016-17	5,100	906	3,377	-1,723	555	2,977	-2,123
2107-18	5,950	1,231	4,608	-1,342	828	3,805	-2,145
2018-19	6,800	1,413	6,021	-779	1,200	5,005	-1,795
2019-20	7,650	1,205	7,226	-424	1,507	6,512	-1,138
2020-21	8,500	1,260	8,486	-14	1,547	8,059	-441
2021-22	9,350	1,174	9,660	310	993	9,052	-298
2022-23	10,200	1,135	10,795	595	651	9,703	-497
2023-24	11,050	1,036	11,831	781	553	10,256	-794
2024-25	11,900	1,016	12,847	947	991	11,247	-653
2025-26	12,750	924	13,771	1,021	1,112	12,359	-391
2026-27	13,600	827	14,598	998	1,094	13,453	-147
2027-28	14,450	644	15,242	792	898	14,351	-99
2028-29	15,300	416	15,658	358	680	15,031	-269

7.4. Table 1 confirms that completions for the 8-year period 2011/12 to 2018/19 in Basingstoke and Deane totalled 5,005 dwellings. This results in a shortfall of 1,795 dwellings against the

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requirement for 6,800 dwellings for that period (850dpa x 8yrs). This represents a significant shortfall<sup>3</sup> against the number of dwellings that should have been provided.

- 7.5. Paragraph 5.11 of the Council's Monitoring Report 2018/19 (section 5), which details its Housing Land Supply Position Statement as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, states that it has applied the 'Liverpool approach' to addressing the shortfall accrued in the period 2011 to 2019. This seeks to spread the shortfall over the remainder of the plan period.
- 7.6. The justification for this is appears to be the Local Plan Inspector's acceptance of this residual approach, albeit the document was examined under the 2012 NPPF and consequently is inconsistent with the advice associated with the 2021 NPPF. This inconsistency therefore reduces the weight afforded to the Council's reliance on the Liverpool approach as confirmed in paragraph 219 of the NPPF.
- 7.7. However, the current version of National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) makes it clear that any shortfall accrued since the base date of the adopted plan should be met in the next five-year period. This is also known as the Sedgefield approach (ID Ref: 68-031-20190722). Importantly, the NPPG post-dates the Local Plan Inspector's Report and establishes a default position in respect of the 'Sedgefield approach'.
- 7.8. The need to address the shortfall in the current five-year period (as opposed to applying the Liverpool approach) is expressly set out in the NPPG. Moreover, it is justified in the circumstances given the worsening affordability ratios being experienced in Basingstoke and Deane Borough. Applying the Liverpool approach simply serves to prevent otherwise sustainable sites from coming forward for development now in order to address the backlog of unmet housing need.
- 7.9. On the basis of the Council's approach, residualising the shortfall means that some of the 1,795 dwelling shortfall that has accrued since 2011 will not be provided until 2028/29. This is wholly at odds with the Government's approach to significantly boosting the supply of homes (paragraph 60 of the NPPF refers). It means homes that are needed now are not

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<sup>3</sup> Shortfall of over 26% (1,795 / 6,800)

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provided until the latter part of the plan period. This serves to artificially constrain much needed growth.

- 7.10. Paragraphs 93 to 99 of the Local Plan Inspector’s Report (6<sup>th</sup> April 2016) considered the application of the appropriate approach to meeting the shortfall accrued in the period 2011 to 2015. The Inspector (paragraph 94) indicated:

**“The Council’s reasons for pursuing the Liverpool approach are linked to its partial reliance on several large sites, which require the provision of significant infrastructure prior to the completion of the first dwellings. These major allocations, which I deal with below in more detail, are sustainably located, near to the main urban areas, especially Basingstoke; they can achieve economies of scale and important community and environmental provision. In my view, these benefits outweigh the delay in their implementation. I therefore support the use of the Liverpool approach for Basingstoke and Deane.”**

- 7.11. The Inspector (paragraph 95) noted that **“the housing trajectory [of the Local Plan] shows projected annual completions to exceed 1,000dpa from 2017/18 through to 2024/25. It shows that the shortfall would be made up completely over a period of 7 years, i.e. by 2021/22.”** It was within this context that the shortfall would be resolved by 2021/22 (i.e. within 7 years of his report) that the Inspector that he accepted that the Liverpool method of resolving the shortfall was appropriate (paragraph 96).

- 7.12. Matters have since moved on. The NPPG has been published and this clearly establishes a default position in respect of the ‘Sedgefield approach’. Moreover, the 1,795 dwelling shortfall that has accrued in the 8-year period 2011 to 2019 is equivalent to failing to provide any houses in over two full years of that period (on the basis of an 850dpa requirement). It is not acceptable (nor is it justified) to delay the delivery of homes to meet this identified need until the end of the plan period, although as explained below, this is not now envisaged within Basingstoke and Deane Borough.

- 7.13. The trajectory of the adopted Local Plan relied upon by the Inspector is detailed in Table 1 alongside that in the latest Authority Monitoring Report, and this demonstrates that the expected provision of over 1,000dpa for 8 consecutive years is no longer expected – this has been reduced to just 5 over the entire plan period.

- 7.14. As Table 1 indicates, whilst the Local Plan Inspector had accepted the Council's contention that its shortfall compared to its annual housing target would be addressed by 2020/21, the latest trajectory (2018/19 AMR) now indicates that the deficit will never be resolved. Therefore, even applying the Liverpool method as advocated by the Authority will result in a complete failure of the Local Plan to deliver its objectively assessed housing need since there are currently insufficient deliverable or developable sites within the Borough to resolve this.
- 7.15. It is consequentially essential that to achieve the Government's objective of boosting significantly the supply of housing (NPPF paragraph 60) the Sedgefield approach to resolve the deficit is applied. This increased boost in housing will result in greater potential for the Authority to actually achieve its housing needs, especially because, as detailed later in this section, the Council is subject to a very substantial shortfall in its housing land supply. It is imperative therefore to ensure that this is addressed at the earliest opportunity.
- 7.16. A similar point in respect of the validity of the Liverpool approach advocated by the Local Plan Inspector was expressed in relation to an appeal for up to 50 dwellings on land at Firs Road in Alderbury, Wiltshire. The appeal was allowed by decision dated 7<sup>th</sup> December 2018. In that appeal, Wiltshire Council was relying upon the application of the Liverpool approach on the basis that the Core Strategy (adopted in January 2015, and hence almost 3 years old at the time of the appeal decision – a younger plan compared to the situation arising in Basingstoke and Deane where its Local Plan was adopted in May 2016, nearly four and a half years ago) uses the Liverpool approach to cater for the shortfall in housing supply.
- 7.17. Notwithstanding the use of the Liverpool approach by the Wiltshire Core Strategy Inspector, the appeal Inspector in that appeal concluded in favour of applying the Sedgefield approach, with paragraph 33 stating as follows:

**“The most recent of all of these other Wiltshire decisions is dated December 2017 and they all pre-date the latest changes to the Government's Planning Practice Guidance. This now establishes a default position in respect of the ‘Sedgefield approach’. Moreover, as explained by the appellant's HLS witness, the CS housing requirement is disaggregated into different HMAs and there would be no inconsistency if the ‘Sedgefield approach’ was used for the SWHMA. Approximately four years after the CS Inspector's report was received the LPA has yet to meaningfully review the**

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**effectiveness of the ‘Liverpool approach’ in catering for the shortfall in supply across the district. I consider it appropriate to now use the ‘Sedgefield approach’ in the SWHMA.**” (My underlining)

- 7.18. There remains a significant shortfall in Basingstoke and Deane Borough (equivalent to failing to provide any houses for 2 of the last 8 monitoring years) and the approach to residualising the shortfall over the plan period has not been effective in significantly boosting the supply of homes. Indeed, as illustrated, the Authority’s latest trajectory (see Table 1 above) shows it will never achieve the cumulative requirement of Policy SS2 in any of the remaining years of the Local Plan through to 2029. This only serves to demonstrate how ineffective the Liverpool approach is in seeking to meet identified needs and that to achieve the significant boost advocated by the Government (NPPF, paragraph 60), the Sedgefield approach must be applied.
- 7.19. Furthermore, in considering the implications of the latest trajectory’s failure to provide sufficient homes to meet the Borough’s housing need, it is also important to compare the Authority’s track record in forecasting delivery. This is shown in Table 2 below which includes the trajectory from the adopted Local Plan together with the annual updates in AMRs up to and including that for April 2019.
- 7.20. Table 3 then goes on to illustrate the accuracy of the Council’s forecasts for housing delivery when compared with the delivery in the subsequent year alongside how the subsequent expectations would have impacted upon the realism of the original. This is a separate concern to the applicant’s contention regarding the overall deliverability of housing land within the Borough.

**Table 2 – Summary of projected completions for Basingstoke and Deane for each year since April 2015**

Year	Forecasted completions over plan period				
	Adopted Local Plan Trajectory (at April 2015 base-date)	April 2016 from AMR	April 2017 from AMR	April 2018 from AMR	April 2019 from AMR
2011-12	693	693	693	693	693
2012-13	303	303	303	303	303
2013-14	531	531	531	531	531
2014-15	424	424	424	424	424
2015-16	520	471	471	471	471
2016-17	906	727	555	555	555
2107-18	1,231	978	1,028	828	828
2018-19	1,413	1,564	1,485	1,453	1,200
2019-20	1,205	1,751	1,755	1,689	1,507
2020-21	1,260	1,423	1,580	1,372	1,547
2021-22	1,174	1,093	1,081	1,188	993
2022-23	1,135	1,189	1,147	991	651
2023-24	1,036	1,001	1,128	981	553
2024-25	1,016	915	1,004	1,092	991
2025-26	924	855	820	961	1,112
2026-27	827	866	745	916	1,094
2027-28	644	769	809	758	898
2028-29	416	632	747	649	680
Total	15,658	16,185	16,306	15,855	15,031

**Table 3 - Assessment of realism of Council forecasts<sup>4</sup>**

Base date of forecast	Accuracy for next year	Accuracy over 5 years when assessed 1 year later through AMR
01-Apr-15	90.58%	104.09%
01-Apr-16	76.34%	99.38%
01-Apr-17	80.54%	94.24%
01-Apr-18	82.59%	88.12%

<sup>4</sup> Calculated as actual delivery in year compared to forecast i.e. at April 2015, 90.58% represents the actual delivery of 471 dwellings / the forecasted figure of 520. For a five-year period, same approach is adhered to i.e. comparing the 2015-20 forecast at April 2015 with that envisaged at April 2016 (i.e. actual for 1 year with a forecast for 4 years which results in 104.09%.)

- 7.21. Tables 2 and 3 above show that the Council has been consistently overly optimistic in its expectations of housing delivery in the subsequent year. This therefore supports the applicant's doubts regarding the expected forecast of housing delivery associated with the assessment of five-year supply, notwithstanding the recognition in the assessment at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 that Basingstoke and Deane Council does not have a 5-year supply.
- 7.22. This over optimism is also reflected in the assessments of 5-year supply undertaken since sources of supply were confirmed through the Local Plan adoption. This again supports the applicant's view regarding the flawed assessment of land supply by the Council.
- 7.23. What is clear from the above analysis is that the Council will not achieve its housing requirements within the Plan period, and this provides weight in favour of permitting deliverable and developable proposals for residential development to contribute towards the resolution of the five-year housing land supply shortfall.
- 7.24. This analysis of the five year-housing land supply position, and the conclusion drawn from it, is corroborated in a recent appeal decision, dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020, in relation to a proposal for 12no. dwellings on land south of Silchester Road and west of Vyne Road, Bramley<sup>5</sup>. Relevant paragraphs from the Inspector's Decision notice are set out below:

**"11...However, the weight to be attributed to Policies SS1, SS6 and H1 is dependent on whether the Council is delivering and is likely to deliver by the end of the Plan period its housing requirement of 15,300 new dwellings.**

**12. There is already a shortfall of 898 dwellings, even accepting the Council's position that the shortfall should be made up during the whole length of the Plan period (via the 'Liverpool' method). That is more than the annual requirement of 850 new homes during the Plan period. The Council conceded that it will not be able to deliver 15,300 new homes over the Plan period. It also conceded that, by the end of the Plan period, it will only have met its cumulative housing requirements in 6 or 7 out of 18 years.**

**13. The Council is seeking to address this by reviewing the Plan. But this is a requirement as set out in LP Policy SS4 if a 5YHLS cannot be maintained over the whole Plan period, as it the case now. It confirmed that the very first stage of such a review – the Issues and Options consultation of the LP**

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<sup>5</sup> Land south of Silchester Road and west of Vyne Road, Bramley: Appeal ref APP/H1705/W/20/3256041

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**Update – only concluded on 9 November and the timetable for this review does not anticipate adoption before 2024. The Council agreed at the Inquiry that none of the policies or options in this early draft of the Plan Review can be given any weight at this stage in the process, as per NPPF paragraph 48. It also agreed, in view of this, that there is a need to release additional land for housing now and that the LP Review will inevitably have to allocate additional greenfield land to be released for new housing. (My underlining)**

**17. It was accepted at the Inquiry by the Council that, in the circumstances set out above, conflict of the proposal with Policies SS1, SS6 and H1 should not be held against it. I wholeheartedly agree. In these circumstances the site’s location outside any SPB does not justify refusal of the application per se.”**

7.25. From the above analysis and commentary, it is clear that there is a pressing and current need to release additional land for housing in Basingstoke and Deane, and moreover, that any future strategy to meet housing needs will require the allocation of greenfield sites to meet this need.

7.26. Moreover, it is important is that there should be a recognition that this issue in part has arisen in the Borough from the reliance in the Local Plan on large strategic housing allocations, that are failing to deliver the number of new homes required. In this context, small and medium sized sites such as that put forward in this application, can assist with addressing this situation and can indeed help with addressing this shortfall in the immediate future. The role of small and medium sized sites is articulated in the appeal decision on land at Bramley<sup>6</sup>:

**“69. NPPF paragraph 68 states that small and medium sized sites – like this – can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area and are often built-out relatively quickly...This is especially important in Basingstoke where the supply is dependent to a large extent on large public sector sites, which are clearly failing to deliver the number of new homes required by the housing trajectory.”**

7.27. It is evident from the above analysis that the application site could help to address unmet housing needs in Basingstoke and Deane Borough, and could be delivered in the short term to assist with addressing this unmet need as quickly as possible.

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<sup>6</sup> Land south of Silchester Road and west of Vyne Road, Bramley: Appeal ref APP/H1705/W/20/3256041

## 8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEED AND SUPPLY

- 8.1. The provision of affordable housing is a key part of the planning system. A community's need for affordable housing was first enshrined as a material consideration in PPG3 in 1992 and has continued to play an important role in subsequent national planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (2012, 2018, 2019 and 2021 versions).
- 8.2. The NPPF is a material planning consideration for the purpose of planning decisions. It is important in setting out the role of affordable housing in the planning and decision-making process. The NPPF sets a strong emphasis on the delivery of sustainable development, including affordable homes, at paragraphs 20 and 63.
- 8.3. Paragraph 60 clearly sets out the Government's aim to "boost significantly the supply of homes". To both achieve higher housing supply and address the needs of the whole community, paragraphs 61 and 62 indicate:

**"To determine the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment, conducted using the standard method in national planning guidance – unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach which also reflects current and future demographic trends and market signals. In addition to the local housing need figure, any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for.**

**Within this context, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies (including, but not limited to, those who require affordable housing, families with children, older people, students, people with disabilities, service families, travellers, people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes)." (My underlining)**

- 8.4. The need for affordable housing and importance is emphasised in many Government publications, including:
- House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts – Planning and the Broken Housing Market (19<sup>th</sup> June 2019);

- Reaffirmation of the Government support for affordable housing in press release of 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020<sup>7</sup>;
- Planning White Paper – August 2020

*Affordable Housing Delivery and Supply*

- 8.5. The Affordable Housing Needs Assessment (October 2015) provides an appraisal of the Borough’s affordable housing needs. This indicated an annual net need (2015-29) for 296 affordable dwellings (Table 3.13) and can be compared with the overall housing need of 850 dwellings as set out in the adopted Local Plan. This equates to 35%.
- 8.6. As indicated in Table 4 below (sourced from the Authority’s Annual Monitoring Reports), the Council has delivered 866 affordable homes in the period April 2015 to March 2019, equating to 216.5 affordable dwellings annually.

**Table 4: Net delivery of affordable homes in Basingstoke & Deane Borough 2015-19**

Year	Gross housing completions			Affordable Housing Need Assessment	
	All	Affordable	%	Affordable need	Shortfall
2015/16	494	73	15	296	-223
2016/17	583	136	23	296	-160
2017/18	863	243	28	296	-53
2018/19	1,217	414	34	296	118
Total	3,157	866		3,087	- 318

- 8.7. As can be seen from Table 4, the delivery of 866 affordable dwellings since April 2015 should be viewed in the context that this represents an under provision of 318 dwellings as assessed by the Affordable Housing Need Assessment to achieve the annual requirement of 296 affordable units.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/jenrick-acts-to-safeguard-affordable-homes-during-pandemic>

- 8.8. Consequently, it is evident that there is an ongoing shortfall in affordable housing delivery. With the expected continued under-delivery of housing to meet the Borough's identified needs for the remainder of the Plan period (to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2029), it is clear that the Borough's significant need for affordable housing is not likely to be resolved in the short to medium term.
- 8.9. Table 5 below provides a review of the changes in the Council's Housing Register over the period since the base date of the Local Housing Need Assessment. This indicates a significant unmet need for affordable homes in the Borough. The table indicates the changes since 2015, and this confirms that there is a significant need which continues to grow and has not been addressed by the level of affordable housing provision in the Borough.

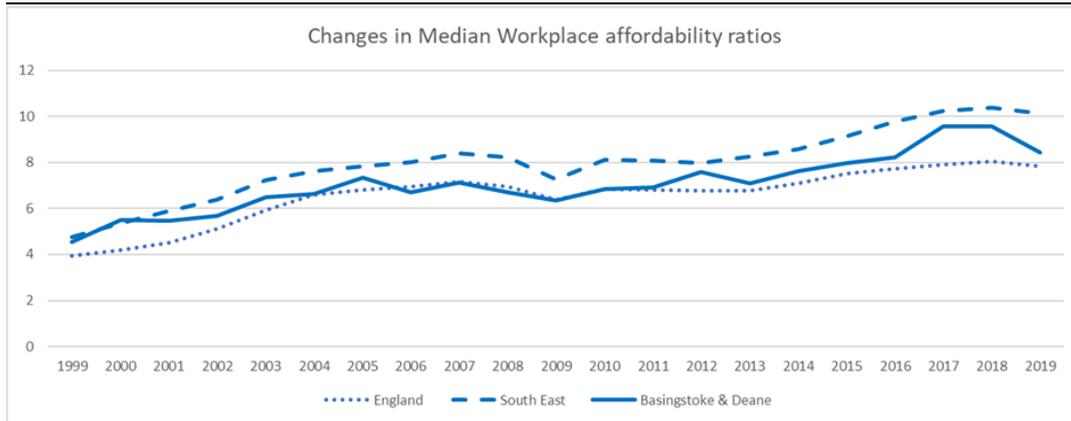
**Table 5 - Comparison of Housing Register Changes in Basingstoke & Deane Borough<sup>8</sup>**

	1/4/15	1/4/16	1/4/17	1/4/18	1/4/19
Number on housing register	7,923	2,350	3,037	3,674	4,254
Those in a reasonable preference category	4,196	2,350	3,037	3,674	4,251
Homeless	2	214	191	192	22

- 8.10. Table 5 indicates that insufficient new affordable homes have been completed in the Borough to off-set the increased demand for such properties which has resulted in the size of the register remaining broadly constant. Therefore, to make an effective contribution towards addressing the requirements of households as indicated on the Borough's housing register, it is essential that further affordable homes are delivered, and this could be achieved as part of this proposal.
- 8.11. The failure to meet the identified needs of affordable housing is a dire situation indicating that the Council is not fulfilling the objectives in paragraph 59 of the NPPF. The continued under delivery of affordable housing has contributed to the worsening of the affordability ratios in the Borough as indicated in the chart below.

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<sup>8</sup> Data obtained from <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-data>.



#### Affordability ratios in Basingstoke

- 8.12. The chart also shows that affordability ratios in Basingstoke and Deane Borough have more than doubled between 1999 and 2019. Since 2001, the ratio has consistently been above that for England. This more than doubling in the affordability ratio has occurred because of a failure to deliver sufficient homes to meet market and affordable need in the Borough. This is illustrated by the extent that the affordability ratio of the Borough has remained above those for England and the region. Consequently, it is essential that further increases in house building occur to improve affordability, especially given the continued under-delivery of supply.
- 8.13. It is clear from the evidence presented above that the need for affordable housing applies universally across Basingstoke and Deane Borough, and does not discriminate in terms of need from an urban to a rural context. Nevertheless, the delivery of affordable homes is clearly more problematic in rural areas given the policy framework that favours the provision of affordable homes as part of large strategic allocations for housing development.
- 8.14. Policy SS6 (New Housing in the Countryside) of the Local Plan, whilst afforded limited weight in view of the Council's absence of a five-year housing land supply, refers to permitting small scale residential proposals that meet a locally agreed need. The supporting text to Policy SS6 explains that the policy allows small-scale new residential development in the countryside in limited circumstances, where it can be demonstrated that it would meet a local need, as agreed in consultation with the parish/town Council.
- 8.15. In the light of this, whilst the policy is afforded limited weight as a material consideration, given that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, as per the informal guidance note relating to the need for new homes in the countryside, the applicant

has sought to engage with the Parish Council and local residents to ascertain further details regarding the local need for housing, including affordable housing in Ashford Hill.

- 8.16. An ongoing need for new homes in Ashford Hill, in particular, for local people and smaller families, remains.
- 8.17. The Council's Housing SPD highlights a Borough wide housing mix requirement. The scheme responds to the focus on smaller family type accommodation across the market and affordable sectors identified by the Council in its SPD.
- 8.18. Questions regarding local housing needs were asked through the public consultation exercise undertaken in advance of the submission of the application<sup>9</sup>. An extract from the Statement of Community Involvement is illustrated below.

Q: Do you believe the Borough needs new homes



- 22% believe the Borough needs new homes and Ashford Hill should contribute
- 33% do not believe the Borough needs new homes
- 44% believe the Borough needs new homes, but they should be placed elsewhere

**Analysis:** 66% of respondents believe the Borough should accommodate new homes, with those indicated they should be placed elsewhere doing so on the basis that Ashford Hill is a hamlet with few local services.

**Extract from the Statement of Community Involvement on housing need**

- 8.19. This indicates that 66% of respondents agreed there was a need for additional new homes, of which 22% felt that these should be provided at Ashford Hill.
- 8.20. The above local housing need assessment confirms that there is a need for additional new homes in Ashford Hill and that these should be provided locally. The assessment also confirms a degree of support for these needs to be met through this scheme on this application site. This provides the necessary housing needs evidence to help justify the proposed development in policy terms.
- 8.21. In addition, the Council's informal advice note on the implementation of Policy SS6(e), whilst afforded limited weight given the out-of-date status of Policy SS6, requires evidence of an identified need for proposed homes, and suggests that this should include surveys with local

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<sup>9</sup> See Statement of Community Involvement submitted with application

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residents. Further engagement on this point is also suggested with the Parish Council. The public consultation exercise detailed in Section 5 of this Statement, and summarised above, demonstrates that the applicant has responded to the principles set out in the Council's informal guidance note on the implementation of Policy SS6(e). It demonstrates a local need for new homes, including affordable homes, within Ashford Hill, which in itself forms part of the wider demand and unmet need for housing in Basingstoke and Deane Borough.

- 8.22. Based on the analysis offered above, it is clear that evidence exists that at both at a Borough-wide level, and at the local level, there is an unmet need for affordable housing, which manifests as a requirement to provide new homes to meet that need in small villages, including Highclere.
- 8.23. This unmet need for affordable housing is corroborated by a recent appeal decision dated 4<sup>th</sup> December on land in Bramley, with the Inspector noting at paragraph 68 that:

**“68. Added to this, apart from providing new homes in a Borough that is failing to deliver its housing requirement year on year, the proposal would provide a policy-compliant 40% or 5 affordable homes in a Borough that has an acute backlog of some 914 affordable units...”**

- 8.24. A step change in the delivery of affordable housing is therefore required if the Council is to get anywhere near the accepted identified need and begin to address the dysfunctions of the local housing market. Such a step change would be consistent with the thrust of paragraph 59 of the NPPF, to boost significantly the supply of homes, including at the local level where they are needed, and represent a clear exceptional circumstance and public interest factor associated with the application proposal.

*Weight to be afforded to the proposed Affordable Housing contribution*

- 8.25. Planning applications should be considered individually on their merits. The social need for affordable housing is an important material planning consideration and making social progress in tackling such needs is an important element of sustainable development running through the NPPF.
- 8.26. The importance of affordable housing as a material consideration has been reflected in a number of Secretary of State (SoS) and Planning Inspector decisions. A consistent theme is

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the significant amount of weight which is attached to affordable housing relative to other material planning considerations in the planning balance.

8.27. Of particular relevance is the weight to be attached to affordable housing provision even in situations where Councils believe they have a sufficient supply of housing land and other adverse impacts have been identified. This does not however apply in Basingstoke and Deane Borough with the acknowledged shortfall in overall housing land supply.

8.28. In this regard the Secretary of State's Decision (13<sup>th</sup> February 2017) (APP/K3415/A/14/2224354) for land and buildings off Watery Lane, Curborough, Lichfield is relevant. The Secretary of State's decision letter at paragraph 44 confirmed an existence of a five-year housing land supply. Despite this the Secretary of State still attached "very substantial weight" to the benefits of the provision of affordable and market housing (paragraph 53). As part of the planning balance and overall conclusion, the Secretary of State also gave modest weight to the landscape and visual harm from the development, considerable weight to the harm to the setting of heritage assets and considerable weight to the loss of veteran trees and ancient hedgerows (paragraph 54), a similar NPPF footnote 7 constraint to the AONB.

8.29. Despite this, the Secretary of State at paragraph 55 concluded that the social and economic benefits of providing affordable and market housing were of such importance that they outweighed this environmental harm such that the proposal represented sustainable development. This is a clear example of where the provision of housing, including affordable housing, despite the existence of a five-year housing land supply, represented significant benefits and a weighty material consideration that outweighed environmental harms.

8.30. The relevant paragraphs stated:

**"53. He attaches very substantial weight to the benefits of the provision of affordable and market housing. In doing so he considers that the appeal proposal advances the social and economic roles identified in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Framework (IR302) which are not diminished owing to the Council now being able to demonstrate a five year supply.**

**54. He gives modest weight to the landscape and visual harm from development. However, he gives considerable weight to the harm to the**

setting of Curborough Grange and Lichfield Cathedral, albeit that this is less than substantial for the purpose of 134 of the Framework. He also gives considerable weight to the loss of veteran trees and ancient hedgerows.

**55. However, the Secretary of State concludes that the social and economic benefits of providing affordable and market housing are of such importance that they outweigh the environmental harm, and that the proposal would thus represent sustainable development. Overall, therefore, he concludes that the material considerations indicate that the appeal should be allowed".** (My underlining)

8.31. In respect of an appeal decision for land to the rear of Canonbury Street, Berkeley, Gloucestershire (21st November 2016) (APP/C1625/W/15/3133335), the Inspector concluded in the planning balance section of his report at paragraphs 74 and 75 that:

**"74. I have concluded that the Council can demonstrate a deliverable five-year supply of housing land and that the proposals comprise sustainable development as described in the Framework. The identified harm to designated heritage assets is less than substantial and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits as set out above. The harm to the landscape is localised and limited. It principally affects views from the east and views looking out from the public footpath within the site. There is also conflict with the development plan, and in particular with part of Policy CP2 and with Policy CP3.**

**75. The benefits of the proposals have to be weighed against this harm. These include the stated objective of accommodating at least 11,400 additional dwellings in the District by 2031 as set out in Policy CP2. The other benefits include the provision of market housing in accordance with the Government's objective, as set out in paragraph 47 of the Framework, of boosting significantly the supply of housing. The provision of 56 units of affordable housing carries significant weight in the light of the acknowledged shortage in the District. The economic and social benefits outlined above all weigh in favour of the proposals".**

8.32. In the Secretary of State's decision in the appeal for 121 dwellings on land north of Dark Lane, Alrewas, he stated (paragraph 49):

**"The Secretary of State notes that since the inquiry closed, the Council's affordable housing requirement for the site has increased from 25% to 31%. The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector for the reasons given (IR12.71) that the need for affordable housing in the district is acknowledged to be acute and, therefore, the affordable housing element of the scheme should carry substantial weight."** (My underlining)

8.33. In paragraph 60, he concluded:

**“Weighing in favour of the proposal for the reasons given above he attaches substantial weight to the benefits of the provision of affordable housing and also attaches further significant weight to the benefits of market housing. In doing so he considers that the appeal proposal advances the social and economic roles identified in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Framework which are not diminished owing to the Council now being able to demonstrate a five year supply.”** (my underlining)

8.34. The benefits of affordable housing were also acknowledged by the Inspector in the appeal for up to 80 dwellings on land at Deerlands Road, Wingerworth. Paragraph 54 of the decision states in relation to the need for and weight to be attributed to the provision of affordable housing:

**“In addition, the need for affordable housing is agreed by the parties to be acute and significant. The Council criticised some of the details of the appellant’s approach towards consideration of affordable housing at the Inquiry, but it is clear that there is a very significant need for affordable housing in the District, and that there is very considerable doubt as to delivery. Even if one accepts the Council’s position that there is a pipeline of affordable housing coming forward in Wingerworth - which is far from clear – the provision of 40% affordable housing in the appeal scheme is a benefit. This is a very significant material consideration weighing in favour of the appeal scheme.”**

8.35. Paragraph 72 states that the **“provision of affordable housing weighs in favour of the appeal”** before paragraph 75 concludes:

**“Although I have concluded that there is a five year housing land supply in the District, based on the standard methodology, this is not a ceiling and the provision of general needs housing is a significant material consideration in the light of national policy. In addition the provision of 40% affordable housing is a very significant material consideration weighing in favour of the appeal scheme.”**

8.36. This acceptance of the benefits of affordable housing is also recognised in the appeal decision relating to a scheme for up to 60 dwellings on land off Satchell Lane, Hamble-le-Rice, Eastleigh. Notwithstanding the Inspector’s conclusion that the Council was able to show a five-year

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supply of deliverable housing land, paragraph 47 of the decision states in relation to the provision of affordable housing as follows:

**“The Council gave evidence as to how the authority has managed to achieve its current housing land supply position and the parties agreed that the Council can demonstrate a five year land supply. The Council’s evidence was that there is a figure of 7.8 years, with the appellant evidencing a 7.2 year supply. Both parties agreed that there is no need to explore the reasons for this slight difference further. At the close of the Inquiry it was suggested by the Council that the figure is around 10 years on the basis of recently released data. However again there is no need to explore this further. Overall, despite the presence of significantly more than a five year supply, the provision of market and affordable housing weighs significantly in favour of the proposal, in the light of the national policy to significantly boost the supply of homes.”**

8.37. Paragraph 64 of the decision concludes as follows:

**“As agreed by the Council, the economic and social benefits of the proposal are worthy of significant weight. Given the national objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, the provision of market and especially affordable housing carries significant weight. I appreciate the Council’s point that the economic benefits related to short term construction jobs, and the longer term boost to local spending power, could arise from any similar development. However that does not detract from the fact that this particular development offers these benefits, which I accord significant weight.”** (my underlining)

8.38. The Inspector’s decision in the Satchell Lane appeal was reviewed through the Eastleigh Borough Council v Secretary of State judgement ([2019] EWHC 1862 (Admin)). In paragraph 18, the Judge acknowledged:

**“Despite the presence of significantly more than a 5YHLS, the provision of market and affordable housing weighed significantly in favour of the proposal in light of the national policy to significantly boost the supply of homes.”**

8.39. This was followed by paragraph 20 in which the Judge highlighted that:

**“As agreed by the Council, the economic and social benefits of the proposal were worthy of significant weight and, given the national objective of**

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**significantly boosting the supply of homes, the provision of market and especially affordable housing carries significant weight.”**

8.40. The decisions above emphasise the great weight which the Secretary of State and Inspectors have, on various occasions, attached to the provision of affordable housing in the consideration of planning applications and appeals. The appropriateness of attributing great weight to the benefits of affordable housing has also been accepted by the Courts.

8.41. Some of the key points that arise from these examples are that:

- Affordable housing is an important material consideration;
- Affordable housing can be considered in its own right;
- The importance of unmet need for affordable housing being met;
- Even where there is a 5-year housing land supply, material benefits arising from affordable housing can still justify the grant of planning permission despite harm/development plan policy conflicts. Of course, the position in Basingstoke and Deane Borough is such that the importance of the provision of affordable housing is heightened further by the fact that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing; and
- That a Borough-wide deficit of affordable housing is no less important than one at local/Parish level.

8.42. It is evident from the housing context set out above that Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has under-delivered against its development plan requirements and strategies. National policy, and Secretary of State and Inspector decisions, highlight the importance of the delivery of new affordable homes, across the board.

8.43. In all respects, notwithstanding the benefits arising from the provision of affordable homes, very substantial weight should be attached to the benefit of providing additional new market and affordable homes in Basingstoke and Deane Borough, and in particular in Ashford Hill, based on evidenced local needs, through this application.

8.44. In the context of the matters discussed above, including the fact that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of housing, the NPPF requires Councils to support the Government’s objective of boosting significantly the supply of homes. Moreover, in the light of the absence of a five-year supply of housing, the presumption in favour of sustainable

development would apply by virtue of paragraph 11 d) footnote 7, whereby the absence of a five-year housing land supply means that the policies which are most important for determining the application, effectively the strategic policies relating to housing land supply, are out of date, subject to any of the constraints in footnote 7 applying. However, documents that support this planning application (LVIA, Heritage Statement, DAS, Flood Risk Assessment, Ecological Assessments and this Planning Statement) confirm that footnote 7 constraints do not arise such that NPPF Paragraph 11 d) remains engaged.

- 8.45. Therefore, the planning application should also be assessed in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and any adverse impacts arising from the development of the site would need to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the scheme. These benefits would include the Government's objective to boost significantly the supply of housing for all groups in the population, which includes those in need of affordable housing.
- 8.46. For the reasons set out in the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and Design and Access Statement that accompany this application, the impacts that would arise in landscape and environmental terms from the development of the site do not provide clear reasons for refusing the application. Accordingly, if no other adverse impacts are identified, planning permission can be granted without delay. In the event of any adverse impacts, it is clear from the evidence provided that these do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the clear benefits of the scheme in either the unweighted or tilted planning balance. These matters are discussed in the Main Issues section of this Planning Statement as set out below.

## 9. MAIN ISSUES

### Principle of development

- 9.1. Applications for development must be considered in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF is a material consideration in determining applications, and due weight should be given to planning policies, according to their degree of consistency with the Framework.
- 9.2. The settlement of Ashford Hill is notated with a Settlement Policy Boundary, but the application site falls beyond this and is designated as countryside as per Policy SS1 (Scale and distribution of new housing) of the Local Plan. The Policy seeks to meet the Borough's housing needs over the Plan period through the development of allocated greenfield sites and the redevelopment of land within towns and villages.
- 9.3. Development in the countryside is restricted unless the specific circumstances apply as set out in Policy SS6 (New Housing in the Countryside). The only criterion of Policy SS6 that could apply to the proposal is (e), which makes provision for small scale residential proposals of a scale and type that meeting a locally agreed need. Such proposals would need to be:
- 1) well related to the existing settlement;
  - 2) not result in an isolated form of development;
  - 3) respect the qualities of the local landscape and be sympathetic to its character and visual quality;
  - 4) and respect and relate to the character, form and appearance of surrounding development; and
  - 5) respect the amenities of residents of neighbouring properties.
- 9.4. Policy SS6 sets out the definition of small-scale development as four dwellings or fewer. On this basis, the proposal cannot be considered as small-scale when assessed against criterion (e) of Policy SS6. However, the weight to be afforded to Policies SS1 and SS6 of the Local Plan, in particular this cap on small scale development is limited in the decision-making process in view of the fact that they are out-of-date as the application of the policy and the development plan as a whole has not allowed sufficient new homes to come forward to meet the minimum five year housing requirement, a point already accepted by the Council in the determination of recent applications.

- 9.5. As established by the NPPF, in order to achieve the overarching objective of delivering sustainable development, local planning authorities must identify a minimum five-year supply of specific, deliverable sites, to meet their housing needs. Presently, as set out in Section 7 above, the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, and therefore, for the purpose of decision-taking, paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF indicates that the policies relating to the delivery of housing, including Policies SS1 and SS6, are out-of-date.
- 9.6. In a recent report to the Development Control Committee, dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021, in connection with planning application reference 20/02375/OUT, for 75 dwellings on land adjacent to Pond Close, Overton, the Committee Report sets out that the Council is unable to demonstrate that it has five years' worth of deliverable sites. The 2020 Authority Monitoring Report explains this in more detail, and commentary is set out above in Section 7 of this Planning Statement. In summary, the Local Planning Authority can only demonstrate a 4.4-year housing land supply, and the Committee Report for 20/02375/OUT accepts that policies relating to housing delivery in the Borough's adopted Local Plan (and made Neighbourhood Plans) are currently considered to be out of date. The Committee report correctly goes on to state that:

**“Planning applications will therefore be considered in line with paragraph 11d) of the NPPF which states that where relevant policies are considered out of date permission will be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or 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. This is a significant material planning consideration.”**

- 9.7. Clearly, the Council accepts that Policies SS1 and SS6 are out-of-date and should therefore be afforded little weight in the decision-making process, in particular to the 4-dwelling limit on acceptable development within the countryside. Any conflicts that arise from the proposal in respect of Policies SS1 and SS6 are therefore reduced significantly in weight in any event. This position is further corroborated by the supporting documentation for the emerging Local Plan, wherein the Council acknowledges in its Settlement Study Part 1, that the approach to the settlement hierarchy is out of date. This is, by the Council's own admission, predicated on the fact that the adopted Local Plan does not categorise settlements within the Borough based on

sustainability principles, nor reflect the NPPF policy of planning for additional development in rural areas to meet needs and enhance or maintain communities. It is important that this observation is borne in mind when weighing the impacts and benefits of the proposal in the planning balance.

9.8. Whilst the application proposal is contrary to local plan policies SS1 and SS6, these policies are out of date and "currently have limited weight in the determination of the application".<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, in order to determine the planning application, it is necessary to assess the scheme's compliance with other policies of the development plan, and ascertain whether there are any adverse effects arising from the proposal, and if so, whether these significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal when considering the NPPF as a whole.

9.9. As a result, the following issues are highlighted and addressed. The first relates to the NPPF's countryside policies. Thereafter, a number of issues arise from the application of development plan policy. These matters are:

- 1) NPPF countryside policies:
  - does the proposal represent isolated development (paragraph 80)?
  - is the application in a valued landscape (paragraph 174a)?
  - does the application scheme recognise intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside (Paragraph 174b)?
- 2) Affordable Housing;
- 3) Housing Mix;
- 4) Accessibility and Adaptable homes;
- 5) Impact on the character of the area (including visual amenity);
- 6) Design (including density and public open space provision);
- 7) Residential Amenity;
- 8) Highways and Parking (Including Traffic Generation, Access, Parking, Highways Improvement and Storage and Collection of Waste and Recycling);
- 9) Accessibility (including Pedestrian and Cycle Access and Transport);

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<sup>10</sup> The approach of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to the application of these policies for planning applications such as this.

- 10) Natural Environment (Including Trees, Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation);
- 11) Conservation of Historic Environment;
- 12) Flooding and Drainage;
- 13) Energy Efficiency;
- 14) Community Infrastructure Requirements / S106 Requirements;
- 15) Economic Considerations; and
- 16) Social Considerations;

9.10. Each of these matters are now addressed in turn.

**1) NPPF countryside policies**

9.11. Under the NPPF in considering new housing in rural areas Paragraph 79 advises that:

**"To promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. For example, where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby."**

9.12. A residential scheme at Ashford Hill will enhance or maintain the vitality of this rural community as well as those nearby where the proposal will support services both within Ashford Hill and nearby villages. In this regard, the proposal is entirely consistent with this section of the NPPF.

9.13. Paragraph 80 states that Local Planning Authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances. The NPPF does not provide a definition of what constitutes 'isolated' development. In considering whether or not the current application site is isolated in light of the NPPF, reference can be made to the recent Braintree case which is set out below in greater detail. In light of the interpretation of Paragraph 80 and in particular the ordinary definition afforded to the word 'isolated' provided by the court, it is not considered that the proposed development in this instance would result in isolated new home in the countryside. The Braintree DC v SSCLG [2018] Civ 610 ('the Braintree case') is a material consideration in the assessment of this application given the location of the site outside of a defined Settlement Policy Boundary. The Court of Appeal upheld the High Court's decision which concluded that that the word isolated should be given its ordinary meaning as 'far away from other places, buildings and people; remote'. Lindblom LJ's held that in the

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context of (then) paragraph 55 of the NPPF 'isolated' simply connotes a dwelling that is physically separate or remote from a settlement. Whether, in a particular case, a group of dwellings constitutes a settlement, or a 'village', for the purposes of the policy will again be a matter of fact and planning judgment for the decision-maker. The Court rejected the argument that the word 'isolated' could have a dual meaning, being physically isolated or functionally isolated (isolated from services and facilities). In applying this guidance to the application site, the proposed dwellings would not be physically remote or 'isolated'. The site whilst it does fall outside of the Ashford Hill Settlement Policy Boundary (SPB) is situated in close proximity to the Settlement Policy Boundary and Holt Cottages that are situated immediately to the north. Accordingly, the proposal does not represent isolated development and would not conflict with NPPF paragraph 80.

- 9.14. NPPF at paragraph 174a confirms that valued landscapes should be protected and enhanced. Application site does not represent a valued landscape within the meaning of this section of the NPPF. The LVIA confirms this. Accordingly, the requirement to protect and enhance does not arise. NPPF paragraph 174b does apply which requires the decision maker to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. This is different to protecting and enhancing. The submitted Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) confirms how the proposals have recognised the intrinsic character and beauty of the site and surrounding countryside. This matter is addressed further under the heading Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area, including Visual Amenity.
- 9.15. The application is therefore acceptable in respect of the NPPF's approach to development in the countryside.

## **2) Affordable housing**

- 9.16. Local Plan Policy CN1 requires the provision of 40% affordable housing as part of new residential development with a tenure split of 70% rented and 30% intermediate products. Whilst the application is in outline the mix of unit sizes are highlighted and the applicant would accept that these be conditioned in order to secure an appropriate level and form of affordable housing in order to maximise the benefit of the proposed scheme. In this regard, based upon the proposed development of 45 dwellings, compliance with policy CN1 requires 18 affordable homes on site, including 13 for rent (72.2%) and 5 intermediate units (27.7%).

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At least 2 affordable homes would also be required to meet enhanced accessibility or adaptability (M4(2)) standards. It is proposed that a s106 is prepared to secure this provision. Consistent with policy CN1, the illustrative masterplan shows the location of affordable homes. This results in a natural integration of the affordable homes in small clusters throughout the scheme with private market dwellings to create a high-quality designed layout and inclusive community. The applicant is committed to ensure that the external design approach to the affordable homes will achieve a 'tenure blind' scheme ensuring that it is not possible to discern the market homes from the affordable homes.

9.17. Policy CN1 of the Local Plan is met. As a result, maximum benefit can be derived from the proposal in respect of important affordable housing provision. Given the level of affordable housing need within the Borough, see Section 7, **substantial weight** can be attached to this aspect of the scheme.

9.18. The application is therefore acceptable in respect of affordable housing.

### **3) Housing Mix**

9.19. Housing Mix Policy CN3 requires that where developments contain market housing, these should contain a range of house types and sizes to address local requirements, with the mix to be appropriate to the size, location, density and character of the site and surrounding area. The policy also requires that the mix is to be supported by evidence to justify the proposed housing mix. In addition, Principle 3.1 (Market housing types and size mix) of the Council's Housing SPD states that development should focus on a mix of two and three bedroom dwellings, with only a limited requirement for homes with four bedrooms or more, which should normally comprise no more than 30% of the market homes in a development. In response, the application promotes a scheme that is designed to reflect the character of the area as well as market requirements. In this regard, The Illustrative masterplan shows a layout which accommodates a range of detached, semi-detached and terraced units of the following market mix:

7 no. 2 bed (26%)

12 no. 3 bed (44%)

8 no. 4 bed (30%)

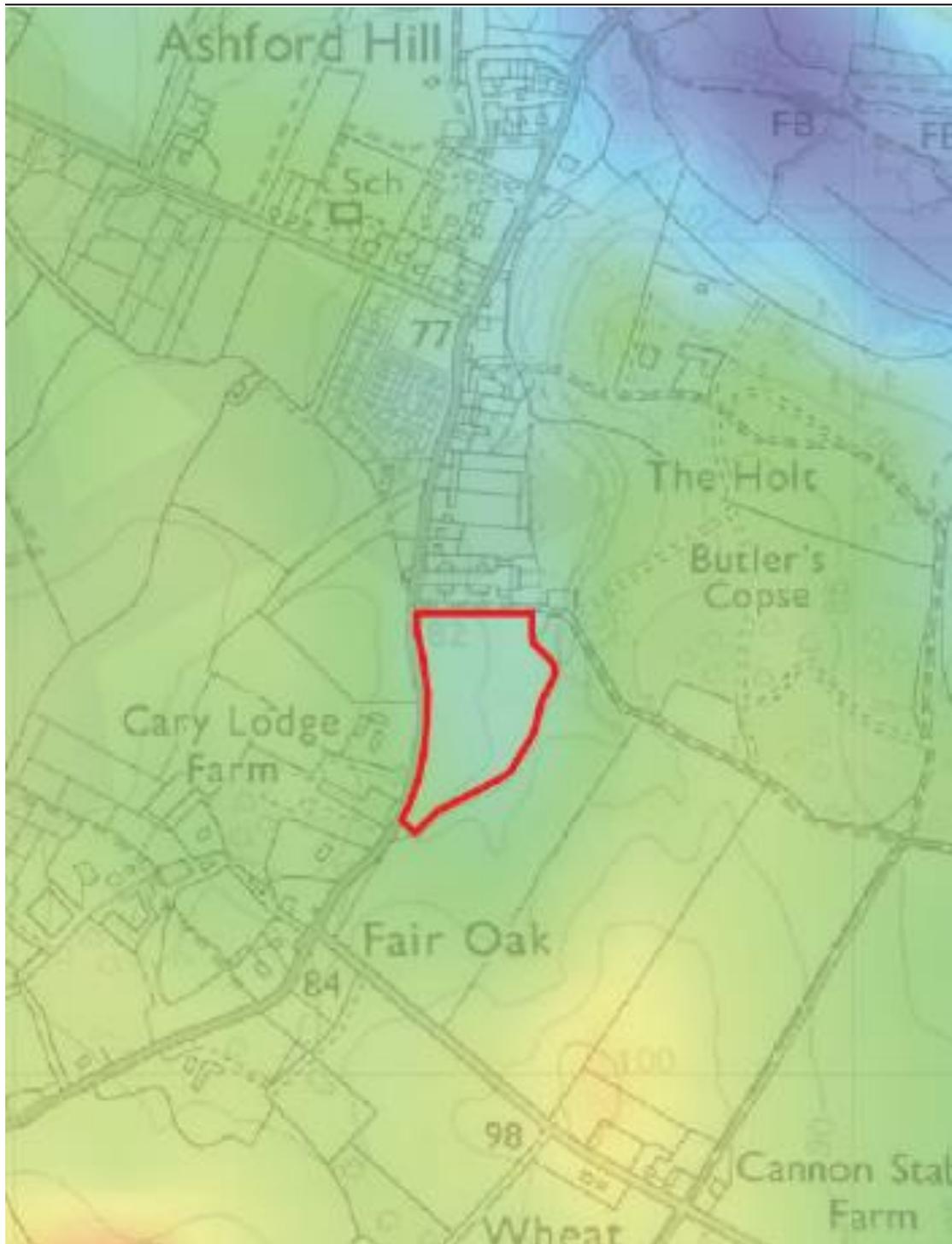
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- 9.20. The proposals therefore accord with the Council's housing mix policy and the aspiration set out in the Housing SPD. As a result, the development very much meets the identified needs of the Borough reinforcing the quality of the housing scheme and the weight to be attached to the increase in the supply of new homes, which, given the circumstances of the Borough, is **substantial**.
- 9.21. The application is therefore acceptable in respect of housing mix.

**4) Accessible and Adaptable Homes**

- 9.22. Local plan policies CN1 and CN3 require the provision of 15% of both affordable and market homes on site to be 'accessible and adaptable' to enable people to stay in their homes as their needs change. Given that the application is for outline permission, such provision can be secured via a planning condition.
- 9.23. The application is therefore acceptable in respect of Accessible and Adaptable Homes.

**5) Impact on the character of the area (including visual amenity)**

- 9.24. The application is supported by a comprehensive Landscape Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). This confirms that the application site lies to the immediate south of Ashford Hill following the predominant pattern of development along the A3051 which very much lies in a gentle valley setting. This is illustrated on the topographical context plan below. Land to the west of the B3051 rises (greener areas) and is very much more open and exposed in the wider countryside.



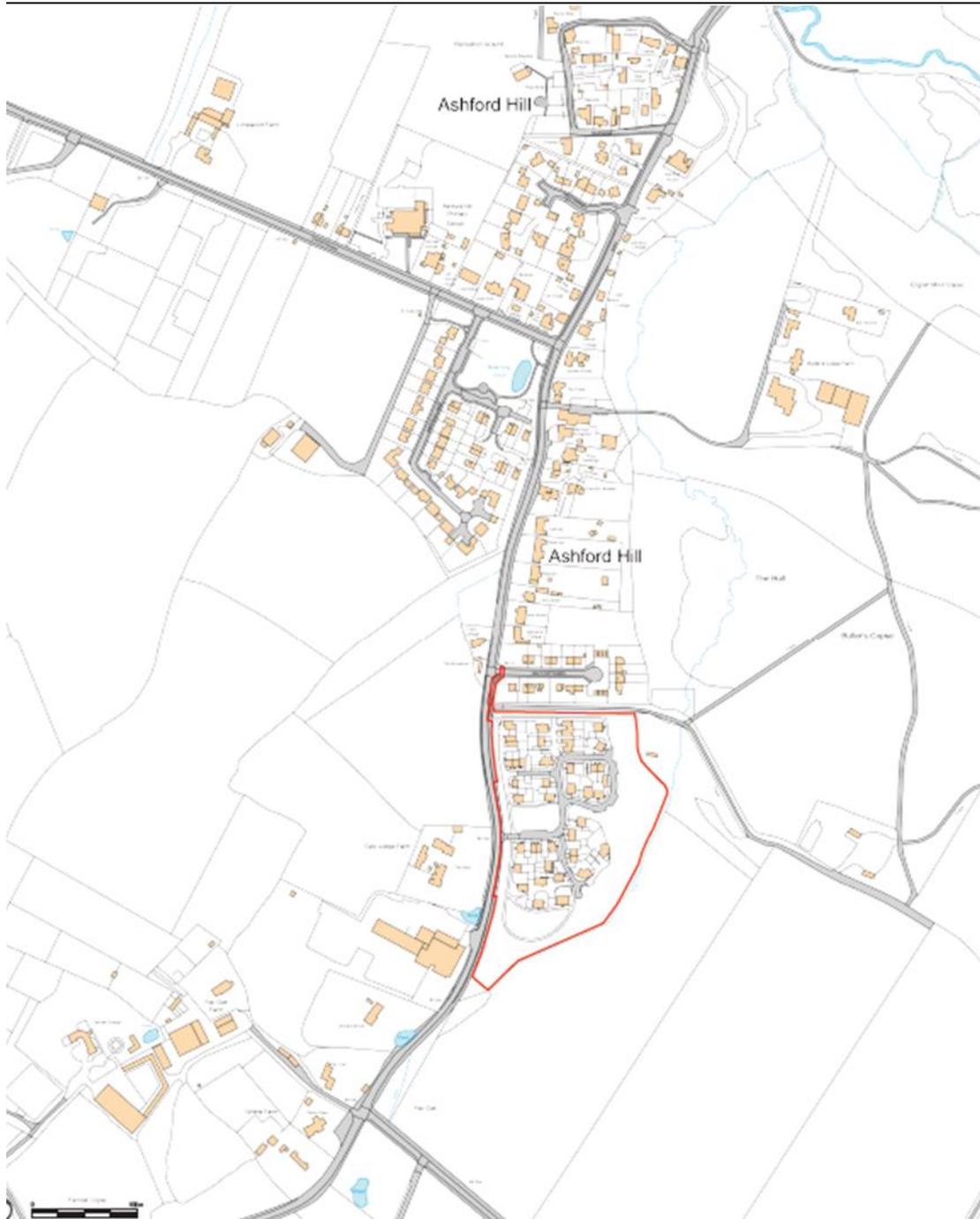
**Topographical Context Plan**

9.25. Accordingly, the location of the application site and the proposal on it very much reflects and respects the pattern of development in the village by reason of location and topography, and by reason of development that is of a similar depth back from the B3051 on its eastern side. The site is naturally contained by mature woodland to the immediate east, a line of willow

trees along a watercourse to the south with gently rising land further to the south contained by an additional line of mature trees and hedges. The containment of the site is complete by the B3051 and development beyond associated with The Barn to the west and commercial premises to the west and southwest. The topography of rising land to the west also contains the site in the wider landscape. Accordingly, the site is well contained in the wider landscape, and is physically and visually associated with Ashford Hill to the immediate north. As a result, the proposed development will only have a limited localised effect on the character and appearance of the countryside.

9.26. The submitted LVIA confirms the limited visual impact of the proposal in public views along the B3051 and from the wider public footpath network. Whilst it is accepted that the site itself will change in character from an open agricultural field to a residential development, that impact and visual change will be limited in extent and influence.

9.27. The wider setting of Ashford Hill is characterised by the mature woodland to the east which has maintained the village's largely linear north - south form. This is very much respected with the proposed application scheme. The setting to the west comprises rising land in a more open landscape. Again, the application scheme respects this topographical setting to the village on its southern side. The combination of the tree belts to the south of the site and rising land beyond to further tree belts maintains Ashford Hill's setting to the south. Existing development to the immediate west and southwest completes the containment of the site on this side with more open undeveloped countryside beyond completing the wider setting to Ashford Hill.



**Site Context Plan**

9.28. Accordingly, and as evident from the site context plan above, the proposal will represent a natural extension to Ashford Hill and where visible will be seen in conjunction with the built form of development to the immediate north. The scheme forms a logical extension to the settlement having regard to its landscape setting.

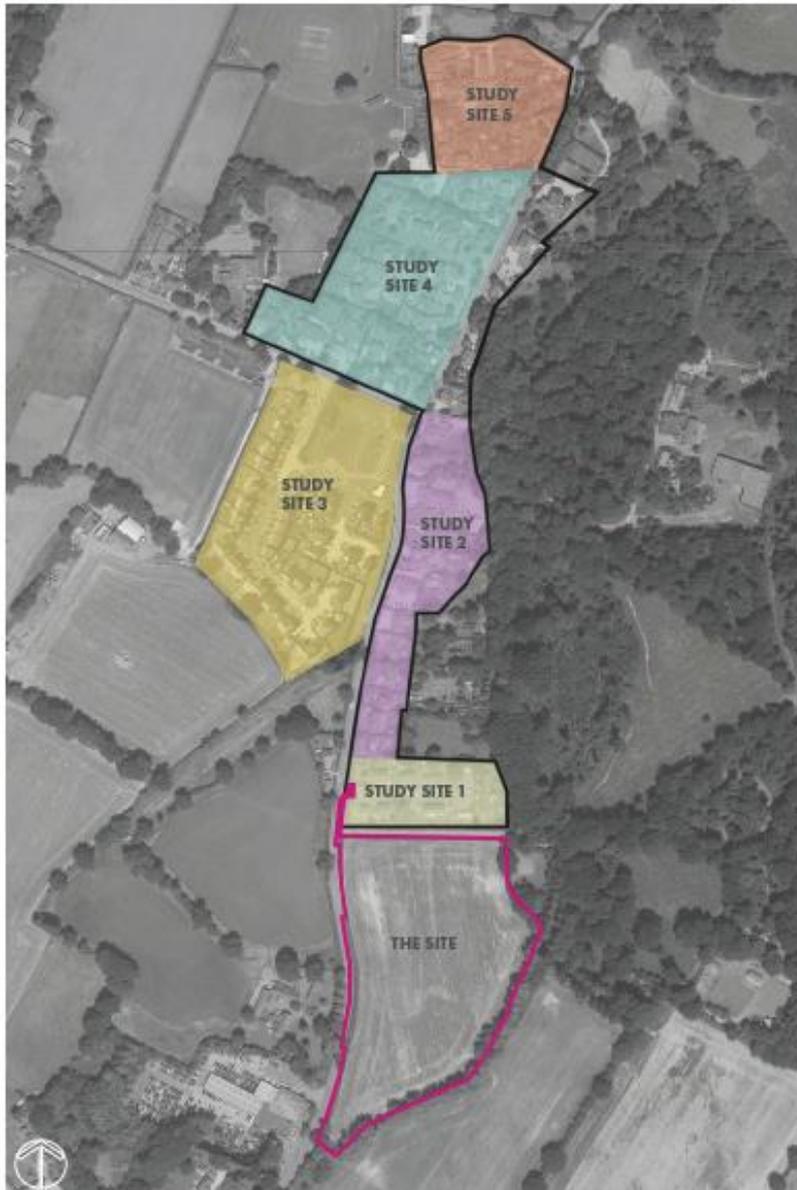
9.29. The illustrative masterplan highlights a sensitive development scheme setback from the B3051 whereby the characteristic hedge line will largely be retained with significant areas of open

space and structural planting to the south and east that maintain an appropriate setback distance of 20 m from the mature woodland to the east and tree belts to the south (consistent with policy). The ability to break up the proposal with a central village green and linear open spaces further highlights the sensitivity of the proposed layout scheme that goes some way towards mitigating against the impacts on landscape character.

- 9.30. Overall, the proposal respects the existing site features and landscape containment resulting in a development with landscape impacts of a relatively localised nature to the site without a detrimental impact upon the wider landscape character beyond Ashford Hill. The illustrative masterplan scheme, which could be condition, indicates how the proposal would assimilate appropriately with the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape. Notwithstanding that the landscape impacts of the development would be relatively localised to the site and would not have a detrimental impact upon the wider landscape character beyond Ashford Hill. As such the proposals would not conflict with local plan policies EM1 and EM10, the Design and Sustainability SPD and the guidance contained in the NPPF.

#### Density

- 9.31. Taking into account parts of the site would remain undeveloped, the density of the developable area would equate to approximately 14.2 dwellings per hectare (dph). It is noted that housing densities within Ashford Hill vary as illustrated below.



ASHFORD HILL DENSITIES

SITE	AREA	DWELLING NO.	DENSITY
1	0.8 HA	15	19 DPH
2	1.57 HA	16	10.2 DPH
3	3.2 HA	37	11.4 DPH
4	2.47 HA	27	11 DPH
5	1.08 HA	15	14 DPH

SITE BOUNDARY  
 ASHFORD HILL SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY

### Density Analysis

9.32. The density of Holt Cottages to the immediate north of the application site is 19dph. Various development parcels throughout the rest of Ashford Hill have densities ranging from 10.2 dph to 14 dph. The proposed density of 14dph would be in keeping with the character of the village. As to the form of the proposed development, the submitted parameter plan indicates

that building heights will be a maximum height of two storeys which is considered acceptable being consistent with the predominant form of houses in Ashford Hill.

- 9.33. The illustrative masterplan proposes a gradual reduction in density and looser grain of development as the scheme extends to the south thereby providing a sympathetic transition to the open countryside beyond. Detailed consideration to the site layout and distribution of housing densities within the development can of course be addressed at the reserved matters stage.
- 9.34. The application scheme represents a sensitive development that recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, minimises the impact on the wider countryside yet respects the character of Ashford Hill and its built environments.

## 6) Design (Layout)



**Illustrative Site Masterplan**

- 9.35. The indicative layout proposes development in individual detached, semi-detached and one line of terrace houses (a line of three properties) with a significant focus on areas of open

space of varying forms on each side of the site. For instance, the development is set back from the northern boundary with Holt cottages with individual properties (four in number) facing a parallel footpath to the lane that lies south of the cottages with the sensitive orientation of these properties ensuring no privacy issues will arise with the existing dwellings to the north. The scheme will present a positive frontage to the B3051, consistent with the pattern and orientation of development within Ashford Hill to the north. That said, the properties will be set back behind the retained roadside hedge which will be supplemented with additional planting. Beyond this there will be either a shared surface drive or a footpath allowing a green and rural frontage to the scheme that maintains a rural character to the scheme. The development will face out onto larger areas of linear open space to the east, with the mature woodland beyond, and to the south, with the mature Willow Tree site boundary beyond. This attractive landscape setting is illustrated in the image below.



**Village Common open space area on the southern side of the scheme**

9.36. In all instances, the development will have a positive and attractive outward looking character to it with the sympathetic grain of the development allowing for open permeable vistas through it, again very much respecting the edge of settlement location of the site. The development parcels will also be broken up by a centrally placed Village Green and linear area of open space that will run east - west through the middle of the site. Again, this will create an attractive open space focal point within the development further enhancing its character and sense of place as illustrated in the image below.



**Proposed Village Green**

- 9.37. The individual properties will also have positive frontages facing this space to assist in natural surveillance and its attractive appearance.
- 9.38. The open spaces on the edges of the proposal will create an attractive landscape setting to the development and the site as a whole. Approximately 1.32 hectares (equating to 42.5% of the site) of open space will be provided to create a sensitive, yet attractive, buffer between the proposed development and countryside and woodland beyond. These areas would be dedicated to open space, sustainable drainage systems to serve new and existing residents of Ashford Hill. The proposed footpath connection to the existing network to the northwest of the site will facilitate connectivity between the site and existing residents. Whilst the Council has a five-year housing land supply deficit, the proposed development strikes the right balance between making efficient use of the land as required by NPPF paragraph 122 and policy EM10(d) and respecting the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.
- 9.39. The application therefore represents a high quality designed layout for the purposes of this outline planning application and is acceptable from a design perspective.

### Public Open Space provision

9.40. Whilst the application is in outline form, the illustrative masterplan includes generous areas of open space, in particular around the periphery of the site as well as through the middle of the site to create an attractive setting to the development and an attractive and functional place to live. The total area of open space amounts to 1.32 hectares (42.5% of the total site area). The level and form of open space can be secured by way of a section 106 agreement.



**Illustrations of various area of open space within the scheme**

9.41. In terms of equipped play, the proposal includes an attractive natural equipped play area to the south. This will enhance this form of open space provision in the village.

9.42. The appropriate equipped play and other open space requirements and/or contributions can be secured through a planning obligation and through the final layout at the reserved matters stage. Accordingly, the development accords with Policies EM1 and EM10.

9.43. The application is therefore acceptable in respect of open space provision.

## **7) Residential Amenity**

9.44. Policy EM10 requires developments to provide high levels of amenity for proposed occupants and neighbouring occupiers regarding privacy, amenity space and natural light. Design Principle RA2 as set out within the Design and Sustainability SPD requires minimum garden

sizes of three bedroomed or more properties to measure 60 square metres, whilst RA3 states that each dwelling must have a minimum garden depth of 10 metres. Key Design Principle RA7 of the Design and Sustainability SPD states that new development must provide a suitable, pleasant outlook and level of natural light for both new and neighbouring dwellings.

- 9.45. The illustrative master plan has been designed and laid out with these requirements in mind. The garden sizes of the proposed dwellings, as indicatively shown on the submitted site plan, accord with the relevant standards as set out above. The location, scale, orientation, density and separation of the proposed dwellings within the scheme ensures that the internal amenity for future residents is acceptable in respect of overlooking, levels of natural light and outlook.
- 9.46. As to the relationship with neighbouring properties, the illustrative layout highlights how the four dwellings that lie south of existing properties will have side elevations facing to the north to ensure that there are no issues of direct overlooking. These can of course be elevated to create an attractive “street” but in a way that does not give rise to any direct overlooking. In addition to these points, the dwellings are in excess of 22 metres thereby ensuring no overbearing or unacceptable relationships between the properties. The existence of mature hedgerow boundaries either side of the track that lies immediately to the south of Holt cottages further reinforces the acceptable relationship between the proposed development and these existing residential properties from a residential amenity perspective.
- 9.47. Finally, the residential development is set some considerable distance from The Barn that lies to the west, the other side of the B3051. The orientation of that property is aligned to the southern extent of the proposed residential development such that the principal southeast elevation / viewpoint is aligned more towards the area of proposed open space. This is irrespective of the substantial set back of The Barn from the B3051 and the mature trees that screen it from the road and therefore the application site and the proposed development on it.
- 9.48. Accordingly, the proposed development respects the amenities of the existing neighbouring properties and creates a high quality on site living environment, both in accordance with Policies EM10 and EM12 of the Local Plan.
- 9.49. The application is therefore acceptable in residential amenity terms.

## 8) Highways and Parking

- 9.50. Policy CN9 (Transport) requires that highway movements are not of an inappropriate type or level as to compromise highway safety with safe and convenient access for potential users and with a compatible on-site layout with appropriate parking and serving provision. The need for appropriate parking is additionally reflected within Policy EM10 with respect to ensuring that the amount, design, layout and location accords with parking standards.

### Traffic Generation

- 9.51. The planning application is supported by a Transport Assessment (TA) that sets out the likely effects in terms of access and transportation from the quantum of development proposed. The TA confirms that the impacts to the local and wider highway network, road and junction capacities are acceptable. The TA also confirms that the proposed development can be served by alternative modes of transport to the car. Whilst it is acknowledged that the development would create increases in volumes of traffic from the construction phase onwards, the nature of the traffic volumes and types would have no material impact upon the roads and junctions local to the site as to exacerbate any existing road safety problems. Therefore, in the absence of overriding adverse harm to the highway network arising, the development accords with Policy CN9 of the Local Plan.

### Access

- 9.52. They outline application includes means of access to be determined. The primary vehicular access is off the B3051 in the form of a priority junction in a location that maximises the visibility splays whilst also minimising the loss of roadside hedges.
- 9.53. A separate pedestrian access is proposed in the north western corner of the site to link up to the existing footpath network in Ashford hill. The intention is that the pedestrian access will enter the site at this point and then run parallel to the B3051 in order to create an attractive and safe pedestrian route alongside, but separate from, the main road.
- 9.54. The Transport Assessment includes a swept path analysis confirming that the illustrative layout is acceptable in terms of the geometry of the internal layout and that larger vehicles

such as refuse and fire can enter and leave the site in forward gear and carry out appropriate turning manoeuvres within the development itself.

#### Parking

- 9.55. The outline application and illustrated masterplan provide details of on site parking for each of the dwellings. The level and location of the car parking highlighted is in accordance with the Council's parking standards SPD reinforcing the realistic nature and quality of the proposed illustrative residential scheme. Whilst this matter will be formalised through the reserved matters, the proposal in its current form is in accordance with policies CN9 and CE10 of the local plan.

#### Highways improvements

- 9.56. The transport assessment highlights a traffic calming scheme along with the B3051 to the south of the proposed primary access. This is designed to slow traffic speeds as they enter the village from the south. This will have two objectives, one an entrance feature to the village and secondly, a form of traffic calming that will enhance the environment of the village from a noise and potentially a road safety perspective, one of the many benefits associated with the proposed development.

### **9) Accessibility**

#### Transport

- 9.57. The submitted Transport Statement confirms that the proposed development is predicted to generate circa 23-24 two-way vehicle movements during the morning and evening peak hour periods. This equates to on average, less than one additional movement every 2 minutes which will be a small and limited impact and will not have any noticeable impact on the safety or operation on the wider local highway network.
- 9.58. Operational junction assessments show that both the proposed site access and the Ashford Hill Road / B3051 Little Knowl Hill junction will operate well within capacity in the morning and evening peak hours without any queuing or delay.

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- 9.59. No highway improvements are needed to mitigate the impact of the development as the impact is very small and well below a level that could be considered 'severe' in line with the requirements of the NPPF.
- 9.60. Appropriate vehicular access arrangements can be achieved onto the B3051 via a proposed 5.5m wide access road. Visibility splays commensurate with the observed vehicle speeds can be achieved in both directions.
- 9.61. Whilst the proposed development does not rely on the relocation of the speed limit on the site frontage to deliver a safe and suitable access, to help address local residents' concerns, it is proposed to relocate the speed limit circa 230m to the south (to the southern extent of the proposed development) and provide gateway traffic calming features to slow vehicles on approach to the village.
- 9.62. The proposed development also provides a footway connection to the existing footway network to the north of the site on the eastern side of the B3051, beyond which residents will be able to access the existing network of footways within Ashford Hill.
- 9.63. An Independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit of the site access arrangements has been undertaken which has thoroughly reviewed the safety of the proposed access and traffic calming works and raises no residual safety concerns.

#### Sustainability

- 9.64. Ashford Hill is a sustainable rural settlement, many everyday services such as a primary schools and leisure facilities can be accessed, all within a reasonable walking distance and a short cycle trip. The Officer's Report for the nearby residential proposal to the south of Ashford Hill Road stated that:
- "The site is within walking distance to local facilities including the primary school, public house and village hall. Employment, retail and leisure facilities exist within a suitable cycling distance ..."**
- 9.65. No objections were raised in relation to the sustainable location of the site. The proposed development site is comparably accessible to this site. As such, the proposed development site is considered to be sustainable in the context of a rural area.

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9.66. The application is therefore acceptable having regard to highways and transportation matters.

## **10) Natural Environment**

### Trees/ Woodland

9.67. The application site is characterised by mature woodland to the east and a belt of mature trees to the south which contain the proposed scheme on these sides. There are no trees within the site itself. Nevertheless, consistent with local plan policy EM1 and Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD, the proposed development is set back a minimum of 20 metres from these mature trees thereby ensuring an entirely satisfactory relationship with this habitat.

9.68. The proposed development is also set back a comfortable distance from the roadside hedge that characterises the western boundary of the site. this boundary will be supplemented with additional new tree planting to maintain an attractive edge to the site and entrance into the village from the south whilst also being consistent with the landscape character of the wider area.

9.69. The application is therefore acceptable in respect of the natural environment.

### Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation

9.70. The submitted Ecological Appraisal is based on the results of a desktop study, extended Phase 1 habitat survey, general faunal appraisal and Phase 2 surveys for Great Crested Newts. The available information confirms that no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations are present within the site. The nearest statutory designation is Ashford Hill Woods and Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 25m north east of the site at its closest point. The nearest non-statutory designation is Fair oak Copse, Ashford Hill with Headley Site of Nature Conservation (SINC), located approximately 0.4km south west of the site. Subject to the implementation of mitigation measures to prevent pollution and manage recreation, it is considered that all designations are likely to be fully safeguarded under the proposals.

9.71. The Phase 1 habitat survey has established that the site is dominated by habitats not considered to be of ecological importance, whilst the proposals have sought to retain those

features identified to be of value comprising the boundary hedgerows and treeline and the off-site watercourse. These features will be retained and buffered with greenspace and will be protected during construction. A small section of hedgerow H3 will require removal to create site access points, which will be compensated for with new planting.

9.72. The habitats within the site have the potential to support several protected species, including species protected under both national and European legislation. Accordingly, a number of mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise the risk of harm to any protected species that may be present within the site, with compensatory measures proposed, where appropriate, in order to maintain the conservation status of local populations.

9.73. The proposals have sought to minimise impacts and subject to the implementation of appropriate avoidance, mitigation, and compensation measures set out, it is considered unlikely that the proposals of the site would result in significant harm to biodiversity, which is the current test for planning under the NPPF. On the contrary, it is considered that it will be possible to achieve several biodiversity gains.

9.74. The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment using the DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 3.0 Calculation Tool' finds that based on the Illustrative Layout, a development of this size on the site is capable of delivering a quantifiable net gain for biodiversity in relation to habitats, which at 65.48% for habitats and 30.81% in relation to linear habitats is significantly in excess of the 10% likely to be brought forward in the future Environment Bill. In addition to these quantifiable net gains, a range of qualitative gains can also be delivered on site, such as the provision of faunal enhancements targeted to national and local Priority Species.

9.75. Accordingly, it is considered the proposals comply with existing and emerging policy (local and national) and legislation.

9.76. The application is therefore acceptable having regard to ecological and biodiversity considerations.

## **11) Conservation of the Historic Environment**

9.77. The NPPF requires that, when determining applications, account should be taken of the

desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of assets. When less than substantial harm is considered to arise, this needs to be weighed against the public benefits.

9.78. The application site does not lie within or adjacent to a conservation area. The closest heritage asset is the listed building that lies to the north west of the application site (The Bungalow) on the western side of the be 3051 beyond Holt cottages. The immediate setting of this property is largely confined to its curtilage and the B3051. Nevertheless, the application scheme has recognised the existence, location and orientation of this property asset and ensured that the north western corner of the application site is appropriately landscaped in order to preserve the wider setting and views of this property.

9.79. A non-designated heritage asset (The Barn at Cary Lodge Farm) exists further to the south, also on the western side of the B3051 to the west of the southern half of the application site. The proposed residential development is set some considerable distance from The Barn. The orientation of that property is aligned to the southern extent of the proposed residential development such that the principal southeast elevation / viewpoint is aligned towards the proposed area of open space. This is irrespective of the substantial set back of The Barn from the B3051 and the mature trees that screen it from the road and therefore the application site and the proposed development on it. It is therefore clear that the application scheme respects this non designated heritage asset and its wider setting.

9.80. The application scheme is supported by a heritage asset that confirms that the proposal preserves the settings of these heritage assets resulting in no material harm, such that the application is in accordance with the NPPF and policy EM11 of the local plan.

#### Archaeology

9.81. An archaeological assessment has been submitted. The archaeological potential of the site is found to be low. Any further archaeological surveys can be secured by condition and carried out prior to a start on the development.

9.82. The application is therefore acceptable in respect of the historic environment.

## **12) Flooding and Drainage**

### Fluvial Flood Risk

- 9.83. The application site lies in flood zone 1. There are therefore no constraints associated with fluvial flood risk.

### Groundwater and Pluvial Flooding

- 9.84. The illustrated site master plan has had regard to the advice and recommendations from the applicant's drainage consultants resulting in the incorporation of a sustainable urban drainage system comprising swales and a pond. The flood risk assessment confirms that the application site is appropriate for residential development and a satisfactory surface water drainage scheme can be accommodated on site, designed and secured during the detailed design, reserved matters, stage.
- 9.85. The application is therefore acceptable in flooding and drainage terms.

## **13) Energy Efficiency**

- 9.86. The Council declared a Climate Emergency during 2019. This recognises the need to take urgent action to reduce both the emissions of the Council's own activities as a service provider but also those of the wider rough. Beyond the requirements of any conditions that may be applicable to planning decisions and the current planning policy framework, the applicant has explored the opportunities for implementing the development in a way that minimises impact on climate change. A sustainable energy report has been prepared and submitted with the application confirming that the proposed outline residential development can represent an energy efficient and sustainable scheme with a number of sustainable energy initiatives. The following measures can inform the design of individual plots at the reserved matters stage:

- *Minimisation of thermal bridging through use of appropriate design materials;*
- *Design to promote passive solar gains, maximise natural daylight, sunlight and ventilation;*
- *Incorporating high efficient lighting targeting at least 75% of all light fittings as energy efficient lighting;*
- *Use of high efficiency heating systems to reduce energy consumption;*

- *Use of high efficiency water saving systems to reduce water consumption demands;*
- *Installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.*

9.87. In addition, sustainable materials and sustainable sourcing of would be utilised in the construction of the development. All these matters can be secured through an appropriate condition.

9.88. The application scheme is acceptable in respect of an energy efficient and sustainable form of development consistent with local plan policies EM9 and EM10.

#### **14) Community Infrastructure Requirements / S106 Requirements**

9.89. The application scheme will attract Community Infrastructure Levy payments. In addition, a section 106 agreement will secure:

- 1) 40% affordable housing;
- 2) Highway contributions;
- 3) Contributions towards off site playing fields;
- 4) Delivery of on-site open space to include play areas and accessible natural green space;
- 5) Landscape management plan; and
- 6) Biodiversity Management Plan.

#### **15) Economic Benefits**

9.90. These can be identified and quantified as follows:

- 1) Increased house building in an area where there is a demand for new housing drives economic growth further and faster than any industry. In this regard, the proposals would contribute 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 and at the right time to support growth.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The ONS Population estimates indicated that the proportion of Basingstoke & Deane's population aged 16-64 year olds is the same as Great Britain (62.7%) although it has fewer males (63% compared to 63.4%). The proportion of the population who were economically active is higher at 86% compared to 78.99%. The proportion with a level 3 or above qualification is also higher in Basingstoke & Deane at

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- 2) The provision of 45 homes (including 40% affordable) in Basingstoke & Deane Borough where there is an established need for such new homes. This is particularly so as the housing requirement is set as a minimum, the Authority has under-delivered to date on new homes and there is a shortfall in five year housing land supply.
  - 3) The application scheme is immediately available and can deliver much needed housing now.
  - 4) Meeting general housing needs is a benefit, consistent with the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing.
  - 5) In order for the economy to function, sufficient housing is required in the right locations and at the right time. Ashford Hill is a settlement considered by the Council to be an appropriate (right) location for new housing development.
  - 6) Create or support between 108 and 140 direct, indirect and induced jobs from the homes built on the site.<sup>12</sup>
  - 7) Helping to deliver a significant boost to the local economy through 'first occupation' expenditure of £245,790<sup>13</sup>.
  - 8) In terms of household expenditure, data from ONS Family Expenditure Survey 2019-20<sup>14</sup> shows that the 'average UK household spend' is £585.20 per week (Table A33) (or £30,514 per year), whereas in South East England it is 19.4% higher than the UK average (Table A33). This means average weekly spend per household is £698.60 (or £36,406 per annum). For the Appeal Scheme, the total gross expenditure is estimated to be £1,638,270 per year 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 Basingstoke & Deane Borough.

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61.7% compared to 57.8% in Great Britain as is the proportion of people in employment who are managers, directors & senior officials (11.8% compared to 11.3%), in professional occupations (27.9% compared to 21.2%) or in associate professional and technical occupations (17.1% compared to 14.8%). This highly skilled workforce is demonstrated by median gross weekly residence based incomes at £667.20 compared to £587 for Great Britain in 2019 (14% higher). The Land Registry indicates that average house prices in Basingstoke & Deane (November 2019) were £308,435 compared to £251,222 in England. The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan 2018-30 (page 14) emphasises the importance of "increasing and accelerating the supply of new homes, including affordable family homes, will be key to continuing growth without increasing the strain on affordability". It also notes the importance of having an appropriately skilled workforce including upskilling – this would need to reflect the demographic and educational profile of residents indicated above.

<sup>12</sup> See page 13 of the Homes Builders Federation "Economic Footprint of UK Housebuilding" (July 2018) - [https://www.hbf.co.uk/documents/7876/The\\_Economic\\_Footprint\\_of\\_UK\\_House\\_Building\\_July\\_2018\\_LR.pdf](https://www.hbf.co.uk/documents/7876/The_Economic_Footprint_of_UK_House_Building_July_2018_LR.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Research carried out by OnePoll on behalf of Barratt Homes (August 2014; <https://www.barratthomes.co.uk/the-buying-process/home-buying-advice/>) indicates an average spend of £5,462 per dwelling.

<sup>14</sup> [Family spending workbook 3: expenditure by region - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/people-in-work-and-retirement/other-statistics/articles/family-spending-workbook-3-expenditure-by-region).

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The expenditure will include that a proportion of that spent on areas including food & non-alcoholic drinks (£68.70 per week); alcoholic drinks (£12.70 per week); recreation and culture (£103.70 per week), household goods and services (£46.40) and miscellaneous goods and service i.e. hairdressing & beauty treatments (£54.10 per week).<sup>15</sup> Given the current economic challenges facing the UK these are significant economic benefits.

- 9) Increased expenditure in the local area will support FTE jobs.
- 10) The application scheme will generate a New Homes Bonus economic benefits for the Council.
- 11) The application scheme would also secure financial contributions through CIL receipts, to be spent on local infrastructure provision that, in turn not only support the local community but also generate economic activity including jobs.

9.91. Substantial weight can be attached to the long-term economic benefits and more moderate weight to the shorter-term economic benefits arising from the scheme.

## **16) Social Benefits**

9.92. The social benefits have been emphasised throughout this planning statement. These include:

- 1) Provides high-quality residential accommodation.
- 2) Provides for 40% affordable housing, consistent with that required by policy.
- 3) Provides a market and affordable housing mix that matches identified needs.
- 4) Increases opportunities for home ownership in the area.
- 5) The new populous resulting from the scheme will help sustain the existing key services in the area.
- 6) Provides for appropriate amenity space to serve the recreational needs of future residents.

9.93. Substantial weight can be attached to the social benefits arising from the scheme.

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<sup>15</sup> Figures based upon SE Regional data in Table A33

## 10. PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

10.1. Whilst the principle of development does not comply with the policies contained within the development plan, as set out above, the Council cannot demonstrate a minimum deliverable five-year supply of housing. The application must therefore be considered in accordance with paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF which states that where relevant policies are considered out of date permission will be granted unless the application of policies in the NPPF that protected areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed, or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole. The application site is not subject to any footnote 6 constraints such that there are no clear reasons for refusing the application. As a result, the titled balance required by 11dii) remains engaged.

10.2. This planning statement has identified and addressed a comprehensive set of issues. These are identified and summarised below with **consistencies** or **conflicts** identified.

- 1) NPPF countryside policies:
  - The proposal is not isolated development, therefore **consistent** with NPPF paragraph 79
  - The application site is not a valued landscape **consistent** with NPPF paragraph 174a
  - The application scheme does recognise intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside **consistent** with NPPF paragraph 174b
- 2) Affordable housing **consistent** with local plan policy CN1;
- 3) Housing Mix **consistent** with local plan policy CN3;
- 4) Accessibility and Adaptable homes **consistent** with local plan policies CN1 and CN3;
- 5) Impact on the character of the area (including visual amenity) **consistent** with local plan policy EM1 but in **conflict** with SS1, SS6;
- 6) Design (including density and public open space provision) **consistent** with local plan policy EM1, EM2 and EM10;
- 7) Residential Amenity **consistent** with local plan policies EM10 and EM12 and Design and Sustainability SPD;

- 8) Highways and Parking (Including Traffic Generation, Access, Parking, Highways Improvement and Storage and Collection of Waste and Recycling) **consistent** with local plan policy CN9;
- 9) Accessibility (including Pedestrian and Cycle Access and Transport) **consistent** with local plan policies SS11, CN6, CN9 and EP4;
- 10) Natural Environment (Including Trees, Ecology and Biodiversity Conservation) **consistent** with local plan policies EM1, EM3, EM4 and EM5;
- 11) Conservation of Historic Environment **consistent** with local plan policies EM1, EM10 and EM11;
- 12) Flooding and Drainage; **consistent** with local plan policy EM7;
- 13) Energy Efficiency **consistent** with local plan policies EM8, EM9 and EM10;
- 14) Community Infrastructure Requirements / S106 Requirements **consistent** with local plan policy CN8;
- 15) Economic Considerations **consistent** with NPPF paragraph 8a; and
- 16) Social Considerations **consistent** with NPPF paragraph 8b.

10.3. It is evident that the proposal represents a high quality, beautiful and sustainable place compliant with all relevant development plan policies. The only conflict arises with development plan policies restricting development within designated countryside areas outside defined settlement boundaries. However, the weight to be attached to these conflicts is reduced owing to the inability of the development plan to provide a minimum five-year supply of housing land. It is acknowledged that some harm will arise to the loss of this greenfield site to a residential development. However, the degree of harm is reduced having regard to the limited (localised) effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the wider countryside. The harm is also reduced owing to the high-quality nature of the proposed development and its compliance with the character, pattern and grain of development associated with Ashford Hill.

10.4. The development will result in significant economic benefits through both the construction phase and then by the occupiers of the dwellings.

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- 10.5. The social benefits would come from the contribution to the range and choice of homes available locally, and the provision of affordable housing, as well as the contribution that these dwellings would make to the Borough's five-year housing land supply. This social benefit is a significant benefit in favour of the application.
- 10.6. There will be environmental benefits. The site lies in a location beyond designated landscape areas with good access to services, facilities and means of public transport, as well as the site providing a net gain of biodiversity. High quality and well located public open space is to be provided. A high-quality residential environment will be created. The development setbacks will also successfully preserve the mature woodland and tree belts that lie to the east and south respectively.
- 10.7. There is likely to be some localised impact on the four neighbouring properties to the north in terms of their outlook over the application site in its current form. However, there would be no harm caused in relation to their private amenities.
- 10.8. Whilst only shown indicatively at this stage, it is considered that the development could respond positively to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, in terms of its pattern of development. Matters relating to scale, massing, design and appearance of the dwellings will be assessed as part of any reserved matters submission with certain parameters fixed by way of conditions.
- 10.9. The localised impacts to the wider landscape character do weigh against the development but it is considered that these wider impacts would be limited.
- 10.10. There would be no significant impact to highway safety or capacity.
- 10.11. It is evident that the proposal is largely acceptable but where a conflict or harm arises, this is limited in extent and nature, whilst the weight to be attached to that harm is reduced owing to the inability of the Council to meet the minimum five-year housing land supply requirement. The relevant assessment for the determination of the application is set out within paragraph 11d of the NPPF. For an application to be refused the adverse impacts must significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. It is clear from the assessment in this statement that the adverse impacts of the proposed development do not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits taking the policies within the NPPF when considered as a

whole. Accordingly, the development represents sustainable development such that it can be approved.