

Agenda Item 45.

| Application Number | Expiry Date | Parish | Ward |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------|---------|
| 201515 | Ext | Wokingham | Norreys |

| | |
|--|--|
| Applicant | Barratt David Wilson Homes |
| Site Address | Ashridge Farm, Warren House Road, Wokingham, RG40 5QB |
| Proposal | Full application for the erection of 153 dwellings comprising a mix of 1,2,3 & 4 beds with associated landscaping, parking, open space, drainage; construction of a new access onto Warren House Road and Bell Foundry Lane; provision of an area of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and all other associated development works (including demolition of existing buildings and provision of temporary site sales). |
| Type | Full |
| PS Category | 1 |
| Officer | Sophie Morris |
| Reason for determination by committee | Major application |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| FOR CONSIDERATION BY | Planning Committee on Wednesday, 16 th December 2020 |
| REPORT PREPARED BY | Assistant Director – Place |

| SUMMARY |
|--|
| <p>The application site relates to land known as Ashridge Farm, located off Warren House Road, approximately 1 mile to the north of Wokingham town centre, and to the south of the A329 (M). Although the site is located within the North Wokingham SDL, it is not currently an allocated site and as such it is located within the countryside.</p> <p>The proposals seek full planning permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide 153 dwellings, and associated Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and other open spaces to serve the development. The proposal also includes the provision of an on-site children’s play area.</p> <p>The site was put forward in the ‘call for sites’ process of the Local Plan Update (LPU) process which included a consultation on a Draft Plan between 3 February and 3 April 2020. Alongside the Draft Plan consultation, WBC published its assessment of all the promoted sites in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), which concluded the application site to be potentially suitable for development. Policy H2 of the Draft Plan proposes to allocate the application site for around 150 dwellings. Notwithstanding the above, the LPU is at a fairly early stage of preparation and at the time of writing has limited weight in the decision making process.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, it is considered important to view the site in the context of its location within the North Wokingham SDL and its immediate surroundings which includes housing development to the south, east and west. The proposals are considered to suitably follow the general pattern of built form across the SDL, and in doing so, it is considered that the separate identity of settlements would be protected, the quality of the environment would be maintained and the development would be located where there is good access to services and facilities which are the key</p> |

objectives relating to Policies concerning proposals which are not within existing settlement limits.

While the site is located within the North Wokingham SDL, it is located outside of the Core Strategy defined settlement boundaries and therefore, in policy terms, it is located within the countryside. It is noted that the site is proposed for allocation within the Draft Local Plan and in accordance with advice contained within the NPPF, refusing the application on grounds of prematurity would not be justified where it is considered that the proposed development is not so substantial in itself nor would it contribute to a cumulative effect that would undermine the plan-making process as is the case in this instance.

The NPPF is clear that where a development does not result in significant harm and is sustainable, it should be supported. The location of the development within the SDL is considered to be sustainable and would allow easy and safe access to facilities within walking distances to schools, retail and community uses as well as the recreational facilities located within the adjacent Cantley Park. The Matthewsgreen primary school which will also provide a nursery and community centre will also be within walking/cycling distances from the site. Reviewing the development surrounding the site, it is considered that the proposals could easily be accommodated within the urban form of the SDL without resulting in any significant harmful impacts to the wider area. The proposals are considered to be well aligned with the underlying objectives of the policies concerning out of settlement proposals in the countryside.

The proposal would bring about significant public benefits to the area. This would include the transfer of the land required for the delivery of the Ashridge Farm section of the Northern Distributor Road, which forms part of an essential piece of infrastructure that is required to mitigate the impact of the effect of additional traffic associated with planned housing growth in North Wokingham. The road has already secured planning permission and it should be noted that this is the last section of the entire NDR route across North Wokingham to commence construction (other sections are either already completed and open or currently under construction). The release of land under this application would provide final section of the road improving east west connections and access to the A329(M) and M4 / M3. Without this the existing highway on Warren House Road and Bell Foundry Lane would need to be upgraded however this would be compromised by existing development and land ownership issues. It should be noted that the Keephatch Gardens scheme (300 units) was also considered appropriate as it helped facilitate delivery of a section of the NDR and provided other public benefits such as additional public open space.

The development would also provide 35% (53 units) of Affordable Homes on-site. Another benefit is that the development would also provide additional SANG and open space which would mean the policy aspiration to provide a significant area of open space across the north of Wokingham will be delivered, linking the existing open spaces already open to the east and west. The provision of public open space in connection with the proposals would see the provision of on-site recreational facilities such as a play area, an attractive SANG provision, all of which would benefit the wider population. The development would also improve the east west connections and access to local amenities such as shops, community centre and the primary school. It is also likely that an increase in the population in this location would help assist with the viability of the nearby Local Centre which is currently under construction on the nearby Matthewsgreen SDL site. Finally the provision of housing in this sustainable location will assist

Wokingham meet its housing requirements and help the Council in defending less sustainable proposals at appeal.

As such given its location, surrounded by the SDL and existing development, it is important to read the development as such, and the overarching vision of the SDL is to provide a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of infrastructure and services ensuring that developments are of a high quality and are sustainable. This includes the provision of schools, community facilities, good quality open space and appropriate local transport and links.

The proposals are considered to strike an appropriate balance between the provision of a sustainable housing scheme while respecting the surrounding character and appearance of the area. Whilst Historic England consider that the proposals would result in harm to the setting of the Listed Farmhouse and curtilage listed barns, the public benefits arising from the proposals are considered to outweigh the identified harm. Moreover the setting of the Listed buildings would be impacted when the new NDR is constructed adjacent. The proposed development would be set within an attractive landscaped setting with significant trees retained and its layout considers the listed building. The site would successfully link in and integrate with the SDL, providing benefits which are also considered to outweigh the locational policy conflict in this instance. It would therefore not result in the proliferation of development away from development limits into open countryside and nor would it compromise the separate identity of settlements with the A329 (M) forming the barrier for development in north Wokingham.

The development proposals for this site are therefore considered to be sustainable, and would offer significant public benefit to help meet the needs of the community, enhance the SDL and would help to deliver on Wokingham's development aspirations for the wider area including through the provision of land required to deliver the Ashridge Farm section of the NDR and a large expanse of public open space. The application given its scale, would not result in harmful impacts to the highway network and would be well served principally by the NDR. Moreover it will deliver high quality development and would not result in significant impacts upon future occupiers or existing neighbours amenities and is in accordance with the Council's overall spatial strategy. There are no other material planning considerations of significant weight that would dictate that the application should be refused in line with the NPPF. Officers are therefore recommending the application for approval, subject to the conditions listed and an accompanying S106 agreement.

PLANNING STATUS

- Within North Wokingham Strategic Development Area
- Countryside
- Setting of Grade II* Listed Building
- Bat Roost Habitat Suitability
- Water Utility Consultation Zones
- Contaminated Land Consultation Area
- Ordinary Watercourses Consultation Area
- 7KM Thames Basin Heath SPA
- Tree Preservation Orders
- Flood Risk Zones 1,2, and 3

RECOMMENDATION

That the committee authorise the GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION subject to the following:

A. Completion of a S106 agreement inclusive of the following Heads of Terms:

- Safeguarding of a corridor of land for the delivery of the NDR, for transfer to WBC;
- Affordable Housing Provision – 35% on site (53 dwellings) comprising 50% Social Rent; 20% Affordable Rent; 30% Shared Ownership
- SANG delivery, initial maintenance, transfer to WBC and maintenance contribution;
- Strategic Access Management and Maintenance (SAMM) Contribution for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA;
- Open Space delivery, transfer to WBC and maintenance thereafter;
- Open Space to remain open for public use in perpetuity.
- Public Transport Subsidy Contribution;
- My Journey Travel Plan Contribution;
- S106 Monitoring Contribution
- Employment skills contribution
- Costs of the Traffic Regulation Order along Bell Foundry Lane;
- Delivery of off-site pedestrian and cycling improvements;
- To submit for approval of the Council SANG Access path specifications which would link the development site with the adjacent Kentwood Meadows and Ashridge Meadows SANGs and to complete the SANG Access in accordance with the approved SANG Access Specifications prior to first Occupation of a Dwelling on Site;
- Prior to commencement of development to either complete an agreement pursuant to sections 38 and 278 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) to dedicate the roads on the application site for adoption by the Council (subject to the plans and specifications for the roads being to the Council's adoptable standards, failing which or at the election of the developer/owner to enter a further supplementary deed under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and other enabling powers to secure, amongst other things, arrangements for the satisfactory construction and through a management company for the adoptable maintenance in perpetuity of the roads as private streets.

B. Conditions and informatives:

1. Commencement

The development of the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: In pursuance of s.91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by s.51 of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004).

2. Approved Details

This permission is in respect of the submitted application plans and drawings outlined below. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in

accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

List of drawings to be approved will be provided as part of the members update

Reason: To ensure that the development is carried out in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.

3. Dwellings Limit

The number of dwellings constructed on the application site pursuant to the planning permission hereby approved shall not exceed 153 dwellings.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

4. Phasing

Prior to the commencement of development a strategy for the sub-phasing of the development hereby approved shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Phasing Strategy will define:

- i. the development to be delivered within each sub-phase of the development;
- ii. timescales;
- iii. details of the coordination of housing and infrastructure delivery including triggers for delivery of infrastructure and the arrangements to prevent interruption of delivery across sub-phase and phase boundaries;

Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved Phasing Strategy.

Reason: to ensure comprehensive planning of the site, to ensure the timely delivery of facilities and services and to protect the amenity of the area in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5, CP6, CP17.

5. Permitted Development

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no buildings, extensions or alterations permitted by Classes A, B, C, D and E of Part 1 of the Second Schedule of the 2015 Order (or any order revoking and re-enacting that order with or without modification) shall be carried out.

*Reason: To safeguard the character of the area and residential amenity of neighbouring properties and the character and appearance of the landscape.
Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3.*

6. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), no external lighting shall be installed on the site or affixed to any buildings on the site except within rear gardens and front door lamps or in accordance with details that have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard amenity and highway safety. Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6.

7. Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

Prior to commencement of development hereby permitted, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) in respect of that phase shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Construction of the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved CEMP. The CEMP shall include the following matters:

- i) a construction travel protocol or Green Travel Plan for the construction phase including details of parking and turning for vehicles of site personnel, operatives and visitors;
- ii) loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- iii) storage of plant and materials;
- iv) programme of works, including measures for traffic management and operating hours;
- v) piling techniques;
- vi) provision of boundary hoarding and lighting;
- vii) protection of important trees, hedgerows and other natural features;
- viii) relevant ecological mitigation measures for protected species (bats, birds, reptiles, amphibians)
- ix) Invasive non-native species strategy
- x) Control of rats and other vermin particularly during site clearance
- xi) protection of the aquatic environment in terms of water quantity and quality;
- xii) details of proposed means of dust suppression and noise mitigation;
- xiii) details of measures to prevent mud from vehicles leaving the site during construction;
- xiv) details of any site construction office, compound and ancillary facility buildings. These facilities shall be sited away from woodland areas;
- xv) lighting on site during construction;
- xvi) measures to ensure no on-site fires during construction;
- xvii) monitoring and review mechanisms;
- xviii) implementation of the CEMP through an environmental management system;
- xix) details of the haul routes to be used to access the development;
- xx) details of temporary surface water management measures to be provided during the construction phase;
- xxi) details of the excavation of materials and the sub-surface construction methodology; and
- xxii) appointment of a Construction Liaison Officer

Reason: To protect occupants of nearby dwellings from noise and disturbance during the construction period, in the interest of highway safety and convenience and to minimise the environmental impact of the construction phase in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP3, CP6 and CP7 and TB23 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy, and ODPM circular 2006/05.

8. Construction Vehicles

No development shall commence until provision has been made to accommodate all site operatives, visitors and construction vehicles loading, off-loading, parking and turning within the site during the construction period, in accordance with details to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The provision shall be maintained as so-approved and used for no other purposes until completion of the development or otherwise as provided for in the approved details

Reason: To prevent queuing and parking off site, in the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6.

9. Hours of operation

No work relating to the development hereby approved, including works of ground clearance or preparation prior to commencement of construction operations shall take place other than between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 hours Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 hours on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank or National Holidays.

Reason: To protect the occupiers of neighbouring properties from noise and disturbance outside the permitted hours during the construction period. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.

10. Samples of Materials

Prior to commencement of development above finished floor level, samples and details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the building/s shall have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the so-approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the external appearance of the building is satisfactory. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3

11. Levels

No development shall take place until a measured survey of the site and a plan prepared to scale of not less than 1:500 showing details of existing and proposed finished ground levels (in relation to a fixed datum point) and finished floor levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and the approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to the occupation of the building(s).

Reason: In order to ensure a satisfactory form of development relative to surrounding buildings and landscape. Relevant policy: NPPF and Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Deliver Local Plan Policy TB21.

12. Earth mounding and contouring

Prior to the commencement of the development, details of earthworks shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, showing the relationship of

proposed mounding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform. The Earthworks shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and permanently so-retained.

*Reason: In the interests of the amenity and landscape character of the area.
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development
Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21*

13. Lighting

Details of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before the development is occupied. The details shall include location, height, type and direction of light sources and intensity of illumination for all external lighting strategies including details of lighting for all highways, cycleways, footpaths, public areas and any non-residential buildings.

The lighting details submitted shall include a “lighting design strategy for biodiversity” for light sensitive species in line with the lighting for light sensitive species strategy given in MM5 of the submitted Ecological Appraisal - 4583-05 EcoAp v6 SB/CL dated June 2020 and shall:

- a) Identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their resting places or along important routes used to access key area of their territory, for example for foraging; and
- b) Show how and where external lighting will be installed so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and maintained thereafter. Under no circumstances should any other external lighting be installed without prior consent from the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that roads and footpaths are constructed to a standard that would be suitable for adoption as publicly maintainable highway, in the interests of providing a functional, accessible, safe and high-quality development and to maintain favourable conservation status of the site for protected species and species of principal importance. Relevant policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP7 and TB23.

14. Highway Construction details

Prior to the commencement of development, full details of the construction of roads, cycleways and footways, including levels, widths, construction materials, depths of construction, surface water drainage and lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Each dwelling shall not be occupied until the vehicle access to serve that dwelling has been constructed in accordance with the approved details to road base level and the final wearing course will be provided within 3 months of first occupation, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To ensure that roads and footpaths are constructed to a standard that would be suitable for adoption as publicly maintainable highway, in the interests of providing a functional, accessible and safe development. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

15. Landscaping

Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of both hard and soft landscape proposals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. These details shall include, as appropriate, proposed finished floor levels or contours, means of enclosure, car parking layouts, other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas, hard surfacing materials and minor artefacts and structure (e.g. furniture, play equipment, SuDs pond inlet and outlet structures, refuse or other storage units, signs, lighting, external services, etc). Landscaping details relating to the detailed SANG design shall include the following:-

- a) Planting plans and methodology for implementation;
- b) Pedestrian footbridge locations and technical design specification;
- c) Furniture detail and specification;
- d) Detailed Planting plan (and schedules) with rationalised planting schemes and tree placement sympathetic to ecology habitat design;
- e) Pond designs (including inlet and outlet structures)
- f) Informal mown path designs to link to existing retained grassland area identified on Context Masterplan Drawing PLN-1-5001 Rev E;
- g) Details of species specific ecological enhancements;
- h) Levels and contour design;
- i) Boundary treatment design.

Soft landscaping details shall include planting plan, specification (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment), schedules of plants, noting species, planting sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate, and implementation timetable.

All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of any part of the development or in accordance with a timetable approved in writing by the local planning authority. Any trees or plants which, within a period of five years after planting, are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of species, size and number as originally approved and permanently retained.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and to maintain favourable conservation status of the site for protected species and species of principal importance. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3, CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03, TB21 & TB23

16. Landscape Management Plan

Prior to the commencement of the development, a landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities, timescales and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas, other than privately owned, domestic gardens, shall be submitted to and approved in

writing by the local planning authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved.

Reason: In order to ensure that provision is made to allow satisfactory maintenance of the landscaping hereby approved. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

17. Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

Prior to the commencement of development, a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan in accordance with the mitigation and enhancement measures contained within the submitted Ecological Appraisal (Aspect Ecology Ltd, Ref 1004583-05, Dated June 2020) and Ecology note (1004583-05 BN07 CEC dv1) dated October 2020 and shall include species specific ecological enhancements. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved Landscape and Ecological Management Plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To secure appropriate wildlife mitigation, compensation and enhancements within the course of the development, as appropriate under the NPPF.

18. Retention of trees and shrubs

No trees, shrubs or hedges within the site which are shown as being retained on the approved plans shall be felled, uprooted wilfully damaged or destroyed, cut back in any way or removed without previous written consent of the local planning authority; any trees, shrubs or hedges removed without consent or dying or being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within 5 years from the completion of the development hereby permitted shall be replaced with trees, shrubs or hedge plants of similar size and species unless the local planning authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that development is being carried out, of trees, shrubs and hedges growing within the site which are of amenity value to the area. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21

19. Protection of trees

- a) No development or other operation shall commence on site until a scheme which provides for the retention and protection of trees, shrubs and hedges growing on or adjacent the site in accordance with BS5837: 2012 has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority (the Approved Scheme); the tree protection measures approved shall be implemented in complete accordance with the Approved Scheme for the duration of the development (including, unless otherwise provided by the Approved Scheme) demolition, all site preparation work, tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery.
- b) No development (including any tree felling, tree pruning, demolition works, soil moving, temporary access construction and or widening or any other operation involving use of motorised vehicles or construction machinery) shall

commence until the local planning authority has been provided (by way of a written notice) with a period of no less than 7 working days to inspect the implementation of the measures identified in the Approved Scheme on-site.

c) No excavations for services, storage of materials or machinery, parking of vehicles, deposit or excavation of soil or rubble, lighting of fires or disposal of liquids shall take place within an area designated as being fenced off or otherwise protected in the Approved Scheme.

d) The fencing or other works which are part of the Approved Scheme shall not be moved or removed, temporarily or otherwise, until all works including external works have been completed and all equipment, machinery and surplus materials removed from the site, unless the prior approval of the local planning authority has first been sought and obtained.

Reason: To secure the protection throughout the time that the development is being carried out of trees shrubs or hedges growing within or adjacent to the site which are of amenity value to the area, and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence
Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

20. Aged and Veteran Tree Strategy

Prior to commencement of the development, a detailed veteran and aged tree mitigation strategy shall be submitted and approved in writing by the Council. The strategy shall include details of all the tree works that are required to maintain the trees ecological value. The management plans should cover a period of 10 years from the commencement of development. The mitigation strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: To secure the suitable protection of aged and veteran trees and to allow for verification by the local planning authority that the necessary measures are in place before development and other works commence.

Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 and TB21.

21. Hedgerow reinstatement

The section of hedgerow adjacent to Warren House Road removed for the Sales area will need to be reinstated in the first planting season following removal of the sales office and associated parking, in accordance with the Hedgerow Reinstatement Plan – 7041.HRP.ASP6.0 Rev A.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3, CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC03 & TB21.

22. Details of boundary walls and fences

Prior to commencement of development above finished floor level, details of all boundary treatment(s) shall first be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development or phased as agreed in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be maintained in the approved form for so long as the development remains on the site.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and highway safety. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP6

23. Biodiversity Enhancement (Species)

Prior to commencement of the development, a detailed strategy of biodiversity enhancements for hedgehogs, bats, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates of species of principal importance shall be submitted to the local authority for its approval. This strategy shall be in line with the outline proposals within the submitted Ecological Appraisal (Aspect Ecology Ltd, Ref 1004583-05, Dated June 2020) and Ecology note (1004583-05 BN07 CEC dv1) dated October 2020. Once approved, the strategy shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed by the local authority in writing.

Reason: To ensure that the proposal is in accordance with Section 41 NERC Act re. UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (Species of Principal Importance), and complies with Planning Policies for Wildlife including CP7 of the Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments.

24. Biodiversity Enhancement (Habitats)

Prior to commencement of the development a biodiversity impact assessment calculator using the Defra metric 2.0 showing how detailed soft landscaping continues to provide a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain shall be submitted to the local planning authority.

Reason: to ensure that the proposal is in accordance National Planning Policy Framework which requires consideration of the potential biodiversity gains that can be secured within developments.

25. Flood Risk Assessment

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until an updated Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Lead Local Flood Authority (in consultation with the Environment Agency) which demonstrates that the Ashridge Stream alignment works have been carried out in accordance with the submitted Flood Risk Assessment produced by RSK (ref: 133599-R2(1)-FRA dated June 2020) and with the Ashridge Stream Realignment Hydraulic Modelling contained within Appendix C of the above referenced FRA. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved FRA mitigation measures shall be fully implemented prior to occupation and subsequently in accordance with the timing / phasing arrangements embodied within the scheme, or within any other period as may subsequently be agreed, in writing, by the local planning authority.

Reason: To prevent the increased risk of flooding due to impedance of flood flows and reduction of flood storage capacity. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09 and CC10.

26. Flood Risk and Drainage

No development shall take place until updated and full details of the drainage system for the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA. The details shall include:

- Results of intrusive ground investigation demonstrating seasonal high groundwater levels for the site and infiltration rates in accordance with BRE365;
- Details of proposed SuDS features in accordance with the CIRIA guidance and the Wokingham SuDS Strategy (January 2017) and demonstration that the base of SuDS features are at least 1m above seasonal groundwater level;
- Demonstration that the details are in line with the ecological enhancement recommendations contained within the submitted Ecological Appraisal (Aspect Ecology Ltd, Ref 1004583-05, Dated June 2020) and Ecology note (1004583-05 BN07 CEC dv1) dated October 2020;
- Full calculations demonstrating the performance of soakaways or capacity of attenuation features to cater for 1 in 100 year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change and runoff controlled at Greenfield rates, or preferably better;
- Calculations demonstrating that there will be no flooding of pipes for events up to and including the 1 in 100 year flood event with a 40% allowance for climate change;
- A drainage strategy plan for the proposed development, including pipe details with invert levels;
- Demonstration that Finished Floor Levels shall be no lower than 300mm above the modelled 1 in 100 year plus 40% climate change flood level;
- Evidence of ground conditions and modelling of the scheme to address concerns regarding the stability of the banks of the diverted Ashridge Stream;
- A maintenance arrangement for the SuDS features throughout the lifetime of the development, indicating who will be responsible for the maintenance.

Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off and to maintain favourable conservation status of the site for protected species and species of principal importance. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1, CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09, CC10 & TB23.

27. Prior to commencement of development, an exceedance flow routing plan for flows above the 1 in 100+40% climate change event shall be submitted to and approved in writing by LLFA. The proposed scheme shall identify exceedance flow routes through the development based on proposed topography with flows being directed to highways and areas of public open space. Flow routes through gardens and other areas in private ownership will not be permitted. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To prevent increased flood risk from surface water run-off. Relevant policy: NPPF Section 10 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change), Core Strategy policy CP1, and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policies CC09, CC10.

Access and movement

28. Access

Prior to commencement of the development, details of the proposed vehicular accesses on to Warren House Road and Bell Foundry Lane to include visibility splays of 2.4m by 43m shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The accesses shall be formed as so-approved and the visibility splays shall be cleared of any obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height prior to the occupation of the development. The accesses shall be retained in accordance with the approved details and used for no other purpose and the land within the visibility splays shall be maintained clear of any visual obstruction exceeding 0.6 metres in height at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and convenience in accordance with Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6.

29. Walking and Cycling Strategy

Prior to commencement of development, details of internal pedestrian and cycle infrastructure and connections from the development to Wokingham town centre, Cantley Park and the SANG to the north of the NDR shall be submitted for approval by the local planning authority. These details shall demonstrate how these routes will be upgraded. The measures shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details prior to occupation of the first dwelling.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable travel, convenience and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6.

Parking

30. Garages and car ports to be retained as such

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification), the garage and car port accommodation on the site identified on the approved plans shall be kept available for the parking of vehicles ancillary to the residential use of the site at all times. It shall not be used for any business nor as habitable space.

Reason: To ensure that adequate parking space is available on the site, so as to reduce the likelihood of roadside parking, in the interests of highway safety and convenience. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policy CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

31. Parking and turning space to be provided

No part of any building(s) hereby permitted shall be occupied or used until the vehicle parking and turning spaces have been provided in accordance with the approved plans. The vehicle parking and turning spaces shall be retained and maintained in accordance with the approved details and the parking spaces shall remain available for the parking of vehicles at all times and the turning spaces shall not be used for any other purpose other than vehicle turning.

Reason: To provide adequate off-street vehicle parking and turning space and to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in the interests of road safety and convenience and providing a functional, accessible and safe

development and in the interests of amenity. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

32. Cycle parking to be provided

No building shall be occupied until secure and covered parking for cycles has been provided in accordance with the approved drawing(s)/details. The cycle parking/ storage shall be permanently so-retained for the parking of bicycles and used for no other purpose.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure weather-proof bicycle parking facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel.

Relevant policy: NPPF Section 9 (Sustainable Transport) and Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

33. Electric Vehicle Charging

Prior to commencement of development above finished floor level, an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. This strategy shall include details relating to on-site electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including a plan showing at least 40% coverage of electric vehicle charging provision across the site in accordance with Appendix E of the WBC Living Streets: Highways Design Guide (2019), and details of installation of charging points and future proofing of the site. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed strategy thereafter.

Reason: In order to ensure that secure electric vehicle charging facilities are provided so as to encourage the use of sustainable modes of travel. Relevant policy: Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 & CP6 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC07.

34. Parking Management Strategy

Prior to the first occupation of the development, a Parking Management Strategy for the management of the on-site parking shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The management of the parking within the site shall be in accordance with the approved details thereafter.

Reason: to ensure satisfactory development in the interests of amenity and highway safety in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policies CP1, CP6 and CP21.

35. Land Contamination

Unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority, development other than that required to be carried out as part of an approved scheme of contamination remediation must not commence until conditions A – D (below) have been complied with. If unexpected contamination is found after development has commenced, development must be halted on that part of the site affected by the unexpected contamination, to the extent specified in writing by the Local Planning Authority, until there is compliance with condition D (below)

A Site Characterisation

An investigation and risk assessment shall be completed in accordance with a scheme that has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority to assess the nature and extent of contamination on the site, whether or not it originates at the site. (This is in addition to any assessment that may have been provided with the planning application) The investigation and risk assessment must be undertaken by competent persons and a written report of the findings must be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. The report of the findings must include:

- (i) a survey of the extent, scale and nature of the contamination;
- (ii) an assessment of the potential risks to:
 - a) human health;
 - b) property (existing or proposed) including buildings, crops, livestock, pets, woodland and services and pipework;
 - c) adjoining land;
 - d) groundwater and surface waters;
 - e) ecological systems;
 - f) archaeological sites and ancient monuments
- (iii) an appraisal of remedial options, and proposal of the preferred option (N.B. The assessment must be conducted in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination CLR11.)

B Submission of a remediation scheme

A detailed remediation scheme that describes how the site will be made suitable for the intended use must be submitted to the local planning authority for written approval. The remediation scheme shall include, the proposed remediation objectives and remediation criteria, details of all works to be undertaken, the timetable of works and site management procedures. The remediation scheme shall ensure that the site cannot be declared as being contaminated under part 2A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, in relation to the intended use, after remediation works are completed.

C Implementation of the approved remediation scheme

The approved remediation scheme shall be implemented before other groundworks or construction works commence unless a phased approach has been agreed as part of the approved remediation scheme or unless written approval is given by the Local Planning Authority. The applicant or contractor must give at least two weeks written notice before remediation works commence. Following completion of remediation works at the site, or upon completion of each phase a verification report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for written approval.

D Reporting of Unexpected Contamination

If unexpected contamination is found at any time during development this shall be reported in writing as soon as possible to the Local Planning Authority. An investigation and risk assessment shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of condition A (above), and where remediation work is necessary a remediation scheme must be prepared and submitted for written approval to the local planning authority, in accordance with condition B (above). Following the completion of measures set out in the approved remediation scheme a

verification report shall be submitted to the local planning authority in accordance with condition C.

E Long term monitoring and maintenance

A scheme setting out the future monitoring and maintenance that will take place at the site shall be submitted for written approval to the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include details of the timescales over which monitoring and maintenance will take place and how frequently reports will be submitted to the local planning authority for approval. All monitoring and maintenance work will be carried out in accordance with DEFRA and the Environment Agency's 'Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination

Reason: To ensure that future users of the site are protected from the harmful effects of contamination

36.Noise mitigation measures

Prior to commencement of development above finished floor level, an updated Planning Noise Assessment for the development hereby permitted shall submitted for written approval to the Local Planning Authority. The updated statement shall be based upon the development layout hereby approved. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the approved noise mitigation measures shall be installed and functional before first occupation of the buildings they are intended to serve.

*Reason: To ensure satisfactory noise attenuation measures are installed.
Relevant policy: NPPF Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment), Core Strategy policies CP1 and CP3 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy CC06.*

37.Odour mitigation measures

The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until written confirmation has been obtained from Thames Water that the odour mitigation measures which the submitted odour modelling assessment (ref: Olfasense, 23 October 2020, report reference TWPS20A_04) is based upon are fully operational within the adjacent Sewage Water Treatment Works.

Reason: To ensure the protection of residential amenities of future occupiers of the development. Core Strategy policies CP1, & CP3.

38.Sustainability and energy efficiency

Prior to commencement of development above finished floor level, an updated Energy Statement for the development hereby permitted shall submitted for written approval to the Local Planning Authority. The updated statement shall be based upon the development layout hereby approved and the sustainability measures contained within the submitted Environmental Economics Energy Statement - Ashridge Farm, Version 1 dated 18/06/2020. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and they shall be installed and functional before first occupation of the buildings they are intended to serve. The submitted details shall include:-

- i) a strategy detailing how the development will secure a 10% reduction in carbon emissions above the minimum requirements of Part L: Building Regulations shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority; or
- ii) an alternative strategy which can demonstrate a greater carbon saving than would be achieved by i) above shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of promoting sustainable forms of developments and to meet the terms of the application. Relevant Policies: Core Strategy policies CP1, and CC04 and CC05 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014), the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2010) and the North Wokingham Strategic Development Location Supplementary Planning Document (October 2011).

- 39.** All new dwellings shall be provided with the appropriate connections for broadband or similar technologies, or ducting that shall enable the connection of broadband or similar technologies.

Reason: To ensure that an adequate level of infrastructure is provided in accordance with Wokingham Core Strategy Policy CP1 and CC04 of the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (Feb 2014).

- 40.** The development shall include provision for all dwellings with a garden with:

- a. A water butt of an appropriate size installed to maximise rainwater collection; and
- b. Space for composting

Reason: To reduce, reuse, and enable the efficient use of water and organic household waste in accordance with NPPF, Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP1, the Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policy CC04, the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (2010) and the Arborfield Strategic Development Location Supplementary Planning Document (2011).

41. Emergency water supplies

Development shall not commence until details for the provision of a water supply including fire hydrants to meet firefighting needs throughout the development (including the installation arrangements and the timing of such an installation) have been submitted to, and approved in writing, by the Local Planning Authority. The approved measures shall be implemented in full accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To ensure that adequate measures for firefighting can be incorporated into the development, including the construction phase in accordance with Wokingham Borough Core Strategy Policy CP4.

42. Archaeological investigation

Development shall not commence until a programme of archaeological work (which may comprise more than one phase of work) has been implemented in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Reason: The site is identified as being of archaeological potential. Investigation is required to allow preservation and recording of any archaeological features or artefacts before disturbance by the development. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB25.

43. Method statement

Prior to the works to relocate the existing granary building, a method statement for its removal and relocation, and a timetable for the works shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be implemented in accordance with the details so-approved.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building. Relevant policy: National Planning Policy Framework Section 16 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan policy TB24.

44. Communications Plan

Development shall not commence until a Communications Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall specify methods for communicating with local residents, including the creation of a liaison group to meet in accordance with an agreed schedule. The Plan shall be carried out as approved until the final completion of the development.

Reason: In order to minimise disturbance to neighbours during construction works.

Informatives

- I. This permission should be read in conjunction with the legal agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (yet to be finalised) the contents of which relate to this development.
- II. All of the dwellings will be required to meet or exceed the minimum size standards as set out in the National Space Standards or any subsequent National Space Standards that are applicable at the time of the reserved matters submission.
- III. The Head of Highways at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham [0118 9746000] should be contacted for the approval of the access construction details before any work is carried out within the highway (including verges and footways). This planning permission does NOT authorise the construction of such an access or works.

- IV. Adequate precautions shall be taken during the construction period to prevent the deposit of mud and similar debris on adjacent highways. For further information contact the Highway Authority on tel: 0118 9746000.
- V. If it is the developer's intention to request the Council, as local highway authority, to adopt the proposed access roads etc. as highway maintainable at public expense, then full engineering details must be agreed with the Highway Authority at the Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham. The developer is strongly advised not to commence development until such details have been approved in writing and a legal agreement is made with the Council under S38 of the Highways Act 1980.
- VI. Any works/events carried out either by, or at the behest of, the developer, whether they are located on, or affecting a prospectively maintainable highway, as defined under Section 87 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, or on or affecting the public highway, shall be coordinated under the requirements of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic management Act 2004 and licensed accordingly in order to secure the expeditious movement of traffic by minimising disruption to users of the highway network in Wokingham.
- VII. Any such works or events commissioned by the developer and particularly those involving the connection of any utility to the site, shall be co-ordinated by them in liaison with Wokingham Borough Council's Street Works Team, (telephone 01189 746302). This must take place at least three months in advance of the works and particularly to ensure that statutory undertaker connections/supplies to the site are coordinated to take place wherever possible at the same time.
- VIII. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of the minimisation of noise on construction and demolition sites. Application, under Section 61 of the Act, for prior consent to the works, can be made to the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager.
- IX. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of Ground Water. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0845 850 2777.
- X. Licences, consents or permits may be required for work on this site. For further information on environmental permits and other licences please visit <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.s=tl&r.lc=en&topicId=1079068363>
- XI. The attention of the applicant is drawn to the requirements of Section 60 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 in respect of the minimisation of noise on construction and demolition sites. Application, under Section 61 of the Act, for prior consent to the works, can be made to the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager

XII. The council advises that the developer produces a strategy to install superfast broadband infrastructure for future occupants of the site. The strategy should ensure that upon occupation of a dwelling the new home owner has access to a superfast broadband service through a site-wide network. It is also advised that the developer keeps occupants fully informed of any delays to superfast broadband connection in before they purchase/occupy their new homes

C) Alternative recommendation:

That the committee authorise the Head of Development Management to refuse planning permission in the event of an S106 agreement not being completed to secure the services, affordable housing and infrastructure within six months of the date of the committee resolution (unless a longer period is agreed by the Head of Development Management in consultation with the Chairman of Planning Committee) for the following reasons:

- 1) In the absence of a planning obligation to secure suitable contributions / on site and off works for the following:
 - Safeguarding of a corridor of land for the delivery of the NDR, for transfer to WBC;
 - Affordable Housing Provision – 35% on site (53 dwellings) comprising 50% Social Rent; 20% Affordable Rent; 30% Shared Ownership
 - SANG delivery, initial maintenance, transfer to WBC and maintenance contribution;
 - Strategic Access Management and Maintenance (SAMM) Contribution for the Thames Basin Heaths SPA;
 - Open Space delivery, transfer to WBC and maintenance thereafter;
 - Open Space to remain open for public use in perpetuity.
 - Public Transport Subsidy Contribution;
 - My Journey Travel Plan Contribution;
 - S106 Monitoring Contribution;
 - Employment skills contribution;
 - Costs of the Traffic Regulation Order along Bell Foundry Lane;
 - Delivery of off-site pedestrian and cycling improvements;
 - To submit for approval of the Council SANG Access path specifications which would link the development site with the adjacent Kentwood Meadows and Ashridge Meadows SANGs and to complete the SANG Access in accordance with the approved SANG Access Specifications prior to first Occupation of a Dwelling on Site;
 - Prior to commencement of development to either complete an agreement pursuant to sections 38 and 278 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) to dedicate the roads on the application site for adoption by the Council (subject to the plans and specifications for the roads being to the Council's adoptable standards, failing which or at the election of the developer/owner to enter a further supplementary deed under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and other enabling powers to secure, amongst other things, arrangements for the satisfactory construction and through a management company for the adoptable maintenance in perpetuity of the roads as private streets.

The Local Planning Authority is unable to satisfy itself that the proposal includes adequate mitigation measures to prevent the proposed development from having an adverse effect on infrastructure, services and would fail to provide affordable housing. This is contrary to the requirements of the NPPF and would compromise the delivery of the necessary infrastructure. This is contrary to policies CP1, CP2, CP3, CP4, CP5, CP6, CP7, CP8, CP10, CP18 and Appendix 7 of the Core Strategy, policies CC01, CC08, TB08, TB12 of the Managing Development Delivery Development Plan Document, saved policy NRM6 of the South East Plan and the Council's adopted North Wokingham SDL SPD and Infrastructure Delivery and Contributions SPD.

- 2) In the absence of a planning obligation to secure suitable avoidance and mitigation measures and access management monitoring arrangements, in terms that are satisfactory to the Local Planning Authority (LPA), the LPA is unable to satisfy itself that the proposals include adequate mitigation measures to prevent the proposed development from having an adverse effect on the integrity of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, in line with the requirements of Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Article 6(3) of Directive 92/43/EEC. The proposal would be contrary to Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan, Policies CP8 and CP4 of the Core Strategy.

| RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Application Number | Proposal | Decision |
| 201115 | Screening Opinion application for an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposed residential development for 170 homes and Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG), associated parking, access, open space and landscaping. | Not EIA development |
| 191010 | Full application for a section of the Northern Distributor Road through Ashridge Farm, linking Bell Foundry Lane to the west with Kentwood Farm to the east, incorporating a new priority junction on Bell Foundry Lane and associated works including a shared footway/cycleway. | Approved 20/08/2019 |
| 201241 | Application to vary condition 2 of Planning Permission 170883 for the proposed conversion of existing barns/outbuildings to 5no. dwellings involving a single storey extension to the rear of 2 outbuildings in connection with their conversion and the creation of an access off Warren House Road to serve a rear parking area. Condition 2 refers to the list of approved plans. The proposed variation relates to an amendment to the application site boundary in conjunction with repositioning the location of the visitor parking spaces and car port. | Approved 29/07/2020 |
| 201315 | Application to vary condition 2 of Listed Building Consent 170884 for the proposed conversion of existing Listed barns/outbuildings to 5no. dwellings involving a single storey extension to the rear of 2 outbuildings in connection | Approved 29/07/2020 |

| | | |
|--------|---|------------------------|
| | with their conversion. Condition 2 refers to the list of approved plans. The proposed variation relates to an amendment to the application site boundary in conjunction with repositioning the location of the visitor parking spaces and car port. | |
| 170883 | Full application for proposed conversion of existing barns/outbuildings to 5no. dwellings involving a single storey extension to the rear of 2 outbuildings in connection with their conversion and the creation of an access off Warren House Road to serve a rear parking area. | Approved 31/08/2018 |
| 170884 | Application for Listed Building Consent for proposed conversion of existing Listed barns/outbuildings to 5no. dwellings involving a single storey extension to the rear of 2 outbuildings in connection with their conversion. | Approved 31/08/2018 |

SUMMARY INFORMATION

For Residential

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Site Area | 17.5ha (5.95ha residential element) |
| Proposed units | 153 |
| Proposed density - dwellings/hectare | 26 |
| Number of affordable units proposed | 53 (35%) |
| Previous land use | Agriculture |
| Proposed Public Open Space | 10.6ha (approx) |
| Proposed parking spaces | 335 |

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

| | |
|--|---|
| Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust | No comments received |
| Crime Prevention Design Officer | No objection |
| National Grid | Linesearch advice regarding listed assets within vicinity of the site |
| Southern Gas Networks | Standing advice and details provided of SGN owned pipes in the vicinity of the site |
| SEE Power Distribution | Linesearch advice regarding network records within vicinity of the site |
| Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue | No objection subject to condition |
| Berkshire Archaeology | No objection subject to condition |
| Thames Water | No objection |
| South East Water | No response |
| Historic England | Concerns over harm caused to setting of Listed Farmhouse |
| Natural England | No objection subject to S106 |
| Environment Agency | Objection to FRA being based on stream diversion |
| WBC Biodiversity | No objection subject to conditions |
| WBC Green Infrastructure | No objection subject to conditions |
| WBC Economic Prosperity and Place (Community Infrastructure) | No objection subject to S106 |
| WBC Drainage | No objection subject to conditions |
| WBC Education (School Place Planning) | No comments received |
| WBC Environmental Health | No objection subject to conditions |
| WBC Housing | No objection subject to S106 |

| | |
|--|---|
| WBC Highways | No objection subject to conditions and completion of S106 agreement |
| WBC Trees & Landscape | No objection subject to conditions |
| WBC Cleaner & Greener (Waste Services) | No comments received |
| WBC Public Rights of Way | No objection |

REPRESENTATIONS

Wokingham Town Council:

Object for following reasons:

- No shops for the community in the application; *Officer comment – see para 21 of report, the site is considered to be well served by local shops and facilities.*
- Site surrounds sewage works which will cause smell pollution to residents – unlikely that the smell can be reduced but any mitigation would be welcomed; The developers own report on odour impact, states that there will be unpleasant levels of smell from the adjoining Sewage Works; *Officer comment – the residential dwellings will be located outside the identified odour contour ‘zone 3’ which is considered acceptable by Thames Water and WBC Environmental Health Officer. Paras 111-112 refer.*
- Concern that pedestrian access to the SANG will be safe and adequate; Concern regarding safe pedestrian walkway from the development into town; *Officer comment – condition 29 requires the submission of a walking and cycling strategy which will detail measures to safely connect the development with the wider area including the town centre and SANG i.e. potentially through the provision of crossings and/or tactile paving and dropped kerbs. The delivery of these measures would be secured within the S106 - see Highway section of report.*
- Concerns regarding electric vehicle provision; *Officer comment – condition 33 requires the provision of an electric vehicle charging strategy for the development.*
- Concerns regarding ecology and biodiversity reports as not clear if they are suggestions of will be followed through; *Officer comment – conditions 23 & 24 secure the provision of the proposed ecology mitigation and enhancement proposals.*
- Pleased to see good cycle parking provision
- Pleased to see affordable rented housing as part of development
- Could a cycle path be added to Warren House Road? *Officer comment – condition 29 requires details of a pedestrian and cycle strategy to be submitted which will detail proposed off-site pedestrian and cycling improvements to be undertaken. Their delivery would be secured within the S106.*

St. Nicholas Hurst Parish

- No comment to make other than construction traffic should not use Forest Road or A321; *Officer comment – condition 7 requires the submission of a CEMP which will detail the proposed construction traffic routes.*

Local Members:

Councillor Rachel Burgess (Labour Ward Member for Norreys)

- There are substantial development constraints of the site;

- There is a band of floodplain, at flood zone 3, the highest rating. Even after the diversion of the Ashridge Stream an area of high risk will remain in the SANG to the northeast of the Sewage Treatment Works. This goes against Wokingham's Core Strategy which includes the avoidance of increasing risks of, or from, all forms of flooding; *Officer comment – this area of floodplain is located within the area of public open space and not close to the residential dwellings - see Flood Risk and Drainage section of report.*
- There will clearly be an odour problem from the sewage treatment works, to which this development will inevitably be built in close proximity, which will cause negative affects on amenity. This odour issue has specifically been listed previously as a site constraint; *Officer comment – the residential dwellings will be located outside the identified odour contour 'zone 3' which is considered acceptable to both Thames Water and WBC Environmental Health Officer. Paras 111 & 112 refer.*
- There are a number of listed building heritage assets at this site. The development would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of these heritage assets and the development would have a detrimental effect on the character of the local area. The heritage assets include a number of grade II listed buildings of special architectural and historic interest, for example an exceptional example of a late 16th century Tudor property; *Officer comment – see Heritage section of report (para's 61 to 77 refers). Whilst Historic England consider that the proposals would result in significant harm to the setting of the Listed Farmhouse, the harm is considered less than substantial. As such, and in accordance with the NPPF, the public benefits are to be weighed against the harm. It should also be noted that the new road will alter the existing setting of the building. In this instance, the public benefits associated with the proposals are considered to outweigh the harm considered by Historic England.*

Councillor Gregor Murray (Conservative Ward Member for Norreys)

- I request that this application be referred to planning committee rather than delegated to officer decision. Siting 157 dwellings around the sewage treatment works creates all types of quality of life issues which need to be discussed and aired in a public forum before any decision can be made.

Neighbours:

Consultation letters were sent to over 900 neighbouring residents, both upon receipt of the application and again upon receiving a revised layout. A total of 18 responses have been received in response to the consultations exercises (6 received following the initial consultation exercise and a further 12 received following the second). A summary of all the responses received are below:

- When the housing plan for Wokingham was first adopted, this area was not included; *Officer response – the site is proposed for allocation within the LPU, but notwithstanding this, it is considered a suitable and sustainable site within the SDL.*
- Object to more housing blighting the landscape; supposed to represent the wishes of local inhabitants, you are doing the opposite; *Officer response – Council has a statutory duty to provide housing in sustainable locations which the proposals are considered to provide and it should be noted that the fact that a site is not allocated does not mean it is not suitable for development. This site lies within the SDL and is sustainably located.*

- Overdeveloped area / too many houses on this side of town; Wokingham seems to be taking the brunt of the new house boom – areas like Theale or Thatcham could do with the burst in people moving in; *Officer comment - Every local authority has a target housing delivery requirement. The SDL was created to ensure new housing in the area would be supported by appropriate associated infrastructure.*
- Housing density seems quite high; *Officer comment – housing density of 26 dwellings per hectare is considered acceptable for this site and in line with housing density on adjacent housing sites.*
- From a view of fields and countryside I will potentially now see just houses. Wokingham disappearing under a sea of concrete, bricks and mortar. Destroying our town.
- Concerns regarding lack of infrastructure supporting it and not being affordable; *Officer comment – due to the location of the site within the SDL, the proposals are considered to be well served by surrounding infrastructure and the proposals will provide a policy compliant provision of 35% affordable housing (53 dwellings) with an appropriate associated tenure mix.*
- Properties likely to be bought off plan and rented out which will be divisive for the community; *Officer comment – this does not fall under the remit of planning controls.*
- Development will be noisy, traffic noise and building and construction will add to it; *Officer comment – submission of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan required under condition 7 will ensure best practices are followed at the construction stage and in order to minimise impacts to surrounding residents.*
- Housing design lacks imagination, just small unattractive boxes; *Officer comment – housing design is considered acceptable and compatible with the character of the surrounding area*
- No commitment to reducing green house gases in the area, this will increase noise and air pollution from the traffic on the A329M; *Officer comment – the proposals seek to contribute towards the reduction of CO2 emissions through the measures proposed within the sustainability report (condition 38 refers) Condition 33 also requires submission of an electric vehicle charging strategy for the site.*
- Losing too much green space; *Officer comment – the existing site is in private use and the proposals will include the provision of a large area of publicly accessible open space which will link with the adjacent SANGs.*
- Seem to be attracting undesirable people that make it unsafe to walk around and feel safe and secure; *Officer comment – the layout is considered acceptable by the Crime Prevention Design Advisor.*
- Impacts upon existing facilities i.e. medical, dentistry, school facilities , only one GP practice near the proposed location which is already overburdened by current residents; *Officer comment - The proposals would be subject to CIL payments with regards to mitigation of any identified additional impacts upon local services. Health provision is provided and controlled by the local Clinical Commissioning Group not the Council.*
- Concerns regarding proximity of development to sewage treatment works; *Officer comment – the residential dwellings will be located outside of the odour contour zone 3, which is considered acceptable to both Thames Water and WBC Environmental Health Officer. Paras 111&112 refer.*
- Flood risk concerns to existing and new properties – will Ashridge stream diversion bring benefit or increase flood risk? *Officer comment – the proposals*

are based upon the diversion of the Ashridge Stream which will result in betterment when compared with existing flood risks associated with the site.

- *Dangerous road layout onto Warren House Road which floods; not necessary. Warren House Road already suffers from vehicles exceeding 40mph speed limit – new houses exiting onto it will increase danger; Officer comment – WBC Highways raise no objection to the new access on to Warren House Road which will be the subject of further safety audits. Issues concerning speeding should be reported to the police.*
- *Why can't all exits be onto NDR – purpose of the NDR was to relieve pressure on local roads; local roads inadequate for amount of traffic using them; Officer comment – see Highways section of report, the NDR once fully operational will relief pressure from a number of local roads. No objection raised to an access onto Warren House road, as this provides further connectivity with the area and which itself will be the subject of further safety audits.*
- *Proposed houses will add to congestion on Wiltshire Road; Officer comment – the traffic impacts of the development have been assessed through the Transport Assessment and considered acceptable upon the local area.*
- *No pavement on northern side of Warren House Road – a new walkway should be established within the development adjacent to Warren House Road; There is no crossing point from the new development to southern side of Warren House Road – how will pedestrians safely cross? Officer comment – there will be a pedestrian walkways and cycle routes within the site improving permeability and condition 29 requires the submission of a walking and cycling strategy which will detail measures to safely connect the development with the wider area i.e. potentially through the provision of crossings and/or tactile paving and dropped kerbs. The delivery of these measures would be secured within the S106.*
- *Previous plans for the NDR showed a pathway along Bell Foundry Lane joining up with Eldridge Park; Officer comment – the NDR pedestrian/cycle route will connect with Eldridge Park, but the shared ped/cycle route from the western end of the new section of the Ashridge NDR will now cross to join with the route running along the boundary of Cantley Park. This has been necessary due to issues regarding land ownership to facilitate running the route along the east side of Bell Foundry Lane.*
- *Junction of Warren House Road and Wiltshire Road has been dangerous for years both for vehicles and pedestrians – major re-design of this junction is required to include crossing points to make it safe; Officer comment – the junction has been assessed within the TA and considered acceptable; condition 29 requires the submission of a walking and cycling strategy which will detail measures to safely connect the development with the wider area i.e. potentially through the provision of crossings and/or tactile paving and dropped kerbs.*
- *Houses too close to sewage works – since new houses either side of the sewage works have been built the awful stench is back again, usually late evening. It happened over 20 years ago, improved, but recently got bad again. Officer comment – Thames Water do not object to the proposals as the dwellings would be located outside of the odour contour zone 3 as identified within the submitted odour impact modelling assessment which they commissioned. Whilst there were some operating issues with a recently installed odour control unit, Thames Water have advised that they anticipate it being operational again in the near future. WBC Environmental Health Officer noted there were two complaints regarding the sewage treatment works earlier in the summer. However, no further information was received from the complainants and the cases were closed with no further action taken.*

- Bats will be impacted along with other wildlife; *Officer comment – WBC Ecology officer is satisfied with the proposed ecological protection measures including those concerning the protection of bats (conditions 7 & 23 refer)*
- Building's should be future proofed i.e. solar panels, heat pumps; *Officer comment – the proposals seek to contribute towards the reduction of CO2 emissions through the energy saving measures proposed within the sustainability report (condition 38 refers) Condition 33 also requires submission of an electric vehicle charging strategy.*
- Impacts of new development on mobile telephone and television signal – what investigations has taken place to ensure signals are not adversely affected – the development should include a mobile phone mast to mitigate the risk; *Officer comment – this is not a material planning consideration*

Comments:

- Welcome the plans to retain the hedgerow along Warren House Road;
- The map does not show the proposed new stretch of road between Bell Foundry Lane and the roundabout on Warren House Road. I hope very much that this has not been quietly ditched, as with all these new houses we need more road; *Officer comment – this section of NDR is being built out, and the transfer of the land to facilitate its delivery would be secured in conjunction with this application should planning permission be forthcoming.*
- When the houses further along Warren House Road were being built we had a huge amount of rats and mice swarming the gardens; pest control had to be called out to try to eradicate them; would rather this wasn't being built but not enough to officially object, but don't want to have to deal with getting rid of rats and mice again; *Officer comment – condition 7 requires the submission of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan within which one of the requirements is to detail the control of rats and other vermin particularly during site clearance.*
- Linking of the SANGs is appealing
- Would like to see more in terms of benefits for the community e.g. pub, restaurant or local shop; space for adults to partake in outdoor exercise other than running or walking would be nice;
- Completion of the NDR should be a priority
- Orchard is a lovely idea will it become a reality

| PLANNING POLICY | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|---|
| National Policy | NPPF | National Planning Policy Framework |
| Adopted Core Strategy DPD 2010 | CP1 | Sustainable Development |
| | CP2 | Inclusive Communities |
| | CP3 | General Principles for Development |
| | CP4 | Infrastructure Requirements |
| | CP5 | Housing mix, density and affordability |
| | CP6 | Managing Travel Demand |
| | CP7 | Biodiversity |
| | CP8 | Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area |
| | CP9 | Scale and Location of Development Proposals |

| | | |
|---|-------------|--|
| | CP10 | Improvements to the Strategic Transport Network |
| | CP11 | Proposals outside development limits (including countryside) |
| | CP20 | North Wokingham Strategic Development Location |
| Adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan 2014 | CC01 | Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development |
| | CC02 | Development Limits |
| | CC03 | Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping |
| | CC04 | Sustainable Design and Construction |
| | CC05 | Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks |
| | CC06 | Noise |
| | CC07 | Parking |
| | CC08 | Safeguarding alignments of the Strategic Transport Network & Road Infrastructure |
| | CC09 | Development and Flood Risk (from all sources) |
| | CC10 | Sustainable Drainage |
| | TB05 | Housing Mix |
| | TB06 | Development of private residential gardens |
| | TB07 | Internal Space standards |
| | TB12 | Employment Skills Plan |
| | TB21 | Landscape Character |
| | TB23 | Biodiversity and Development |
| | TB24 | Designated Heritage Assets |
| Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) | BDG | Borough Design Guide – Section 4 |
| | | DCLG – National Internal Space Standards |

PLANNING ISSUES

Application Site and Surroundings

1. The application site relates to land known as Ashridge Farm, located off Warren House Road, approximately 1 mile to the north of Wokingham town centre, and to the south of the A329 (M). Although the site is located within the North Wokingham SDL, it is not currently an allocated site and as such it is located within the countryside.
2. To the east of the site boundary is the housing development and SANG associated with Kentwood Farm West (otherwise known as Mulberry Place), which has planning permission for 225 dwellings. This is currently under construction. The north western boundary of the application site adjoins the existing SANG associated with the adjacent Bell Farm housing development, whilst Cantley Park recreation ground lies beyond the south western boundary of

the site. The Thames Water Sewage Treatment works are located between the southern and northern parts of the application site, along with two existing residential dwellings. Access to these properties and to the Sewage Treatment works is currently via a lane located off Bell Foundry Lane.

3. Adjacent to part of the southern boundary of the site lies a single dwelling, as well as the Ashridge Farmhouse, barns and outbuildings. The Farmhouse is a Grade II* Listed building fronting on to Warren House Road. The barns which would have originally been associated with the farmhouse include a collection of 6 outbuildings comprising a timber and brick roadside barn, listed individually at grade 2 and a series of predominantly brick and timber outbuildings which are considered curtilage listed. These outbuildings are not currently in use and are run down, but have planning permission and listed building consent for their conversion into 5 dwellings, although this has not as yet been implemented.
4. The Ashridge Farmhouse building and its immediate curtilage is no longer directly connected with the wider land around it, although the land is currently in use for agricultural purposes and accommodates several large modern agricultural buildings. The Ashridge Stream flows south to north through the east of the site, turning in a westerly direction to run along the northern edge of the adjacent Sewage Treatment Works. It discharges into the Emm Brook approximately 1.4km to the northwest of the site. The general topography of the site is reasonably flat, although is slightly higher in the west.
5. The application site is dissected by the planned route of the Northern Distributor Road (NDR), which forms part of an essential piece of infrastructure that is required to mitigate the impact of the effect of additional traffic associated with planned housing growth in North Wokingham. The requirement for the distributor road is identified in the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy, Strategic Development Location SPDs, Infrastructure Contributions SPD and subsequent planning permissions.
6. The NDR will comprise a new road around north Wokingham running from Coppid Beech / London Road in the east to Reading Road in the west, linking with the Winnersh Relief Road. The majority of the sections of the route are now either under construction or operational i.e. the route from Coppid Beech to Warren House Road is now open, as well as the ongoing section from Bell Foundry Lane to the west of the application site through Matthewsgreen, linking up with Toutley Road. The westernmost section which will link the Matthewsgreen section with Reading Road to the west was granted planning permission in May 2019 and is currently under construction.
7. The section which will run through the application site received planning permission in August 2019 (191010) and is the final central section of the overall route which will tie the Kentwood Farm West section with Bell Foundry Lane. However, as discussed further in the report below, as WBC do not currently own the land required to deliver this section of the road, should planning permission be forthcoming for the proposals under consideration, the area of land would be required to be transferred to the Council at a nominal cost to facilitate its delivery.

Development Proposals

8. The application proposals seek full planning permission for the redevelopment of the site to provide 153 dwellings, and associated Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and other open spaces to serve the development. The proposal also includes the provision of an on-site children's play area.
9. As mentioned above, the site is dissected by the approved route of the Ashridge Farm section of the NDR, and as such, the proposals have been designed around the approved detailed design of this, to ensure they would be compatible with the alignment and would not prejudice its delivery. The housing element of the proposals would therefore be situated to the south of the NDR, with the SANG and a further large area of public open space located to the north of the NDR. This large area is not currently accessible to the public, but in conjunction with the proposals will be provided to link with both the Kentwood Farm West SANG to the east and the Bell Farm SANG to the west.
10. The proposed layout has been amended since the initial submission and the number of dwellings has reduced from 165 as initially proposed to 153 in response to officer comments and the provision of an updated odour assessment.

Principle of Development

11. The National Planning Policy Framework has an underlying presumption in favour of sustainable development which is carried through to the local Development Plan. The NPPF is clear that where a development does not result in significant harm and is sustainable, it should be supported and advises that arguments that an application is premature are unlikely to justify a refusal of planning permission other than in limited circumstances, where both:
 - (a) the development proposed is so substantial, or its cumulative effect would be so significant, that to grant permission would undermine the plan-making process by predetermining decisions about the scale, location or phasing of new development that are central to an emerging plan; and
 - (b) the emerging plan is at an advanced stage but is not yet formally part of the development plan for the area.
12. In this case, the proposals are not considered so substantial in themselves nor would they contribute to a cumulative effect that undermines the plan-making process. Therefore, in this context, refusing the application on grounds of prematurity would not be justified in this instance.
13. The Managing Development Delivery Local Plan (MDD) Policy CC01 states that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Development Plan for Wokingham Borough will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
14. Policy CC02 of the MDD sets out the development limits for each settlement as defined on the policies map. Policy CP9 sets out that development proposals located within development limits will be acceptable in principle, having regard to the service provisions associated with the major, modest and limited categories.

15. However, whilst the site is located within the North Wokingham SDL, it is located outside of the Core Strategy defined settlement boundaries and therefore, in policy terms, it is located within the countryside. Policies CP9, CP11 of the Core Strategy and Policy CC02 of the MDD seek to restrict development outside settlement boundaries other than in a few limited circumstances, and the scheme would not meet any of the cited exceptions criteria. That said, it should be noted that the SPD's set out that the principle of development within the SDL's is acceptable. The Council can currently identify a 5 year housing land supply, and is therefore not currently reliant upon the application site to meet its housing need.
16. The site was put forward in the 'call for sites' process of the Local Plan Update (LPU). The most recent formal stage in the LPU process was a consultation on a Draft Plan between 3 February and 3 April 2020. Alongside the Draft Plan consultation, WBC published its assessment of all the promoted sites in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA), which concluded the application site to be potentially suitable for development. Policy H2 of the Draft Plan proposes to allocate the application site for around 150 dwellings. Notwithstanding the above, the LPU is at a fairly early stage of preparation and at the time of writing has limited weight in the decision making process. In summary, the planning status of the site at present remains unallocated.
17. Notwithstanding the above, it is considered important to view the site in the context of its location within the North Wokingham SDL and its immediate surroundings which includes housing development to the south, east and west. The proposals are considered to suitably follow the general pattern of built form across the SDL, and in doing so, it is considered that the objectives cited within the above referenced policies would be met through the development proposals, in that the separate identity of settlements would be protected, the quality of the environment would be maintained and the development would be located where there is good access to services and facilities.
18. The rationale for creating the four SDLs within the borough, was in order to provide a strategic response to the requirement to provide at least 13,487 new dwellings with associated development and infrastructure in the period 2006-2026 as identified within Core Strategy policy CP17.
19. Wokingham identified that the majority of new residential development would be delivered in four Strategic Development Locations in order to strategically plan for and deliver the social, environmental and highways infrastructure necessary to support this significant population growth; whilst at the same time protecting other more sensitive areas of the borough from inappropriate and unsustainable development.
20. Whilst the site is not currently allocated for housing, it is considered that the proposals would nonetheless be compatible with the Council's overall vision for the North Wokingham SDL, and when viewed in the context of both the immediate and wider SDL developments, would integrate and be compatible with the overarching masterplan for the area. Planning permission has been forthcoming on two other non-allocated sites within this SDL, these being at Keephatch Farm located on the eastern side of the SDL, along with Bell Farm which lies to the west of the application site. In both of these cases, one of the

key factors was that land was secured to help facilitate the delivery of sections of the NDR, as would also be the case in respect of this application.

21. Given the location of the site within the SDL, it is also considered that future occupants would have good access to local day to day facilities, including the nearby primary school which will also house a nursery and community centre. This is currently under construction within the Matthewsgreen area of the SDL. The local centre for the SDL is situated next to the school site and is also currently under construction. This will provide a supermarket and two smaller local shop units. These facilities are located approximately 1km from the site and can be accessed via the NDR which provides a dedicated 3m wide ped/cycle lane along the route. This development would help with east west movement in the SDL and would allow residents in particular in the east to access these facilities more easily. Residents would also have the choice of walking through Cantley Park to access these facilities which itself provides recreational facilities including a play area, an archery field, along with tennis and hockey courts. Planning permission was also granted earlier this year for a 3G all-weather pitch within the park. Approximately 0.6km to the south east of the site, there is also an existing local centre known as 'Ashridge Shops' located on Ashridge Road which has a Sainsbury's Local and other smaller retail units. Wokingham town centre is also accessible by foot or cycle from the site being located approximately 1.5km from the site. As such, the site is considered to be located in a sustainable location which will be well served both by existing and future local facilities.
22. A range of economic benefits would also derive from the development. These are likely to include the creation of a range of construction jobs and opportunities; increases in resident expenditure in the locality providing a boost to the local economy; and the creation of "spin-off" jobs in services and other firms resultant from wage spending and supplier sourcing from the occupiers of the new development. These economic effects align well with a wide range of national, regional and local policy objectives, in particular, increasing the supply of high quality, sustainable housing to meet projected increases in population and enhancing economic prosperity through creating employment opportunities for local people.
23. Therefore, whilst WBC can currently demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, enabling further housing on suitable, sustainable sites are likely to further strengthen WBC's case for the rejection of unsatisfactory, less sustainable sites elsewhere in the borough. Moreover the NPPF states that sustainable development should not be refused even if a site is not allocated within the Local Plan.
24. Having regard to the above factors, this application is considered to represent a sustainable development proposal within an SDL with substantial public benefits including the provision of land to facilitate the final section of the NDR route and providing a large public open space area extending from Twyford Road to Warren House Road, and as there are not considered to be any adverse impacts of granting planning permission that would outweigh those benefits. The NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development is considered to be met and the application is therefore being recommended for approval.

25. Core Strategy Policies CP1 (Sustainable Development) and CP3 (General Principles for Development) requires high quality design that respects its context. This requirement is amplified by MDD LP Policies CC03 (Green Infrastructure, Trees and Landscaping) and TB21 (Landscape Character). The Government has also recently released a National Design Guide: *Planning practice guidance for beautiful, enduring and successful places* in October 2019.

Layout

26. The proposed layout for the housing element of the scheme has been guided predominantly by the alignment of the NDR route and the land required to incorporate its associated landscaping proposals, the Ashridge stream re-alignment, along with the extent and location of existing protected trees within the site, the presence of the adjacent Listed Farmhouse, as well as boundary line of the odour contour zone around the nearby sewage treatment works.

27. Following officer comments made on the originally submitted layout, and in conjunction with the receipt of an updated odour assessment produced on behalf of Thames Water, the proposed layout has been amended since the application was initially submitted. The changes mainly relate to the western side of the site where a new access is now proposed off Bell Foundry Lane, and the number of units has been reduced in this area as it was previously considered that too many dwellings were previously located in this area. The amended layout now also provides a further set back from the NDR in order to ensure that no properties would be included within the odour contour 'zone 3' (discussed later in the report). The updated odour contour zone boundary has also resulted in changes being made on the eastern side of the site, adjacent to the NDR where the buildings are now considered to address the NDR more appropriately. The amendments are considered to have resulted in an overall improved layout to the site, which responds more appropriately to the setting of the listed farmhouse, the existing landscape features and the alignment of the NDR route.

28. The south western side of the site would comprise a group of 19 dwellings, which would be accessed from a new access off Bell Foundry Lane. The arrangement of the dwellings in this area has been influenced by the presence of an existing mature veteran tree which would serve as an attractive central landscape feature in this area. Between these houses and the larger portion of the site, there would be a further large area of public open space containing further mature existing veteran trees, a children's play area, and an orchard area to the rear of the Listed Farmhouse to help maintain its setting. This arrangement is considered to be much improved over the initially submitted layout where the area of public open space in this location was smaller than the extent now proposed and would have also included the removal of a TPO veteran tree. In conjunction with the NDR scheme, the tree removal was initially thought to be necessary to accommodate the road alignment, however, following the further detailed design of the NDR, it has been possible to retain the tree, and it has therefore now been incorporated within the landscape proposals associated with this application.

29. This is considered to be an appropriate layout for this part of the site, particularly given the presence of the Listed Farmhouse. Whilst discussed in detail later in the report, views of the Listed Farmhouse are considered to be currently limited from public vantage points, other than from on Wiltshire Road and Warren House Road. However, it is considered that the layout as proposed will open up views

towards the rear of the farmhouse, which would be set beyond the context of an attractively landscaped area of public open space and would include the relocation of an existing granary building which is currently located in the rear yard area.

30. Access to the dwellings located in the central and eastern areas of the site would be provided via an access located off the NDR on the northern side of the housing layout, as well as from a new access proposed off Warren House Road. Whilst concern has been raised within some of the consultation responses with regards to this additional access onto Warren House Road, this has been assessed and considered acceptable by Highways (subject to detailed design and road safety audit). In addition, with the delivery of the section of the NDR route running through the site, it is anticipated that the new route of the NDR will absorb a lot of the volume of traffic currently using Warren House Road. In any case this inclusion of an access to the south is in line with good design practices and permeability.
31. The housing layout would be situated within the southern half of the site, with the associated SANG and open space to the north, beyond the NDR, and adjacent to the east and western boundaries of the existing SANGs serving the Kentwood Farm and Bell Farm housing schemes. The three SANGs would be connected via access paths, with the details and requirement for installation being incorporated into the S106. Linking these spaces would serve to both provide the required Natural England circular walk distance, but would also enhance connectivity and permeability opportunities within the SDL and would be open to all. As mentioned previously, this area is currently not accessible to the public, however, through the provision of the linking public open spaces, would enable a much larger expanse of connecting SANG across the northern part of the SDL. This would be in line with the overarching masterplan vision for North Wokingham for a large and connecting expanse of green public open space running across the northern boundary of the SDL.
32. The proposed layout for the housing comprises a connected hierarchy of streets, with the main road running through the central part of the housing layout. Dwellings are shown to be oriented so that they would address and provide frontages to the streets, facing out towards the boundaries of the site, which is considered appropriate, particularly where there are existing hedgerows/tree buffer around its perimeter. Providing a suitable buffer between the built form and the boundaries allows space for the provision of an attractive soft edge to the development which is considered appropriate in this location.
33. The Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) provided comments on the originally proposed layout, mainly in relation properties achieving appropriate defensible space, as well as having dual aspect where they are located on corners. They were consulted further upon receipt of the revised layout submission and have responded to state that they have no objection to the revised proposals. Some of the points raised within their initial response concerned details such as types of locks on doors etc, which are not matters for planning consideration.
34. The SANG provision associated with the proposals would be located on the northern section of the site, beyond the NDR and the layout provides further

integrated areas of public open space, mainly around the existing retained Veteran trees located within the site including an area located in the central part of the housing layout, which would contain a children's play area.

35. The proposed layout is also considered to link well with the wider SDL. The layout provides for a number of connected streets and paths running through and around the site. As referred to within the Highways section of the report below, the overall layout is considered acceptable and would connect well for both pedestrians and cyclists with the wider area. Whilst the site is not currently allocated for housing provision, the proposals are nonetheless considered to be compatible with and complimentary to the SDL, and would integrate successfully with the overall SDL vision and masterplan. The proposals are therefore not considered undermine the strategic objectives of the SDL, nor impact upon the wider area, but rather would serve to be compatible with them.

Scale

36. The housing proposals would predominantly comprise dwellings of two storeys in height, with some 2 ½ storey properties (where small dormer windows are located within the roofslope). There would be 3 apartment blocks in total, all of which would be three storeys in height. Two of these would be set back adjacent to the southern side of the NDR, and the third would be set positioned further into the site. The number of apartment blocks on the site is not considered excessive, but will serve to provide a good overall mix of dwelling types. Furthermore their proposed locations within the eastern side of the site is considered appropriate as they will be set a suitable distance away from the immediate setting of the Listed Farmhouse and will relate well to the adjacent development at Kentwood Farm West, which also provides a number of apartment blocks along the NDR. These would also not be highly visible from the countryside to the north.

Design and Appearance

37. A variety of housing typologies are proposed within the site including terraces, semi-detached and detached houses, coach houses, and 3 apartment buildings. The architectural approach is considered to be traditional and incorporates forms and detailing consistent with the local vernacular.
38. All of the dwellings and apartment blocks would comprise brick facades together with a variety of bay and cottage style sash windows (the exception to this being the two dwellings which would be located next to the orchard behind the farmhouse where the use of timber cladding is proposed to reflect that of the Listed Farmhouse). Visual interest would be provided to the elevations through brick detailing around windows as well as below the eaves and along the sides of the brick gables to some of the properties. It is considered the overall approach to the design and external finishes would be compatible and complementary with the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would provide a successful and well designed scheme. Samples of the proposed materials (such as the variety of bricks to be used across the development) would be required to be submitted for approval under condition 10 of the permission.

39. The range of housing types and styles will ensure that there is diversity in the built form and a range of housing for future occupants. The diversity in terms of the style of the dwellings is achieved through the detailing such as heights, materials/design and roof form. This will help to provide a clear and legible neighbourhood.

40. Overall the proposed design, scale and appearance is considered good quality and will integrate and be compatible with the character of the surrounding area.

Dwelling Mix, Affordable Housing and Standard of Accommodation

41. MDD policy TB05 (Housing Mix) requires that residential development should provide an appropriate density and mix of accommodation reflecting the character of the area. It is considered that the development would provide a good mix and balance of dwelling types, tenures and sizes, as follows:

| | Market | Affordable | Total |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1 bed flat | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| 2 bed flat | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| 2 bed coach house | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 2 bed house | 20 | 17 | 37 |
| 3 bed house | 38 | 11 | 49 |
| 4 bed house | 31 | 4 | 35 |
| Totals | 100 | 53 | 153 |

42. Core Strategy Policies and the Infrastructure and Contributions SPD indicate that development within the SDLs should secure 35% affordable housing. In this instance the 35% requirement would be wholly met on-site through the provision of 53 dwellings. The proposed affordable housing mix would comprise a mix of 1&2 bed flats, and 2, 3 and 4 bed houses with a tenure mix of 50% social rent, 20% affordable rent and 30% shared ownership . Whilst this is not wholly in line with the Council’s starting position of seeking 70% social rent to 30% shared ownership affordable housing provision, this policy is not intended to be rigid and should respond to the changing local needs. It should also be noted that this site is providing the 35% policy compliant affordable housing provision requirement wholly on site which is considered a benefit of the scheme. There are other sites within the SDL which also have some level of affordable rent within the agreed affordable housing mix and the whole of the SDL provides a good mix of units. As such, on balance, the proposed affordable housing tenure and dwelling mix is considered acceptable and is supported by WBC housing team. The design of the affordable dwellings are considered to be tenure blind and are distributed appropriately within the site. It is therefore considered that the proposals would ensure the delivery of an appropriately mixed and balanced development in accordance with policy CP5.

Residential Amenity

43. All of the dwellings are designed to meet or exceed the minimum size standards set out in the National Space Standards. The Borough Design Guide advises that a minimum garden depth of 11m should be provided within new developments. A garden depths plan has been submitted with the application which demonstrates that all of the residential gardens provided throughout the development will either

meet or exceed the 11m garden depth, with the exception of 12 properties however the shortfall is minor and would not compromise the amenity of residents. When taking into account the overall layout of these gardens, the provision of external private amenity space for these dwellings are considered acceptable.

44. The flats within the apartment blocks would have balconies large enough to accommodate a small table and chairs, which will offer private amenity space to residents, and units located at ground level have a designated area of defensible space to protect the occupiers amenities. Although the coach houses would not have designated outdoor space, it is considered that the general residential amenities of the occupiers of these units would be acceptable, given the overall provision of communal open space across the site and the proximity of these units to the SANG.
45. The Borough Design Guide establishes minimum separation distances of 10m front-to-front across the street, 22m back-to-back and 12m back-to-flank and the proposed layout adheres to this guidance. Other separation distances advised within the Borough Design Guide would be achieved.
46. Furthermore, condition 5 is recommended which removes permitted development rights of the properties. This is to ensure that any future proposals to extend the properties, including into the garden spaces, can be assessed through the submission of a planning application. This will help to restrict unacceptable encroachment into these important garden spaces which might otherwise benefit from permitted development rights.
47. It is therefore considered that the development will provide a good mix, balance and quality of dwelling types, tenures and sizes so that a wide range of housing needs can be met. This will ensure that the development is sustainable in meeting the housing needs of the community. The development therefore accords with the relevant policies of the development plan in this regard. Note that issues of air quality are addressed further down in the report.

Neighbouring Residential Amenity

48. Core Strategy policy CP3 requires that new development should be of a high quality of design that does not cause detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users. Separation standards for new residential development are set out in section 4.7 of the Borough Design Guide.
49. The site layout of the proposed development is considered to satisfactorily demonstrate that all dwellings on the site will be sufficiently distant from all neighbouring properties and have been designed such that they would not introduce unacceptable relationships of overlooking and loss of outlook, daylight, sunlight or privacy. Separation distances to existing dwellings to the south, where the new development would be closest to existing properties, would all achieve separations in excess of the standards set by WBC's Borough Design Guide.
50. Noise, disturbance and inconvenience during the construction period will be managed and minimised as far as is reasonable through good practice and through the submission (for the Council's approval) of a Construction

Environmental Management Plan and which restrict the hours of construction activity, the details for which would be secured through condition 7.

Trees, Landscaping and Open Space

51. Core Strategy Policies CP1 and CP3 require a high quality design that respects its context. This requirement is amplified by MDDL Policies CC03 and TB21 which require development proposals to protect and enhance the Borough's Green Infrastructure, retaining existing trees, hedges and other landscape features wherever possible and incorporating high quality - ideally native, planting as an integral part of any scheme.
52. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and an Arboricultural Implications report have been submitted to accompany the application (updated in conjunction with the revised layout). As part of the development proposals and mitigation of the development within the landscape, the LVIA has indicated that the landscaping of the scheme will adopt a number of design principles throughout the site, which would include amongst other principles retaining the existing field boundary hedgerow and mature hedgerow trees within the layout where possible; having regard to existing mature and Veteran trees and incorporating Veteran tree buffers as Open Space; a scheme of landscaping utilising locally native species; appropriate offsets along key boundaries.
53. The development would be set within the context of a series landscaping proposals across the site. The existing hedgerows located along the southern and western boundaries are proposed to be retained where possible. Where sections of hedgerow are lost as a result of required openings, replacement hedges are proposed elsewhere within the site. The planting proposed for the immediate setting of the housing will include sections of hedge or blocks of shrubs within front gardens to run parallel with the highway/footway. This will help create a sense of enclosure and creating a green corridor along the access roads. The setting of the development will also benefit from the landscaping proposals associated with the NDR scheme which will provide a tree lined landscaping scheme along both sides of the road. Street trees will also be provided at intervals along the access roads and within the parking courtyards of the development. This approach is considered acceptable as it is important in terms of not only breaking down the hard landscaped appearance of the roads but also in creating a pleasant residential environment for future residents.
54. The submitted Arboricultural Implications report confirms that none of the significant, veteran or mature trees are to be removed as part of the development. The existing tree and hedge lined boundary of the site will provide an attractive setting for the proposals, with further tree and hedge planting being provided elsewhere throughout the development. Where trees are proposed for removal (6 identified), none of these are significant and as such no objection has been raised, and the proposals will provide a significant amount of additional and replacement planting, both within the newly created areas of open space and SANG, as well as street planting within the residential layout, in order to provide an attractive landscaped setting for the development and to compensate for the small amount of tree removal which would need to take place in order to accommodate the development.

55. Detailed landscaping proposals would be secured by condition 15, which would detail the exact number of new proposed trees for the scheme, and this would significantly exceed a replanting ratio of two trees being planted for every one removed. This is due to the limited number of existing trees that would need to be removed, compared with the extent of new trees which would be required across the site to provide for an attractive landscaped setting for the development.

56. Retained trees and hedges would be protected during the construction process (as required by condition 19) and condition 18 is proposed in order to ensure the new planting establishes successfully within the landscape. In summary, the proposals are considered to be acceptable in landscape terms, and the benefits of the proposals, subject to mitigation, are considered to outweigh the harm.

Open Space and Green Infrastructure

57. Policy TB08 of the MDD DPD lays out the required standards for development in terms of Public Open Space (POS) provision. The submitted proposals would be policy compliant with regards to the provision of the typologies of open space required by Policy TB08. In addition to this, further open space of around 5.9ha is being proposed, which significantly exceeds the Policy requirements of TB08 and includes a large expanse of open space in the northern section of the site (referred to below) as well as areas of landscaped open space within the housing layout, including a children's play area. The provision requirements of these open space typologies are to be secured through the S106, with their detailed landscaping and design details, including the proposed equipment for the play area being provided through the requirements of condition 15.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)

58. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) was designated under European Directive due to its importance for heathland bird species. Core Strategy policy CP8 establishes that new residential development within a 7km zone of influence is likely to contribute to a significant impact upon the integrity of the SPA. The North Wokingham SDL falls within this zone of influence and, in accordance with Core Strategy policy CP20, mitigation in the form of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is being provided. An appropriate assessment has been undertaken and is annexed to this report.

59. The proposals include the provision of 3.2ha of SANG which will be located in the northern part of the application site. This is significantly in excess of the minimum policy requirement of 0.81ha for the scheme of the size proposed. As previously referenced, this area will link directly with the adjacent Kentwood Meadows and Bell Farm SANG increasing the attractiveness of the area and creating further connectivity links within the SDL. In addition to the provision of SANG in the northern section of the site, a further area of semi-natural grassland in the region of around 5.9ha will also be accessible to the public and this, together with the SANG provision will provide an extensive area of publicly accessible open space spanning across the width of the northern section of the site. It is recommended that there is no distinction between these areas of open space, in that it should not be fenced. This was one of the overarching aspirations of the North Wokingham SPD, in that the SANG and green open space infrastructure serving

the new developments within the SDL would connect, thus providing further recreational opportunities for residents. The general layout and design principles of the SANG and open spaces are considered acceptable, however further and more detailed landscaping plans both for the SANG specifically as well as for the remainder of the site will be required to be provided through the submission made under the requirements of condition 15.

60. The implementation and hand over of the SANG and public open space will be controlled by the S106 agreement and the SANG will be required to be open for public use prior to the occupation of any of the dwellings.

Heritage

61. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes a statutory duty to consider the effect on heritage assets: development should preserve or enhance the character and setting of listed buildings. The NPPF stresses the need to avoid or minimise conflict between the conservation of listed buildings and development (paragraph 190), and states that any harm to a listed building needs to be clearly and convincingly justified (paragraph 194) and weighed against the public benefits of the proposals (paragraph 196).

62. In considering designated heritage assets, the NPPF (Para 132) requires 'great weight to be given to the asset's conservation', and that any harm should require 'clear and convincing justification'. The MDD Local Plan (TB24) requires that '...works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building.'

63. The application site itself does not contain any nationally designated (protected) heritage assets, such as scheduled monuments, listed buildings or registered parks and gardens. The site is also not located within a Conservation Area. However, as previously mentioned, the Grade II* Listed Ashridge Farm and curtilage associated barns lie adjacent to part of the southern boundary of the site.

64. Historic England responded on the application and consider that the proposals would result in significant harm to the setting of the Listed Building, and do not consider there to be a clear and convincing justification for the harm because the site is not allocated for housing within WBC's adopted planning policy and adequate housing supply exists. They do, however, advise that the harm would be considered less than substantial.

65. In their response to the originally proposed layout, they refer to the virtually unaltered interior of the farmhouse which is considered to set it apart from similar buildings of this date and is the reason that it is listed at a high grade. However, they also consider that way in which the historic buildings of the farmstead combine to form a very coherent group also makes an important contribution to their significance.

66. Their response also refers to the wider setting of the farmstead and consider that this also makes a valuable contribution to the significance of the listed buildings. They refer to the historic field pattern around the farm, and consider this to be a

reminder that the farmstead was created as part of the enclosure of open fields and that the rural setting of the farmstead is still apparent despite creeping suburbanisation, and greatly enhances its aesthetic appeal as well as providing a tangible reminder of the buildings historic link to the surrounding land.

67. In referring to the proposals specifically, they consider that the proposed housing development would, despite some notable 'open space' around protected trees and a modest orchard north of the farm, harmfully erode the immediate setting that they consider adds so much to the significance of the historic farmstead.

68. Their response referred in particular, to the proposed housing located to the north of the farmstead between it and the approved NDR, and directly to the east of the farmstead and advised that if the Council is minded to approve the scheme then the harm should be minimised through the creation of a green buffer, removing housing between it and the new NDR and giving meaningful space to the east. They did, however, welcome the proposed retention of the granary building (a non-designated heritage asset located to the rear of the Farmhouse and barns). The revised layout proposes the granary being relocated within the orchard area which is considered an appropriate location, as it will be viewed within the context of the rear of the farmhouse building. Condition 43 requires further details relating to the provision of a method statement relating to its relocation.

69. Historic England were consulted further upon receipt of the revised layout, which as previously mentioned included the creation of a larger expanse of open space within the area to the north of the listed farmhouse and a reduction in the number of units from 165 as originally proposed to 153. However, in their response to the amended layout, they advised that their comments and concerns broadly remained the same as their original response, in that the harm caused does not appear to be justified as the site is not allocated for housing and it has not been shown that a better, less harmful location cannot be found.

70. However, whilst it is acknowledged that the proposals for the site will involve houses being built upon land which was once part of the working farmstead at Ashridge Farm, this is no longer the case, and the Farmhouse and its immediate curtilage is visually separated from and has no direct relationship with the current agricultural related uses associated with the site. The barns which would have originally been associated with the farmhouse received planning permission and listed building consent in 2018 for their conversion into 5 dwellings (in consultation with Historic England). There is also the sewage treatment works to the rear and whilst impacts considered in conjunction with the NDR proposals sought to minimise the impacts to the setting of the farmhouse, its presence and operation will inevitably change the character of this area.

71. The Listed Farmhouse and associated barns are also not considered to be readily viewed in the context of the wider setting of the site, and existing views of the farmhouse are currently limited to viewpoints at the east end of Bell Foundry Lane, the north end of Wiltshire Road and along parts of Warren House Road. Due to the distance between the farmhouse and the housing proposals on the eastern side of the site, (which would be set back from Warren House Road behind a hedge and tree boundary), it is not considered that existing views of the

farmhouse in these locations would be significantly harmed by the presence of the proposals.

72. Whilst Historic England's response advises that they have concerns with the proposals in heritage terms and consider the proposals will be significantly harmful to the setting of the listed building, they do advise that the identified harm would be less than substantial. Therefore, in accordance with NPPF paragraph 196, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits.

73. In this instance, it is considered that the proposals would result in significant public benefit which would outweigh the harm considered by Historic England. As referred to earlier in the report, the proposals would provide the transfer of the land required to construct the final section of the NDR, which is a key piece of the Council's strategic road infrastructure required to support the additional housing in the area. This is considered to be a significant public benefit associated with the proposals as it is the remaining section of the route to commence construction and once complete will facilitate the entire route being able to open across North Wokingham.

74. Whilst it is acknowledged that through the provision of this section of the NDR running through the site, new opportunities for public views towards the rear of the farmhouse will be opened up, through the amended layout, an attractive and open landscaped area would provide the immediate setting in front of these views. Given the current limited views of the Farmhouse from public vantage points other than on Warren House Road, the layout and opening up of the views from the rear is considered to be a benefit to the wider public.

75. Other public benefits of the scheme are considered to include the provision of the large expanse of connecting open space in the north of the site, which is an identified aspiration within the North Wokingham SDL SPD, as well as the provision of onsite affordable house along with associated economic benefits arising out of the proposals.

76. It should also be noted that development around listed buildings is not uncommon despite the fact this results in impacts to their setting however this needs to be balanced against the benefits of the scheme. It is noted that Kentwood Farm had a similar impact upon an adjacent listed building which was considered acceptable.

77. Therefore, in summary, whilst it is acknowledged that the proposals would result in the provision of housing on land which was formerly connected with the Listed farmhouse, it is considered that the site layout has responded to the issues raised where possible and the provision of the housing and the associated public benefits that would follow would outweigh the harm considered by Historic England.

Ecology and Biodiversity

78. Core Strategy Policy CP7, carried forward by MDD LP Policy TB23, requires appropriate protection of species and habitats of conservation value. Design

Principle 1b (i-ii) is concerned with protection of ecological habitat and biodiversity features, together with mitigation of any impacts that do arise.

79. An Ecological appraisal was submitted alongside the application, together with a subsequent Ecology note in response to initial comments made by WBC Ecologist. The ecological baseline status of the site and wider area being was established through desk and field survey. The application site does not include any statutory or non-statutory designated sites.

80. The Phase 1 habitat survey established that the site is dominated by habitats of negligible to low ecological value, namely improved grassland. However, there are also hedgerows qualifying as Priority Habitats, and mature trees with potential to support roosting bats. The proposals have sought to retain those features of greatest ecological value.

81. The habitats within the site support, or have potential to support, several protected species, including species protected under the provisions of the relevant legislation. Accordingly, a number of recommendations and measures are set out in regard to these species, with suitable mitigation strategies and compensatory measures identified, which would minimise the risk of harm to protected species, whilst enabling the conservation status of local populations to be maintained (and potentially enhanced) as a result of the proposals. Condition 7 relating to the construction management plan requires details of identified mitigation measures during the construction phase to be included within the submission for written approval.

82. In the longer term on the site, condition 23 is recommended and will include the provision of ecological enhancements such as bat, bird, and habitat piles to benefit reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates within the development in order to secure the provision of the referenced ecological mitigation and enhancement measures across the site,.

Net gain for biodiversity

83. The NPPF para 170 (d) requires development to provide net gains for biodiversity where possible. A biodiversity Net Gain Calculation has been provided and WBC Ecologist considers that the proposed scheme is likely to achieve at least a 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) in terms of habitats and hedgerow in accordance with the NPPF, and that a 10% river unit biodiversity enhancement can likely be achieved through the worked up landscaping details for the SANG proposals. Condition 24 is therefore also recommended to require an updated BNG calculation to be submitted which will need to be based upon the detailed landscaping proposals required under condition 15.

Transport, Highways and Parking

84. The NPPF seeks to encourage sustainable means of transport and a move away from the reliance of the private motor car. Core Strategy policies CP1, CP4, CP6 and CP10 broadly echo these principles and indicate that new residential development should mitigate any adverse effects on the existing highway network.

85. The application is accompanied by a Transport Assessment (TA) which assesses the impact of development, both in terms of the traffic generated by the development itself, and in the context of the cumulative impact of additional residential development within the SDL.

86. The assessment identifies that the impact of the development, both individually and cumulatively with the SDL development, would not be severe and would not result in an adverse impact on the operation and safety of the local highway network. The submitted TA has been reviewed and WBC Highways are satisfied that the surrounding road network would be able to acceptably accommodate the travel demands of the site. It should be noted that once the entire route of the Northern Distributor is open and operational, this will take a large amount of traffic volume through North Wokingham, much of which currently exists along the local roads such as Warren House Road due to the fact that the Ashridge Farm section of the NDR is not as yet constructed. It should also be noted that many of the problem junctions have already been upgraded or will be as part of the SDL development.

87. Comments have been raised within the consultation responses regarding the existing safety of the junction of Bell Foundry Lane/Warren House Road/Wiltshire Road. The submitted TA identified that traffic from the proposed development would have a minor impact upon this junction.

Public Transport & Travel Planning

88. In order to encourage use of non-car modes, a contribution is being sought towards implementation of the Council's 'My Journey' initiative, as well as to improve bus services in this part of the Borough, both of which would be secured through the associated S106 agreement. Such contributions are necessary to help encourage the use of alternative modes of transport other than by private car. The site is considered to be well served by bus, with the nearest bus stops being located on Ashridge Road to the south of the main entrance to the site as well as at intervals along the NDR. These would all be within a 400m walking distance of the site.

Layout

89. Access into the development would be from a new access proposed off Warren House Road at the southern end of the site, an access onto the NDR (already approved as part of the NDR layout) at the northern end of the housing layout, and a further minor access onto Bell Foundry Lane at the western side of the site. There would be no vehicular access between the main part of the development and the houses being accessed from Bell Foundry Lane (except for emergencies). Details for the new accesses have been reviewed as part of the application and considered acceptable, however full highway details for them would be provided through the requirements of condition 28.

90. The application is supported by a number of documents/plans, including vehicle tracking, visibility splays and details of servicing which demonstrate the safety and functionality of the highway provisions. Some concern was raised within the consultation responses in respect of the new proposed access located off Warren House Road. This access has been reviewed in a Stage 1 road safety audit, and whilst there is no highway objection in principle to this new access, its

detailed design will be required the submissions made under condition 28 including further road safety audits during the design and construction phases. The use of Warren House Road is also not considered to result in demonstrable harm to the highway network in terms of traffic congestion, particularly once the associated NDR running through the site is open and taking volume of traffic from Warren House Road which might have otherwise used that route.

91. The development will also provide for improved permeability within and from/to the site by walking and cycling. However, the submitted TA identified that some offsite works would be required to improve pedestrian and cycle links to the town centre, particularly from the southern side of the site as the north side of the site will be served by connections onto the 3m shared cycle/pedestrian route along the NDR. Condition 29 is therefore recommended which would provide details of all walking/cycling routes connecting the site with the SDL and wider area including routes into Wokingham Town Centre. The Town Council commented on whether a cycle path could be provided along Warren House Road. However, whilst not part of the current submission, as mentioned above, the application TA identified that improved pedestrian and cycle links from the development will be considered, and the details for this will be submitted through the requirements of condition 29. These works would be carried out through a s278 process.
92. Comments were made in the consultation responses regarding being able to safely cross the NDR to gain access to the SANG as well as crossing Warren House Road to the south side to access the pavement. Whilst there would be dropped kerbs on either side of the NDR road close to the SANG access path, a controlled crossing point has not been identified for provision at this stage. There will be refuge islands located at other intervals along the NDR, one to the east within the Kentwood West development, and one to the west close to where the NDR will join with Bell Foundry Lane. However, the potential need for a controlled crossing directly opposite the SANG access would require further assessment within the details required under the walking and cycling strategy as required by condition 29. This is also the case with regards to the potential provision of a crossing on Warren House Road. It should also be noted that the road and potential crossings would be subject to road safety audits.

Parking and Cycle Parking

93. In line with Core Strategy Policy CP6 and MDD DPD Policy CC07, and the Council's standards, as currently set out in MDDL Appendix 2, the proposals demonstrate that the development will incorporate parking in line with the Council's standards as follows:-

Parking provision

| On plot parking | Visitor / Unallocated | Garages |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------|
| 238 | 60 | 37 |

94. The above parking provision accords with WBC's parking standards, and would equate to a parking provision ratio per dwelling of 2.2. Condition 33 requires the provision of an Electric Vehicle Charging strategy to be submitted for the Council's approval in connection with future proofing the development to align with the increase in electric vehicle ownership.

95. Cycle parking for occupants of the apartment blocks will be provided within a dedicated cycle store, whilst cycle parking provision for the houses will be provided in garden sheds. These arrangements are considered acceptable and condition 32 will ensure the cycle storage provision is installed in accordance with the approved details.

Flooding and Drainage

96. Core Strategy Policy CP1 and MDDL Policies CC09 and CC10 establish that new development should avoid increasing and where possible reduce flood risk (from all sources) by first developing in areas with lowest flood risk, carrying out a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) where required and managing surface water in a sustainable manner.

97. A Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy has been submitted with the application. The majority of the application site falls within Flood Zone 1 where the risk of flooding is low. However, parts of the site are located within flood zones 2 & 3, these areas being located in proximity to the route of the Ashridge Stream located on the eastern side of the site.

98. However, as already mentioned, WBC will undertake works to re-align the stream in conjunction with the delivery of the Ashridge Farm section of the NDR, details for which have already been approved as part of an Ordinary Water Course consent. As such, the Flood Risk Assessment submitted with the application is based upon a hydraulic modelling exercise undertaken with the stream diversion in situ. The results of this demonstrates that all flood events up to the 1 in 1000 year event will remain in-channel as the Ashridge Stream passes through the developable area of the site, therefore Flood Zones 2 and 3 would be confined to the watercourse channel. It is proposed that the modelling undertaken will be submitted to the Environment Agency to allow the EA Flood Map for Planning to be updated to show the developable area entirely within Flood Zone 1 (with the exception of the river channel).

99. Within the proposed SANG area, the Ashridge Stream will follow the realigned course immediately to the north of the new Northern Distributor Road, with flows remaining in channel for all events up to the 1 in 1000 year event. Where the new stream alignment meets with the existing, to the east of the Sewage Treatment Works, the modelling shows that there will be an improvement to existing flood risk with all events up to the 1 in 1000 year event remaining in channel.

100. Whilst there would be a remaining localised area of high flood risk 3 in an area to the northeast of the Sewage Treatment Works (situated in the vicinity of the route of the Ashridge Stream), the vast majority of the public open space and SANG would be at a low risk of flooding. Furthermore, this area is situated a long distance away from the residential development and in the event this area should flood, there would be alternative options to gain access to the public open space and SANG beyond if required. The proposals are therefore considered acceptable in this respect. It should also be noted that there are other areas of public open space within the SDL along the route of the Ashridge Stream which are also located within the floodplain. However, as is the case in those instances, no residential dwellings would be located within the floodplain area.

101. It is therefore considered that the resulting flood modelling following the stream diversion works being undertaken demonstrate that the overall flood risk to the development site would be low, and furthermore would result in a betterment in respect of the current flood risks associated with the site. This betterment would arise as a result of the re-profiled nature of the diverted stream design, i.e. it would be shallow with slopes of a more gentle gradient. It would also follow a more meandering route along the eastern edge of the site, which will result in a longer channel for water to flow through than the existing alignment provides.
102. It is noted that the Environment Agency's response to the application raised an objection to the proposals, and referred to the fact that the proposals were reliant upon WBC undertaking the stream re-alignment works, and requested that an updated Flood Risk Assessment be provided based upon the proposals in the context of the stream alignment as it currently stands. However, the design of the proposals are not based upon the existing stream alignment and WBC would not support such a proposal to culvert or build over the existing watercourse. Moreover without the NDR and the associated stream diversion works being constructed, the scheme would not be acceptable.
103. The stream diversion works form part of the NDR construction programme, and will be undertaken in the early stages of the construction. Enabling works are currently underway on site, and the Council has committed to the delivery of this key section of the NDR subject to release of the land to the Council. Therefore, in order to ensure that the Flood Risk associated with the housing proposals as identified within the FRA modelling undertaken with the stream diversion in place, condition 25 is recommended which will require the validation of the stream diversion works in accordance with the submitted FRA to be submitted to the Council for approval (and in consultation with the EA) prior to commencement of development. Officers consider this to be an acceptable means of establishing that appropriate flood risk mitigation has been incorporated into the proposed scheme to ensure the safety of future occupants with regards to flood risk.
104. Whilst WBC are the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) concerning ordinary watercourses (such as the Ashridge Stream), the Environment Agency also commented on the proximity of dwellings in the southern section of the site to the embankment of the re-aligned stream. However, whilst two properties would be sited closer than the recommended distance of 8m to the ordinary watercourse, as previously mentioned, the slopes of the embankments will be shallow (maximum gradient of 1 in 3), and therefore, subject to satisfactory details required under condition 26 which includes details of soil stability being submitted to the Council for approval, WBC consider this relationship to be acceptable in this instance.
105. Surface water run-off will be managed using a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) including attenuation in pipelines and an attenuation basin located in open space within the north section of the site, beyond the NDR, before being discharged at the greenfield run-off rate. WBC's Flood Risk and Drainage Advisor has reviewed the drainage strategy details submitted in support of this application for the site and is satisfied with the overall proposed drainage

strategy. However as the layout has changed since the initial submission and associated surface water drainage strategy, condition 26 requires the submission of updated detailed surface water drainage details. WBC Trees and Landscaping and Green Infrastructure officers have also requested that further consideration be given to the proposed SuDs strategy for the site which as initially proposed would include attenuation in pipes before discharging to an attenuation basin. As such, the above referenced condition 26 is recommended requiring the details of additional SuDs features to be incorporated into the drainage scheme.

106. Therefore, subject to the submission and approval of details referenced above, the proposals are considered acceptable with regards to matters concerning flood risk and surface water drainage.

Environmental Health

107. Core Strategy Policy CP3 requires that new development should be of a high quality of design that does not cause significant detriment to the amenities of adjoining land users and their quality of life. Reports submitted relating to considerations of Environmental Health included a Technical Report relating to potential contamination, a noise report, an air quality assessment and an odour modelling assessment.

Land Contamination

108. With regards to issues concerning land contamination, a report by RSK, May 2020, ref:133599- R1 (0) was been submitted and reviewed by the EHO officer. It concludes that whilst the majority of the site is low risk, following the site walkover there were areas found with potential for contamination due to chemicals stored inappropriately and areas of made ground and as such, those areas will need intrusive site investigation to determine whether remediation will be necessary. As such, condition 35 is recommended which will require further investigation, remediation and verification stages if identified as necessary.

Air Quality and Odour

109. An Air Quality assessment has been submitted (RSK, June 2020, ref:443912/AQ/01) which assessed air quality at the site, the air quality impact of the operational phase of proposed development on the site and on local air quality and the impact of the construction phase.
110. As the site is not within an AQMA (Air Quality Management Area) and is some distance from areas currently experiencing poor air quality, the WBC EHO does not consider that the site would introduce receptors to an area of already poor air quality or create an AQMA. The site, when operational, is not expected to cause a significant increase in traffic and associated pollution and the EHO therefore raises no objections to the proposals with regards to air quality for the operational phase of development. However, the EHO recognises that the construction phase has the potential to cause some adverse impacts, but which can be managed through good practice methods. As such, condition 7 is recommended which requires the submission of a Construction and Environmental Management Plan.

111. With regards to matters concerning the proximity of the site to the Thames Water Sewage treatment works, this has been considered as part of the application proposals. The application is accompanied by a detailed odour modelling assessment, undertaken by a consultant appointed by Thames Water. Dispersion modelling based on predictions and measurements of odour emissions on the sewage treatment works site and weather data has been used to produce an odour contour map. The odour contour map shows the predicted spread of the likelihood of odour annoyance which is based on odour emission predictions. Whilst upgrading works were undertaken to the treatment works in 2018 which included the installation of an odour control unit, its operation resulted in some complaints regarding noise. As such, the submitted odour assessment is modelled upon the odour control unit being operational. The odour contour map shows the contour zone boundaries which are likely to result in odour related complaints. Within the 'zone 5' contour, complaints are likely, within the 'zone 3' contour, complaints are more likely and beyond the 'zone 3' contour, complaints of odour are less likely. It is therefore recommended that dwellings are not located within the 'zone 3' contour boundary.

112. The layout proposal takes the odour assessment contour zones into account and all dwellings would be situated outside of the odour contour 'zone 3' as reference above. Thames Water and WBC Environmental Health Officer have reviewed the proposals against the submitted odour assessment and raise no objections. As such the proposals are considered acceptable with regards to the proximity of the sewage treatment works. It should be noted the same assessments applied to the adjacent sites at Bell Farm and Kentwood Farm. However, condition 37 is recommended which requires written confirmation to be provided from Thames Water that the odour mitigation measures which the submitted odour assessment is based upon are fully operational prior to first occupation on the site. The EHO's response also notes that should unexpected odour nuisance arise in future due to plant failure etc, statutory nuisance powers remain available.

Noise

113. The submitted noise report considered that noise from external noise sources can be suitably mitigated through appropriate glazing and ventilation. No objection is raised by the EHO with regards to these suggested mitigation measures being implemented. However as the report was based upon the initially submitted layout, condition 36 requires an updated submission to be approved and implemented accordingly.

Sustainable Design/Construction

114. Core Strategy Policy CP1 requires development to contribute towards the goal of achieving zero carbon development by including on-site renewable energy features and minimising energy and water consumption. This is amplified by MDDL policies CC04: Sustainable design and construction and CC05: Renewable energy and decentralised energy networks and the Sustainable Design and Construction Supplementary Planning Document (May 2010). As the proposal is residential proposal of over 1000sqm, Policy CC05 also advises that

planning permission will only be granted for such proposals that deliver a minimum 10% reduction in carbon emissions through renewable energy or low carbon technology.

115. An energy statement has been submitted in support of the application, which sets out the various renewable and low energy technology measures proposed to be used in the design of the development in order to reduce energy demand on site, and as such, reduce CO₂ emissions. The potential measures identified include photovoltaics (PV) solar panels, solar water heating and air source heat pumps.

116. However, whilst the submitted sustainability report sets out various potential measures which could be used to achieve a 10% reduction in CO₂ emissions in accordance with Policy CC05, the layout which the assessment is based upon has subsequently been amended. As such, condition 38 requires the submission for approval of an updated sustainability and energy efficiency report which demonstrates that the layout as now proposed would also comply with Policy CC05.

117. As referenced earlier in the report, in conjunction with the proposals, a significant number of new trees would be planted across the site, which would also help reduce CO₂ emissions, and further contribute towards the Council's Climate emergency commitment response to working towards achieving zero carbon developments.

Archaeology

118. MDD Policy TB25 states that in areas of high archaeological potential, applicants will be required to provide a detailed assessment of the impact on archaeological remains. If development is likely to affect an area of high archaeological potential or an area which is likely to contain archaeological remains, the presumption is that appropriate measures shall be taken to protect remains by preservation in situ. Where this is not practical, applicants shall provide for excavation, recording and archiving of the remains.

119. Berkshire Archaeology's response on the application refers to previous archaeological investigations within the red line boundary between 2015 and 2018 advising that these previous investigations have characterized the archaeological potential of the wider area and have demonstrated that it was farmed and settled from at least the Late Iron Age period (100 BC – AD 100) onwards and a number of modest Late Iron Age and Roman farmsteads have been identified.

120. On that basis, they advise that whilst the preparation of an archaeological desk-based assessment would not add significantly to our knowledge of this site, it does however still retain an archaeological potential. As such, they advise it would be appropriate to include a condition requiring the submission of a programme of archaeological work should the proposal be permitted. Condition 42 therefore refers.

Employment Skills Plan

121. Policy TB12 of the Wokingham Borough Council MDD, requires planning applications for all major development (both commercial and residential) in Wokingham Borough to submit an employment skills plan (ESP) with a supporting method statement. However, in this instance, the applicant has elected to pay a contribution in lieu of the provision of an Employment Skills Plan and as such, this would be secured within the S106 agreement.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010)

In determining this application the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts upon protected groups as a result of the development.

CONCLUSION

For the reasons outlined in the above report, the site is considered to be a sustainable and suitable development site that would offer public benefit to help meet the needs of the community and delivers on Wokingham's development aspirations for the area. The application will deliver high quality development in accordance with the Council's overall spatial strategy and although the site is not located within the existing settlement boundary, it is sited within the SDL where the principle of development is generally considered acceptable and the benefits of the scheme are considered to outweigh the limited conflict with the development plan. As such there are not considered to be any resulting harmful impacts arising from the proposals which would warrant the refusal of planning permission on this basis. There are no other material planning considerations of significant weight that would dictate that the application should be refused. Officers therefore recommend the application for approval, subject to the conditions listed and an accompanying S106 agreement.

Encs. Site location plan; Context Landscape Masterplan; Coloured site layout plan; Streetscenes Plan; Appropriate Assessment; Wokingham Town Council comments x 2