

MEMORANDUM

To: Tom Rea
Senior Planning Officer

From: Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer
Ext: 4526

Your Ref: 25/00886/FP

Date: 5th August 2025

Full Planning Permission: Erection of 14 dwellings and associated infrastructure Reed House, Jacksons Lane, Reed, Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 8AB
Ref: 25/00886/FP

Dear Tom,

Thank you for your memo of 21 July 2025 in respect of the above application for full planning permission.

The affordable housing requirement is 25% on sites which will provide between 11 and 14 dwellings or more, in accordance with the Local Plan. Within the overall affordable housing requirement, the Council requires a 65% rented/ 35% affordable home ownership or other forms of affordable housing tenure mix, in accordance with the Local Plan and the Developer Contributions SPD.

The North Herts District and Stevenage Borough Councils SHMA Update 2023 shows a need for a 65% Social Rented/ 15% Affordable Rented/ 20% Affordable Home Ownership tenure mix.

Reed is a Category A village with a settlement boundary within which development will be allowed. There is one allocated site in Reed in the Local Plan, expected to deliver 22 new homes. This application is not for the allocated site and the site is beyond the village boundary in Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt; an area of rural restraint.

Policies SP5: Countryside and Green Belt and CGB1: Rural Areas beyond the Green Belt apply.

Policy CGB2b: Community facilities, services and affordable housing in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt says that planning permission for community facilities, services or affordable housing in the Rural Area Beyond the Green Belt will be granted adjoining Category A villages if

- a) It meets a proven local need as identified through a parish survey or other relevant study;
- b) There are no reasonable alternate, suitable and available sites:
 - i. within the defined boundaries of the relevant Category A ; or

- ii. otherwise within a reasonable travelling distance (by various modes) of the location where the need has been identified;

The preparation and review of all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up-to-date evidence. Strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment to determine the minimum number of homes needed, in accordance with the NPPF.

Paragraph 63 of the NPPF says “Within this context of establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies. These groups should include (but are not limited to) those who require affordable housing; families with children; older people (including those who require retirement housing, housing-with-care and care homes); students; people with disabilities; service families; travellers; people who rent their homes and people wishing to commission or build their own homes”.

Paragraph 66 of the NPPF says “Where major development involving the provision of housing is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect that the mix of affordable housing required meets identified local needs, across Social Rent, other affordable housing for rent and affordable home ownership tenures”.

Paragraph 64 of the NPPF says “Where a need for affordable housing is identified, planning policies should specify the type of affordable housing required, and expect it to be met on-site unless:

- a) off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified; and
- b) the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities.”

A rural Housing Needs Survey (HNS) was undertaken in Reed in May 2008, so this would now be considered very out of date.

The conclusions of HNS identified a total need for five x two bed homes, mainly rented accommodation, over a five-year period following the survey.

If the provision of limited market housing can be justified and approval of the scheme is granted in exceptional circumstances the 2023 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update identifies a need for a greater proportion (62%) of larger homes (three + bedrooms) and 38% one and two bedroom homes for rent. For affordable home ownership the SHMA identifies a need for 80% one and two bedroom homes and only 20% for three bedroom homes.

The applicant is proposing the provision of five affordable homes comprising one and two bedroom single storey homes on one part of the site. The market housing comprises three and four bedroom houses.

This does not meet with the Council's policies and requirements for the affordable homes to be evenly distributed on the site, rather than on one part, and for the affordable homes to be physically indistinguishable from any market housing. Any affordable homes should be owned and managed by a registered provider.

In addition, for family homes (2+ beds) there should be either a separate kitchen/diner and living room or living room/diner and separate kitchen to allow space for homeworking and children doing homework.

The 2023 SHMA provides evidence that many more people require social rented homes (65%), and this tenure is recognised in the NPPF. To meet the Council's housing needs all the rented units must be set at Social Rents to ensure affordability and all rents must be within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, in accordance with the Local Plan, the Council's Tenancy Strategy and the Developer Contributions SPD.

The nationally described technical housing standards provide the nationally recognised standards for bedrooms, storage and internal areas in new dwellings across all tenures. All the affordable units are required to meet the nationally described housing space standards.

Reed parish has Protected Area Status and staircasing on any shared ownership units is restricted to 80% in accordance with The Housing (Shared Ownership Leases) (Exclusion from Leasehold Reform Act 1967) (England) Regulations 2009.

Grant funding for the provision of affordable housing is not available on S106 sites, and any affordable homes should be delivered through planning gain alone.

The applicant will need to provide documentary evidence of any viability issues using a recognised financial toolkit, which the Council will have independently assessed at full expense to the applicant.

I hope this information assists you. Please contact me if you require any further information.

Regards

Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer