

PLANNING STATEMENT

LAND NORTH OF POUND FARM, LONDON ROAD, HITCHIN

Reserved Matters Application for Residential
Development of 48 Dwellings

Elivia Homes Limited

December 2024

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of Elivia Homes Limited (hereafter referred to as 'Elivia Homes') to accompany a reserved matters application to North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) in relation to residential development and associated works at Land north of Pound Farm, London Road, Hitchin.
- 1.2 This reserved matters application follows the recent grant of outline planning permission which formed part of a hybrid application (Application Ref. 21/00434/HYA) described as follows:

"Hybrid application for a residential development to provide a total of up to 84 dwellings with associated access from London Road, including provision of a roundabout, associated parking, landscaping, open space and ancillary works comprising: Phase 1 – Application for full planning permission for the erection of 36 dwellings; Subsequent Phases – Application for outline planning permission all matters reserved except for access on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 48 dwellings."

- 1.3 The outline element associated with the hybrid application relates to Phases 2 and 3. All matters were reserved except for access. The application seeks the approval of details for the following reserved matters in relation to the Phase 2 and 3 elements pursuant to conditions 7, 8 and 9 of the hybrid planning permission:
- Layout
 - Scale
 - Landscaping
 - Appearance
- 1.4 In addition to the above, the application also seeks to discharge condition 10 (which requires details of cycle parking) in relation to Phases 2 and 3.

Overview

- 1.5 The development at Land north of Pound Farm will be delivered in three phases. The first phase ('Phase 1') relates to the detailed element, comprising 36 dwellings and associated works for which full planning permission has been granted under the hybrid application. The Phase 1 area covers the western portion of the site, incorporating the London Road frontage, as well as the land required for the central spine road and the areas of open space – as detailed on the accompanying drawings. 'Phase 2' comprises the central part of the site on either side of the spine road with 'Phase 3' occupying the easternmost developable portion of the site. Phases 2 and 3, to which this application relates, comprise a total of 48 dwellings.
- 1.6 The principle of development and development parameters have been established and accepted under the hybrid application.
- 1.7 The Phase 2 and 3 area includes minor adjustments along the central spine road area to adjust landscape details and areas of visitor parking to align with the detailed housing layout. In all other respects the central spine road remains as previously consented. The need for an

Non-Material Amendment (NMA) to the Hybrid consent to reflect these minor adjustments has been discussed with the NHDC during the pre-application process.

About Elivia Homes

- 1.8 Elivia Homes was formed in 2022 through the coming together of two award-winning businesses, formerly known as Vanderbilt Homes and Crayfern Homes, who were founded in 2004 and 1992 respectively. It expanded in 2023 when they acquired Millwood Designer Homes, which was founded in 1991, and became Elivia's Eastern region. Elivia Homes is committed to delivering sustainable growth and maintaining a proud reputation as one of the most trusted and admired housebuilders across the South East. Elivia Homes is committed to delivering sustainable growth and maintaining a proud reputation as one of the most trusted and admired housebuilders across the South East.
- 1.9 Elivia Homes are dedicated to building unsurpassed developments that help people and places thrive. Their developments are made by the finest craftspeople to create homes unlike any other. Throughout the design and build process they consider the finer details of how life will be lived in their homes, delivering not just a property, but instead a home.

Planning Statement Structure

- 1.10 This Supporting Planning Statement deals with the key planning issues relevant to the application and demonstrates that the proposal meets the local and national planning policy framework. It describes the site and its surroundings, the relevant planning history and the proposed development. The Statement further reviews relevant planning policies and guidance and provides an appraisal of the relevant planning considerations. Concluding comments in support of the proposals are set out at the end of the statement.

Accompanying Technical Work and Supporting Documents

- 1.11 The application is accompanied by technical reports and supporting documents, which demonstrate that the proposals would not have any unacceptable adverse impacts, and that this is a sustainable form of development that can be sensitively delivered.
- Architectural Drawings, prepared by OSP Architecture
 - Design & Access Statement prepared by OSP Architecture
 - Drainage Strategy, prepared by SDP
 - Landscaping Scheme, prepared by Aspect
 - Transport Statement, prepared by iTransport

1.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 This reserved matters application relates to the Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas (measuring 1.79 hectares) of the wider residential development at Land north of Pound Farm which was granted planning permission for up to 84 dwellings under a hybrid application (application reference 21/00434/HYA).
- 1.2 Phases 2 and 3, to which this application relates, form part of the wider development site – which itself comprises an undeveloped parcel of land, measuring 3.49 hectares in area, located on the eastern side of London Road and to the north of the complex of buildings and their associated land which form the property known as Pound Farm.
- 1.3 The red line site area for the hybrid application included part of the highway land along London Road that is to be utilised for the new access and roundabout that will serve the development, as well as visibility splays and other associated highways works. These works will allow for improved visibility at the junction where Mill Lane meets London Road, which lies directly opposite the site.
- 1.4 The site is situated on the southern edge of the built-up area of Hitchin and lies approximately 1.7km southeast of the town centre. It is referred to as 'HT2 – Land North of Pound Farm' in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan (hereon referred to as the 'Local Plan') in which it is allocated for residential development with an estimated capacity of 84 dwellings.
- 1.5 The site itself lies just to the south of the urban boundary of Hitchin and within the Parish of St Ippolyts. To the north of the site is a relatively modern housing estate, typically defined by relatively large, detached houses set within an attractively landscaped streetscene. To the east of the site is a wooded area, through which the Ippollitts Brook runs.
- 1.6 Pound Farm, which lies to the south of the site, features a Grade II listed farmhouse building. Beyond Pound Farm, and further to the south, is open countryside before reaching St Ippolyts village. To the west of the site is London Road, beyond which is Mill Lane, where the Grade II listed Mill Farm is located.
- 1.7 The topography of the site slopes gently from west to east. Prior to development the site was an agricultural arable field with no built development. There are some mature trees and hedging around parts of the perimeter the site. A public footpath runs just to the north of site between the site and the residential area to the north.

2.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 This reserved matters application follows the recent grant of outline planning permission which formed part of a hybrid application (Application Ref. 21/00434/HYA) described as follows:
- “Hybrid application for a residential development to provide a total of up to 84 dwellings with associated access from London Road, including provision of a roundabout, associated parking, landscaping, open space and ancillary works comprising: Phase 1 – Application for full planning permission for the erection of 36 dwellings; Subsequent Phases – Application for outline planning permission all matters reserved except for access on the remaining part of the site for the erection of up to 48 dwellings.”*
- 2.2 The hybrid application was approved by the Council’s Planning Control Committee at their meeting on 20th April 2022 with a unanimous resolution to grant following referral to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (as the site was within the Green Belt), and completion of the S106 agreement.
- 2.3 The application was referred to the Secretary of State (SoS) following the committee meeting. The Council received written notification from the SoS on 13 May 2022 confirming that it would not be calling in the application.
- 2.4 The S106 agreement was completed on 15 March 2024 and the planning permission was subsequently issued by NHDC on 19 March 2024.
- 2.5 The outline element associated with the hybrid application relates to Phases 2 and 3. All matters were reserved except for access.
- 2.6 The site has not been subject to any recent planning applications other than that of the hybrid planning application referred to above, alongside a non-material amendment to the Phase 1 approval that has no impact upon the Phase 2 and 3 areas.

Pre-application Engagement

- 2.7 Pre-application discussions with officers at North Herts District Council (NHDC) regarding the proposed residential development of the site commenced in September 2017. Further pre-application discussions with NHDC and Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) have taken place since the original pre-application submission and have continued up to the point of submission of this application, with the most recent meeting taking place on 13 November 2024. The design and layout of the proposal and the proposed housing mix have been developed in consultation with officers. The accompanying Design and Access Statement provides further details on the development of the design and layout following pre-application engagement.
- 2.8 In addition to the pre-application discussions with officers of both NHDC and HCC, the applicant has also engaged with St Ippolyts Parish Council and local residents prior to the submission, whilst the previous hybrid planning application was also subject to extensive engagement.

3.0 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The application seeks the approval of reserved matters in relation to residential development and associated works at the site known as 'Land north of Pound Farm'. It follows the recent grant of outline planning permission which formed part of a hybrid application (Application Ref. 21/00434/HYA).
- 3.2 This application seeks the approval of reserved matters for Phases 2 and 3 which benefit from outline planning permission granted under the hybrid application (Phase 1 being fully detailed within the hybrid application and therefore befitting from full planning permission).
- 3.3 All matters were reserved except for access. The application seeks the approval of details for the following reserved matters in relation to the Phase 2 and 3 elements pursuant to conditions 7, 8 and 9 of the hybrid planning permission:
- Layout
 - Scale
 - Landscaping
 - Appearance
- 3.4 Conditions 7, 8 and 9 of the hybrid planning permission are as follows:
7. *Before the development hereby permitted is commenced for phases 2 and 3, approval of the details of the layout, scale and external appearance of the development and the landscaping of the site in relation to those phases (hereinafter called "the reserved matters") shall be obtained in writing from the Local Planning Authority.*
- Reason: To comply with the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 as amended.*
8. *Application for approval of the reserved matters for phases 2 and 3 shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission, and the development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 2 years from the date of approval of the last of the reserved matters to be approved.*
- Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 92 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*
9. *Before the detailed scheme hereby approved for phase 1 is first occupied, an application for reserved matters for all subsequent phases, shall be submitted for determination by the local planning authority within the time frame set out in condition 8 (standard outline time limit).*
- Reason: To support the Governments objective of significantly boosting housing supply by encouraging delivery of emerging local plan allocation HT2, both in a timely fashion and in a manner which will benefit the environmental and social setting of phase 1 hereby approved.*
- 3.5 This application for reserved matters falls within the prescribed period for submission and complies with the above conditions in this regard.
- 3.6 The proposal also seeks to discharge condition 10 of the hybrid planning permission, which states:

10. *Prior to the first occupation of each phase of the development hereby approved details of siting, number and design of secured/covered cycle parking spaces shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

The approved details shall thereafter be installed prior to the occupation of each dwelling and permanently retained for cycle parking.

Development Overview and Phasing

- 3.7 The development at Land north of Pound Farm is to be delivered in three phases and will provide 84 new homes in total.

Phase 1

- 3.8 The first phase of development ('Phase 1') was the subject of the detailed element for which full planning permission has been obtained under the hybrid application. It comprises 36 dwellings with associated parking and landscaping. The Phase 1 area incorporates the London Road frontage as well as the vehicular access and the spine road that will run through the centre of the site.
- 3.9 The Phase 1 area also encompasses two separate areas of open space; these being a square within the centre of the development and the main open space that will occupy a triangular-shaped area at the eastern end of the site. The latter incorporating a children's play space in the form of a Local Area for Play (LAP).

Phases 2 and 3

- 3.10 Phase 2 occupies the central part of the site and Phase 3 comprises the eastern portion of the site (with the exception of the open space area contained in Phase 1).
- 3.11 The Phase 2 and Phase 3 areas, for which the approval of reserved matters are being sought under this application, will comprise 48 new homes. The submitted illustrative site-wide masterplan shows how the development proposed in Phases 2 and 3 has a suitable relationship with the approved Phase 1 development.

Layout

- 3.12 The layout is in general conformity with that detailed on the parameters plan which was approved under the hybrid planning application. It is also in general conformity with the layout shown on the illustrative masterplan drawing submitted with the hybrid application.
- 3.13 The layout for Phases 2 and 3 will maintain the approach proposed under the hybrid application which seeks to create different character areas within the overall development parcel – see accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 3.14 Phase 2 occupies the central portion of the site on either side of the spine road and surrounding the central square (which itself is included within the Phase 1 detailed element). This phase comprises 33 units in total.

- 3.15 Phase 3 occupies the eastern portion of the site, extending from the Phase 2 area up to the main public open space area (which is within Phase 1). This Phase also straddles the spine road. It comprises 15 units.
- 3.16 The layout delivers on the vision to achieve a high-quality residential environment that responds sensitively to its semi-rural location and the setting of the nearby listed farmhouse building at Pound Farm.
- 3.17 As part of the formulation of the proposals the Architects undertook a review of the approved Masterplan to establish whether there was scope to make any positive improvements to the layout of the development in Phases 2 and 3. This confirmed that improvements were possible and these enhancements have included:
- Reconfiguration of Plots 56-61 involving:
 - Replacing terrace of five houses (plots 56-60) with a terrace of three houses (plots 56-58) which is rotated approximately 90 degrees with car parking spaces in front.
 - Removal of the flat over garage (plot 61) and substitute these plots with a new terrace of three dwellings, oriented in the same way as plots 56-58.
 - Adjustments to some secondary and tertiary internal junctions to allow improved road geometry.
 - Amendments to the design of numerous house types to create greater visual interest, particularly including increased roofscape variation along the spine road and better enable plots to address dual aspects/street corners (see, for example) plots 67 and 68.
 - Addition of or alterations to small single storey elements to some plots.
 - Adjustments to the road layout and plotting of some units to account for updated tree surveys and tree constraints (particularly with regard to off-site trees).
- 3.18 For the avoidance of doubt, given that the layout is a reserved matter for Phases 2 and 3, the illustrative masterplan that was approved under the hybrid planning application can be treated as indicative only. As such, the layout proposed in the reserved matters application is not required to follow the precise layout detailed within the illustrative masterplan. Notwithstanding this, the layout hereby proposed remains similar to that shown on the illustrative masterplan and does not seek to deviate from this significantly. The proposed scheme for Phases 2 and 3 also remains in line with the approved parameters that were established under the hybrid application.

Access and Street Hierarchy

- 3.19 As per the details approved under the hybrid application, the site is to be served by a single vehicular access point on the eastern side of London Road which will incorporate a roundabout at the entrance to the site. This is the approved access position. From this access point, a primary, spine road will lead eastwards into the site (included within Phase 1) with secondary streets serving the Phase 2 and 3 areas stemming from the spine road.
- 3.20 The secondary streets stemming off the main spine road will lead to tertiary cul-de-sacs and shared driveways, following the approach shown on the Masterplan drawing which formed part of the hybrid application.

Housing Mix

- 3.21 The proposed development will comprise a mix of both private and affordable dwellings and will consist of a range of sizes and types.
- 3.22 The housing mix for the Phase 2 and 3 areas is provided below:

Phase 2 and Phase 3 Proposed Housing Mix by Size			
Bedrooms	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total
2	11	0	11
3	8	7	15
4	6	4	10
5	8	4	12
Total	33	15	48

- 3.23 The proposed housing mix for the site overall is set out in the following table:

Site-wide Proposed Housing Mix by Size	
Bedrooms	Number
1	8
2	18
3	28
4	18
5	12
Total	84

- 3.24 Within Phases 2 and 3, there will be 12 affordable units, one of which is being delivered to M4(3), following discussions with the Housing Officer. This will allow the provision of 33 affordable units in total across the development as a whole.
- 3.25 The housing mix and affordable housing provision detailed within the hybrid application was as follows:

Site-wide Proposed Housing Mix by Size	
Bedrooms	Number
1	8
2	15
3	31
4	24
5	6
Total	84

- 3.26 As can be seen above, the housing mix and affordable housing provision detailed within the reserved matters application broadly conforms with the indicative mix within the hybrid application. The only notable changes are that there are marginally more 2 bedroom and 5 bedroom properties than originally forecast, with these units removed from the indicative number of 3 and 4 bedroom properties, better serving the local housing market whilst also moderately boosting the number of smaller homes in the scheme.

Scale

- 3.27 The houses will be between 1.5 and 2.5 storeys, in line with the Parameters Plan approved under the hybrid application.
- 3.28 Within Phase 2 there will be a combination of 1.5 storey, 2 storey and 2.5 storey houses. All of the houses within Phase 3 will be 2 storey. Garage buildings will be single storey.
- 3.29 The application is accompanied by a full package of drawings including elevations for all buildings and sections through the site which further detail the scale of the buildings.

Landscaping

- 3.30 The proposed landscaping follows the approach put forward within the hybrid application and will ensure that a suitable transition is achieved between the new development and the undeveloped tranche of Green Belt land to the south and east.

- 3.31 Detailed landscaping drawings, prepared by Aspect Landscape Planning, accompany the application.
- 3.32 Key landscape features across the development site as a whole include:
- Landscaped frontage along London Road;
 - Street tree planting;
 - Use of trees and planting to break up parking forecourts;
 - Creation of central 'village square' to provide amenity landscape space;
 - Creation of open space at eastern end of site to provide landscaped buffer with adjacent established woodland which lies to the east;
 - Creation of green buffer along southern boundary through new planting that will reinforce the existing vegetation;
 - Landscaped buffer along part of the northern boundary shared with the Broadmeadow Ride development to the north.
- 3.33 Within Phases 2 and 3, a comprehensive scheme of hedge, shrub and tree planting is proposed to provide suitable landscaping and ensure a high quality environment is achieved.
- 3.34 Open space will comprise the central square, the larger open space at the eastern end of the site that will incorporate a Local Area of Play (LAP) and the area adjacent to part of the northern boundary that links into the existing open space to the south of the Broadmeadow Ride development. The open space at the eastern end of the site and the central square are included within Phase 1. The area of open space adjacent to part of the northern boundary, as referred to above, falls within the Phase 2 and 3 area. This was detailed on the Masterplan submitted with the hybrid application and has been maintained as such.

Appearance

- 3.35 Following the approach put forward in the hybrid application and as agreed for the Phase 1 area, a traditional style of architecture has been adopted. This will allow the proposed built form to positively respond to the character of the area, the adjacent Pound Farm complex and the site's location towards the edge of the built-up area of Hitchin.
- 3.36 A combination of brick, render and weatherboarding will be used for the external walls of the buildings and a combination of tiles will be used to finish the pitched roof surfaces. A palette of materials has been carefully selected to ensure that variation between the building types is provided whilst at the same time providing the development with its own distinctive identity and ensuring that the materials used on Phases 2 and 3 remain compatible with those used in Phase 1.
- 3.37 Further details of the design and appearance of the buildings are set out on the submitted application drawings and are described in the Design and Access Statement.

4.0 PLANNING POLICY REVIEW

- 4.1 This section highlights the most relevant planning policy considerations related to the application to develop the site for residential use and comprises a list of relevant development plan policies.

Development Plan

- 4.2 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan for North Hertfordshire District Council consists of the following:
- The adopted North Herts District Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (2022);
 - Hertfordshire County Council Waste & Minerals Local Plan comprising:
 - Minerals Local Plan Review 2002–2016 (2007);
 - Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies Development Plan Document 2011–2026 (2012);
 - Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2011–2026 (2014).

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

- 4.2 In addition to the development plan, the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 represents the Government's statement of national planning policy and offers a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 4.3 Relevant parts of the NPPF are outlined below.
1. Introduction
 2. Achieving sustainable development
 4. Decision-making
 5. Delivering a sufficient supply of homes
 6. Building a strong, competitive economy
 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
 9. Promoting sustainable transport
 11. Making effective use of land
 12. Achieving well-designed places
 13. Protecting Green Belt land
 14. Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
 15. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- 4.4 The Government has updated the NPPF since the approval of the Hybrid application. However, the changes are not considered to be materially significant to the assessment of this reserved matters proposal, given the nature of the extant consent and its relationship with this Reserved Matters application.

North Hertfordshire District Local Plan 2011–2031 (2022)

The Local Plan was adopted in Autumn 2022. The policies considered most relevant to this application are as follows:

Policy HT2: Land north of Pound Farm (St Ippolyts Parish)

- 4.5 The application site is identified in the emerging Local Plan as an allocated housing site under Policy HT2 'Land north of Pound Farm (St Ippolyts Parish)'. The full wording for Policy HT2 is set out below and incorporates the additional Proposed Main Modifications points (third and sixth bullets). The dwelling estimate has remained unaltered at 84 dwellings.
- Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;
 - Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SUDs or other appropriate solution;
 - No residential development within Flood Zone 2;
 - Maintain appropriate buffer zone from Ippolitts Brook at southeast of site;
 - Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts upon adjoining priority habitat (deciduous woodland) and key features of interest of adjacent local wildlife site (Folly Alder Swamp);
 - Retain and reinforce planting along southern and eastern boundaries to ensure integrity of revised Green Belt boundary;
 - Sensitive design towards south-west of site and in areas viewed from Mill Lane to minimise harm to heritage assets.

Policy SP1: Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire

- 4.6 The emerging local plan supports the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire and will maintain the role of key settlements within and adjoining the District as the main focus for housing, employment and new development making use of previously developed land.

Policy SP2: Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution

- 4.7 The majority of the District's development will be located within or adjoining towns including Hitchin.

Policy SP5: Countryside and Green Belt

- 4.8 This policy advises that the Council will support the principles of the Green Belt and recognise the intrinsic value of the countryside and that a comprehensive review of the Green Belt has been conducted. Land has been removed from the Green Belt to:
- Enable strategic development at the locations referred to in Policies SP8 and SP3;

- Enable local development around a number of the District's towns and villages; and
- Define boundaries for villages referred to in Policy SP2 which fall within the Green Belt but were previously 'washed over' by this designation;

Policy SP6: Sustainable Transport

- 4.9 The Council will deliver accessibility improvements and promote the use of sustainable transport modes insofar as reasonable and practicable.

Policy SP7: Infrastructure Requirements and Developer Contributions

- 4.10 The Council will require development proposals to make provision for infrastructure that is necessary in order to accommodate additional demands resulting from the development.

Policy SP8: Housing

- 4.11 Housing growth will be supported across the District with an aim of delivering at least 11,600 new homes, of which 4,000 new homes are aimed to be provided through local housing allocations.

Policy SP9: Design and Sustainability

- 4.12 The Council considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development and will support new development where it is well designed and adopt the Government's technical standards for the size of new homes, water efficiency and, in specified circumstances, accessibility.

Policy SP10: Healthy Communities

- 4.13 The Council will provide and maintain healthy, inclusive communities for our residents and will:
- a) Support the retention of existing community, cultural, leisure or recreation facilities;
 - b) Require appropriate levels of new community, cultural, leisure and built sport & recreation facilities to be provided in new development;
 - c) Work with the NHS Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Groups and other relevant providers to ensure appropriate coverage of healthcare facilities across the District;
 - d) Maintain the network of local retail centres identified in Policy SP4 and support the retention of locally-important shops;
 - e) Work with Hertfordshire County Council and education providers to ensure the planning system contributes to the provision of sufficient school places and facilitates the provision of new or expanded schools in appropriate and accessible locations; and
 - f) Protect, enhance and create new physical and green infrastructure to foster healthy lifestyles.

Policy SP11: Natural Resources and Sustainability

- 4.14 The Plan seeks to meet the challenges of climate change and flooding. The Council will:

- a) Support proposals for renewable and low carbon energy development in appropriate locations;
- b) Take a risk based approach to development and flood risk, directing development to areas at lowest risk in accordance with the NPPF and ensuring the provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other appropriate measures;
- c) Support the principles of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations 2017 and seek to protect, enhance and manage the water environment;
- d) Give consideration to the potential or actual impact of land contamination and support proposals that involve the remediation of contaminated land; and
- e) Work with utilities providers, East Hertfordshire District Council and relevant agencies to ensure additional wastewater treatment capacity is delivered without harm to protected European sites.

Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity

- 4.15 The Council will protect, enhance and manage the green infrastructure network and seek opportunities to create new green infrastructure, including managing biodiversity networks.

Policy SP13: Historic Environment

- 4.16 The Council will balance the need for growth with the proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, the more important the heritage asset the greater the weight that will be given to the conservation of the asset and the management of its setting. The Council will pursue a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment through:
- a) Maintaining a strong presumption in favour of the retention, preservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their setting according to their significance;
 - b) Identifying sites on the national register of Heritage at Risk or on the Council's 'At Risk' register;
 - c) Periodic reviews of Conservation Areas and other locally designated assets; and
 - d) Publication of detailed guidance.

Policy T1: Assessment of Transport Matters

- 4.17 Planning permission will be granted provided that:
- a) development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable impacts upon the highway network.
 - b) mechanisms to secure any necessary sustainable transport measures and / or improvements to the existing highway network are secured in accordance with Policy SP7;
 - c) suitable Transport Statements, Transport Assessments and / or Travel Plans along with supporting documents are provided where required; and
 - d) for major developments, applicants demonstrate (as far as is practicable) how:

- i. the proposed scheme would be served by public transport;
- ii. safe, direct and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided; and
- iii. comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks will be secured.

Policy T2: Parking

- 4.18 Parking should be provided in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 4: Car Parking Standards of the emerging Local Plan.

Policy HS1: Local Housing Allocations

- 4.19 Planning permission for residential development and associated infrastructure on Local Housing Allocations sites will be granted provided that:
- a) development broadly accords with the indicative number of homes shown;
 - b) proposals successfully address site specific policy considerations; and
 - c) unless site specific policy considerations state otherwise, a variety of homes are provided in accordance with the general policy requirements of this Plan.

Policy HS2: Affordable Housing

- 4.20 Sites of 25 dwellings or more are expected to provide 40% affordable housing. 65% of total provision should be affordable rented and 35% other forms of affordable housing i.e. shared ownership.
- 4.21 Where development of a site is phased it will be considered as a whole for the purposes of affordable housing provision.

Policy HS3: Housing Mix

- 4.22 Developments should provide an appropriate range of house types and sizes and a density, scale and character appropriate to their location and surroundings.

Policy HS5: Accessible and adaptable housing

- 4.23 Planning permission for major residential development will be granted where:
- a) Applicants demonstrate that at least 50% of homes can be built to the M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable standard; and
 - b) On schemes where 10 or more affordable units will be delivered, 10% of these can additionally be built to the M4(3) wheelchair user standard.

Policy D1: Sustainable Design

- 4.24 Development proposals should respond positively to the site's local context, create or enhance public realm, be sustainable in energy consumption, waste including designing out crime and anti-social behaviour. Development proposals should have regard to the Design SPD and should meet or exceed the nationally described space and water efficiency standards.

Policy D3: Protecting Living Conditions

- 4.25 Planning permission will be granted for development proposals which do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions. Mitigation measures may be considered in order to mitigate the harm to an acceptable level. If the Council is not satisfied that mitigation proposals would address the identified harm, development proposals will not be permitted.

Policy D4: Air Quality

- 4.26 Development proposals must give consideration to the potential or actual impact on local air quality, propose appropriate levels of mitigation and carry out air pollution impact assessments. Where air pollution impact assessments are not required, appropriate levels of mitigation must be proposed to address emissions of pollutants to the atmosphere.

Policy HC1: Community Facilities

- 4.27 Planning permission for new community facilities will be granted provided that they are: appropriate in scale having regard to their local context; accessible by a range of transport modes; and would meet an identified need in the local community.

Policy NE1: Strategic Green Infrastructure

- 4.28 Planning permission will be granted provided that development:
- a. protects, conserves and where possible enhances the strategic green infrastructure network;
 - b. avoids the loss, fragmentation, severance or negative impact on the function of the strategic green infrastructure network;
 - c. creates new strategic green infrastructure where appropriate and is accompanied by a plan for its long term maintenance and management; and
 - d. has suitable mitigation measures or appropriate replacement to satisfactorily address adverse impacts on the strategic green infrastructure network.

Policy NE2: Landscape

- 4.29 Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that:
- respect the sensitivities of the relevant landscape character area and have regard to the guidelines identified for built development and landscape management;
 - do not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area or the landscape character area in which the site is located, taking account of any suitable mitigation measures necessary to achieve this;

- are designed and located to ensure the health and future retention of important landscape features; and
- have considered the long term management and maintenance of any existing and proposed landscaping.

Policy NE4: Biodiversity and Geological Sites

- 4.30 This policy seeks that all development should seek to deliver net gains for biodiversity and geodiversity, contribute to ecological networks and the water environment, and/or restore degraded or isolated habitats where possible.

Policy NE6: New and Improved Open Space

- 4.31 Planning permission will be granted for development proposals that make provision for new and/or improved open space which:
- a. Meets the needs arising from the development having regard to the Council's open space standards and other relevant guidance;
 - b. Contributes towards improving the provision, quality and accessibility of open space; and
 - c. Incorporate any necessary open space buffer(s) for landscape, visual, ecological or air quality reasons. Any on-site provision must include a long-term maintenance and management plan, and where required phasing plans, to demonstrate delivery.

Policy NE7: Reducing Flood Risk

- 4.32 Planning permission for development proposals will be granted where adequate measures (such as sequential and exception tests, FRA's or flood protection strategies) have been taken into consideration and/or submitted where required.

Policy NE8: Sustainable Drainage Systems

- 4.33 Planning permission for development will only be granted where the most sustainable drainage solution is used to reduce the risk of surface water flooding, enhance biodiversity, water quality and provide amenity benefits.

Policy NE9: Water Quality and Environment

- 4.34 Planning permission for development proposals will be granted provided that they make appropriate space for water, including (as applicable):
- a) maintaining a minimum 8 metre wide undeveloped buffer zone from all designated main rivers;
 - b) maintaining a minimum 5m wide undeveloped buffer zone for ordinary watercourses; and
 - c) river restoration and resilience improvements where proposals are situated close to a river or considered to affect nearby watercourses.

Policy NE10: Water Conservation and Wastewater Infrastructure

4.35 Planning permission for new development will be granted provided that:

- a) it does not result in the deterioration of any watercourse in accordance with the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations 2017 (WFD);
- b) it helps contribute towards the WFD actions and objectives;
- c) it helps achieve the objectives set out in the Anglian and Thames River Basin Management Plans;
- d) mechanisms for delivering any necessary new or improved water and / or wastewater infrastructure are secured under the requirements of Policy SP7; and
- e) adequate foul water treatment and disposal already exists or can be provided in time to serve the development.

Policy NE11: Contaminated Land

4.36 Planning permission for development affecting or affected by contaminated land will be granted provided that:

- a) contaminated land study / contaminated land risk assessment is submitted as part of the application;
- b) appropriate mechanisms are in place to investigate, characterise the risks and remediate the contamination to remove the risks, or reduce the risk to an acceptable level; and
- c) the site is suitable for use taking account of ground conditions, groundwater vulnerability and pollution arising from previous land use and land remediation in reference to relevant guidance (and any subsequent updates).

Policy HE1: Designated Heritage Assets

4.37 Planning applications relating to Designated Heritage Assets or their setting shall be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement that:

- assesses the significance of heritage assets, including their setting;
- justifies and details the impacts of any proposal upon the significance of the designated heritage asset(s); and
- informs any necessary measures to minimise or mitigate against any identified harms;

Planning permission for development proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets or their setting will be granted where they (as applicable):

- enable the heritage asset to be used in a manner that secures its conservation and preserves its significance;
- incorporate a palette of materials that make a positive contribution to local character or distinctiveness, where it is appropriate and justified; and

- will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset, and this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development, including securing the asset's optimum viable use.

Where substantial harm to, or loss of significance, of a designated heritage asset is proposed the Council shall refuse consent unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme is necessary to deliver considerable public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

Policy HE3: Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 4.38 Permission for a proposal that would result in harm to, or the loss of, a non-designated heritage asset will only be granted provided that a balanced judgement has been made that assesses the scale of harm to, or loss of significance of the non-designated asset and, where the proposal results in the loss of a non-designated heritage asset:
- a) the replacement building contributes to preserving the local character and distinctiveness of the area; and
 - b) where the asset is located in a conservation area a continuous contract for the demolition and redevelopment of the site has been secured, unless there are justifiable grounds for not developing the site.

Policy HE4: Archaeology

- 4.39 Permission for development proposals affecting heritage assets with archaeological interest will be granted provided that:
- developers submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where justified, an archaeological field evaluation.
 - it is demonstrated how archaeological remains will be preserved and incorporated into the layout of that development, if in situ preservation of important archaeological remains is considered preferable; and
 - where the loss of the whole or a material part of important archaeological remains is justified, appropriate conditions are applied to ensure that the archaeological recording, reporting, publication and archiving of the results of such archaeological work is undertaken before it is damaged or lost.

Where archaeological sites have been assessed to meet the criteria for inclusion on adopted registers or maps of locally important heritage assets these shall be treated in the same way as archaeology areas and areas of archaeological significance. Areas of as yet, unknown archaeology may be identified during research, or through the planning or plan making process. These sites or areas should be treated in the same way as archaeology areas and areas of archaeological significance.

Policy IMR1: Five Year Housing Land Supply

- 4.40 In order to identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years worth of housing, the Council will:

- a) Deliver the total housing requirement of 15,950 net dwellings over the plan period on a stepped basis. The Council's five year housing land supply will be measured against housing requirement targets of:
 - 350 dwellings per annum for the plan period from 2011 to 31 March 2020;
 - 500 dwellings per annum for the plan period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2024; and
 - 1,120 dwellings per annum for the plan period from 1 April 2024 to 2031;
- b) Add any shortfall in housing delivery since the plan's start date, spread evenly over the remaining plan period, to the calculation of the requirement;
- c) Ensure that the supply of specific, deliverable sites included a buffer (moved forward from later in the plan period) in line with national planning policy; and
- d) Monitor housing completion and permissions on an ongoing basis to ensure the housing trajectory is based upon robust and up to date information and assumptions.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document January 2023

- 4.41 This SPD outlines the Council's approach to planning obligations in relation to planning applications and enables developers and landowners to be aware at an early stage what infrastructure, services and public facilities may be sought to cope with additional demands brought on by new development and offset any harmful effects to the natural, historic or built environment.

Design Supplementary Planning Document July 2011

- 4.42 The North Herts Design SPD was adopted in 2011. It states that achieving good design and sustainable development are the core principles underlying planning. The SPD highlights the importance of good design and provides guidance on how to achieve a well-designed and well balanced place for future generations.

Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document 2024

- 4.43 The North Herts Sustainability SPD was adopted in September 2024. It provides information regarding the Council's sustainability expectations for development in North Herts, and offers good practice guidance to residents and developers when developing proposals and submitting planning applications.

National Design Guide (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government)

- 4.44 The National Design Guide was published in October 2019. It sets out the characteristics of well-designed places and demonstrates what good design means in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance and should be read alongside the separate planning practice guidance on design process and tools.

Technical Housing Standards – Nationally Described Space Standard, Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) 2015 [amended 2016]

- 4.45 The DCLG Technical Housing Standards document provides guidance on acceptable minimum sizes for residential accommodation. This includes overall gross internal areas and individual room sizes including room widths and depths as well as the provision of storage areas for future occupiers. All residential development should comply with the recommendations within the technical housing standards document unless otherwise specified.

St Ippolyts Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.46 The St Ippolyts Neighbourhood Planning Area was designated by The Council's Cabinet on 31st July 2018. However, a Neighbourhood Plan for the St Ippolyts Neighbourhood Planning Area has not been made.

5.0 PLANNING APPRAISAL

Principle of Development

- 5.1 The Land north of Pound Farm benefits from an allocation of up to 84 dwellings within the adopted Local Plan under Policy HT2. It has been removed from the Green Belt for development and incorporated within the settlement boundary for Hitchin.
- 5.2 The principle of residential development has been accepted by virtue of the wider site's allocation within the Local Plan and the approved hybrid planning application which allows up to 84 new dwellings with associated works. Phases 2 and 3, to which this application relates, benefits from outline planning permission, granted under the hybrid application. Further, access arrangements for the development have been established and agreed under the hybrid application.
- 5.3 The scheme remains in general conformity with the details submitted with the hybrid application which included an illustrative site-wide masterplan and parameters plan.
- 5.4 The following 7 bullet points are set out within Policy HT2 of the Local Plan in relation to the site:
- Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure;
 - Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SUDs or other appropriate solution;
 - No residential development within Flood Zone 2;
 - Maintain appropriate buffer zone from Ippollitts Brook at southeast of site;
 - Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts upon adjoining priority habitat (deciduous woodland) and key features of interest of adjacent local wildlife site (Folly Alder Swamp);
 - Retain and reinforce planting along southern and eastern boundaries to ensure integrity of revised Green Belt boundary;
 - Sensitive design towards south-west of site and in areas viewed from Mill Lane to minimise harm to heritage assets.
- 5.5 Each of the aims of Policy HT2 and how these have been met are discussed in the table below.

Policy HT2 Compliance	
Policy HT2 Criteria	Response
1. Site layout designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure.	An existing Anglian Water foul water sewer runs through the site. The layout for Phases 2 and 3 has been designed to take account of existing wastewater infrastructure. The proposed layout will incorporate a road running above

	the route of the sewer and will allow it to be maintained thereby avoiding any redirection.
2. Address existing surface water flood risk issues through SUDs or other appropriate solution.	A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDs) Strategy accompanied the hybrid application and which set out the proposed measures to ensure that surface water across the site is suitably managed. The overriding Drainage Strategy has been approved under the hybrid planning application and following consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority. This reserved matters application is accompanied by a further Drainage Strategy which delivers on the principles agreed under the hybrid application. The strategy includes the use of permeable paving and provision of an attenuation basin located in the open space area at the eastern end of the site (and within the Phase 1 area for which full planning permission has been granted). This basin has been carefully designed and located, responding to the change in levels across the site and also to maintain a natural feel so as to remain sensitive to its location adjacent to the Green Belt and against the wooded backdrop. It has also been designed so as not to be subjected to a permanent body of water thereby allowing it to be able to form part of the open space.
3. No residential development within Flood Zone 2.	The residential development envelope sits comfortably outside the extent of Flood Zone 2. An extract of the Flood Zones Map is contained within the flood risk assessment and drainage strategy submitted with the hybrid application and shows that Flood Zone 2 sits just outside of the site boundaries. The site is located in Flood Zone 1 and therefore zoned as being in an area least at risk from fluvial flooding.
4. Maintain appropriate buffer zone from Ippollitts Brook at southeast of site.	The open space to be provided at the eastern end of the site has been designed to integrate with the wider landscape and the woodland area to the east of the site boundary – serving to maintain the appropriate buffer zone from Ippollitts Brook. The eastern end of the development site which includes this buffer is included within the detailed Phase 1 area, for which full planning permission has been granted, under the hybrid application.

5. Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts upon adjoining priority habitat (deciduous woodland) and key features of interest of adjacent local wildlife site (Folly Alder Swamp).	The proposal provides opportunities for ecological enhancements to be made. The eastern open space area with amenity grassland and SuDS will provide not only open grassland habitat but will act as a buffer to the woodland, Ippollitts Brook and Folly Alder Swamp local wildlife site. The hybrid application was accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which put forward a number ecological measures to be put in place and which would mitigate against any adverse impacts upon adjoining priority habitat and the adjacent Folly Alder Swamp local wildlife site. During the hybrid application it was found that, overall, the proposals could proceed with limited biodiversity impacts and for which biodiversity gain is possible. Despite a net gain being achieved on site, Osprey Homes has agreed to provide a financial contribution towards an off-site local biodiversity project at Walsworth Common, Hitchin which has been secured by the S106 agreement.
6. Retain and reinforce planting along southern and eastern boundaries to ensure integrity of revised Green Belt boundary.	This reserved matters application is accompanied by detailed planting plans which show the new planting to be provided within Phases 2 and 3. The site layout for Phases 2 and 3 allows for planting along the southern edge to be retained where possible and reinforced to ensure that the development has a suitable relationship with the adjoining open countryside and causes no harm to the Green Belt.
7. Sensitive design towards south-west of site and in areas viewed from Mill Lane to minimise harm to heritage assets.	The areas towards the south-west of the site and closest to Mill Lane are within the Phase 1 area – details of which have been approved under the hybrid application. A sensitive design approach has been adopted across the site to reflect its semi-rural setting. The design of the development in Phases 2 and 3 is of the same style as that which has been approved for Phase 1 and which respects the setting of the site and the nearby listed building at Pound Farm.

Housing Supply

- 5.6 This development is justified in the context of a significant need for market and affordable housing in the North Herts District and the wider area.
- 5.7 It is clear that there is an acute shortage of housing within the District which has been compounded by an under supply of housing over recent years. The Council has allocated the site and granted the hybrid planning consent for the scheme to help work towards alleviating this shortage. This site would make a valuable contribution towards meeting the demand for high quality homes.
- 5.8 As set out in Annex 2 of the NPPF, the Housing Delivery Test measures net homes delivered in a local authority area against the homes required, using national statistics and local authority data. The results published by the Government in January 2022 confirmed that North Herts District Council had met only 49% of its housing delivery target over the prior 3 years which triggered the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 5.9 Although the Council position improved in 2023, meeting 105% of its target, the clearly fragile housing supply situation increases the importance of permitting residential development on sites allocated within the Local Plan such as this expediently to ensure that delivery does not fall back below target.

Housing Mix and Affordable Housing

- 5.10 The proposed development will comprise a mix of both private and affordable dwellings and will consist of a range of sizes and types.
- 5.11 Within Phases 2 and 3, there will be 12 affordable units. This will allow the provision of 33 affordable units in total across the development as a whole.
- 5.12 Of the 12 affordable units in Phases 2 and 3, six of these will be within the affordable rented tenure with the remaining six within the shared ownership tenure. This provision, in combination with that being delivered in Phase 1, will allow for 21 units in affordable/social rented and 12 units in shared ownership.
- 5.13 The overall housing mix and affordable housing provision conforms with that detailed within the hybrid application and secured within the S106 agreement. Affordable housing will be distributed across the site, and an appropriate mix of housing will be provided, in accordance with the provisions of Policy HS2 of the Local Plan.

Layout

- 5.14 The layout principles are detailed within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 5.15 The higher density development and taller (2.5 storey) buildings will be located towards the centre of the site with the lower density development generally located towards the site boundaries, following the parameters plan approved under the hybrid application.
- 5.16 The proposed layout allows for the new buildings to be set back a sufficient distance, and be separated by way of the open space, from the northeastern boundary of the site so as to help mitigate against any adverse impacts upon the adjoining woodland habitat and the local wildlife site at Folly Alder Swamp.
- 5.17 A landscaped buffer is proposed along the northern boundary shared with the Broadmeadow Ride development to the north, providing the opportunity for pedestrian links into the area of open space to

the north and to ensure connectivity between these two residential areas. These links, as well as that proposed within the northeastern boundary, will provide residents with a convenient means of access into the adjoining recreational areas and Larch Avenue and Sycamore Close beyond. Further, it will also present the opportunity for properties to have an active interface with the adjoining recreational space to the northwest thereby affording natural surveillance of this area. Similarly, those plots along the eastern edge will face towards the open space to the northeast affording natural surveillance of this area.

Amenity of Future Occupiers

- 5.18 The proposed dwellings will incorporate suitable garden areas which are commensurate with the size of the properties. Future occupiers will benefit from good levels of amenity including adequate levels of natural lighting, outlook and privacy.
- 5.19 Each of the proposed dwellings will offer adequate internal space in accordance with the Nationally Described Space Standards.

Appearance

- 5.20 The architect has adopted a design approach that will ensure that the new buildings incorporate traditional features and materials that respect the semi-rural location and complement the Pound Farm complex of buildings. The accompanying illustrative streetscene drawings represent key views within Phases 2 and 3, demonstrating that a visually attractive environment will be achieved.
- 5.21 The proposed development, including the proposed landscaping and green spaces together with the layout and design would achieve a sense of place and character, in keeping with its urban edge character, through a mix of housing types and styles.
- 5.22 The built form within Phases 2 and 3 will incorporate a combination of architectural typologies, design features and materials that feature in Phase 1 to ensure that a cohesive form of development across the wider site is achieved. Further details of the design and appearance of the proposed development are provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 5.23 Overall, the proposal would deliver a high-quality housing development that responds to local character and would accord with Local Plan Policies D1 and HT2.

Scale

- 5.24 The proposed buildings will have an appropriate scale and mass when considered in the context of the site, being on the southern edge of the built-up area of Hitchin. The buildings will be of a scale and architectural typology that remains consistent with the built form that has been approved for Phase 1.
- 5.25 The majority of the houses will be 2 storeys in height. Some 1.5 storey and 2.5 storey dwellings will also be provided. Those houses which are 2.5 storeys will be contained within more central parts of the site and will have the appearance of 2 storey dwellings with dormers at second floor level. The garages will be single storey in height.
- 5.26 The buildings will respect the scale of the existing residential development including that within the Broadmeadow Ride development to the north and will not appear overly dominant when viewed from surrounding areas. The locations of taller buildings have been carefully considered to articulate the layout and provide increased legibility.

Amenity of Neighbours

- 5.27 The proposed layout will allow a suitable amount of separation to be provided between the proposed new properties and the nearest neighbouring properties so as not to have any significant effects on the neighbours' natural lighting, outlook or privacy.
- 5.28 The proposed development will have no overbearing impact, and will not lead to a heightened sense of enclosure, on neighbouring properties by reason of the siting of the new buildings and the separation provided between them and the adjoining properties.
- 5.29 Whilst the proposal will introduce housing on a parcel of land where none exists at present, the site is located adjacent to a primarily residential area being on the southern edge of the built-up area of Hitchin. Activity associated with the new houses will not cause any significant disturbance to the surrounding neighbouring properties given the site's context.

Landscaping

- 5.30 The proposed approach to landscaping remains aligned with that detailed within the hybrid application. It seeks to mitigate the visual impact of the development through various landscape features detailed within the accompanying Landscape Proposals drawings, prepared by Aspect Landscape Planning.
- 5.31 Key landscape features within Phases 2 and 3 include street tree planting, the creation of a green buffer along the southern boundary through new planting that will reinforce the existing vegetation and a landscaped buffer along part of the northern boundary shared with the Broadmeadow Ride development. These features, in addition to those contained within the Phase 1 area, which include the central 'village square' and open space at the eastern end of site (to provide landscaped buffer with adjacent established woodland which lies to the east), will provide for an attractive environment.

Impact on Heritage Assets

- 5.32 The Heritage and Setting Statement which supported the hybrid application remains relevant. The reserved matters scheme has had regard to this assessment and has been sensitively designed accordingly.
- 5.33 The proposal will not involve physical change to Pound Farm or any other nearby heritage assets. The Heritage and Setting Statement has found that the development is nominally within the setting of Pound Farm and that although there will be a material change in the appearance of the site, the proximate setting of and prospect from the historic part of Pound Farm will remain largely unaffected. The wider setting will be affected, in the sense that the most immediate remnants of its rural context will be changed permanently. However, it is concluded that the contribution of the current setting to significance of the asset is minimal and there will be little material harm as a result of the proposed development.
- 5.34 Any harm arising from the proposals is considered to be at the very low end of the scale of 'less than substantial'. Accordingly, paragraph 200 of the NPPF is engaged which requires the harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal which includes the provision of new high quality housing.
- 5.35 Views of the tower of the Church of St Ippolyts do not appear prominently over the treeline to the south and east of the site. Views of this feature from within the site are not considered intrinsic to the

setting or significance of the Church. The development will not affect any key views of the church tower. The proposals will preserve the prominence of the building within the landscape and will not disrupt the interpretation of the building as the historical centre of the village of St Ippolyts. The proposals will not cause harm to the significance of the Church of St Ippolyts. The heritage values which contribute to the significance of the building will also be preserved.

- 5.36 The Heritage and Setting Statement further concluded that the settings of other nearby assets (including St Ippolyts Conservation Area), by virtue of relative disposition, intervening forms and lack of causal relationship will not be impacted upon and there will be no harm to significance.
- 5.37 The site has been the subject of lengthy consultation during the plan making process. It has been allocated for residential development within the Local Plan and the presence of the listed building at Pound Farm has been acknowledged throughout the plan making process. It is considered that any harm caused to the significance of Pound Farm as a result of the proposed development would be very low.
- 5.38 The proposed development is therefore judged to be acceptable having regard to the approach to assessing heritage impacts set out within the NPPF and the scheme accords with Local Plan policy.

Transport and Parking

Access

- 5.39 The entrance to the wider site and the roundabout that is to be incorporated there have been consented under the hybrid planning permission.
- 5.40 The layout for Phases 2 and 3 has been tested by way of a swept path analysis and has been found to provide an acceptable layout with appropriate road geometry, visibility splays and manoeuvring space for refuse and emergency vehicles. The proposed layout allows for suitable collection distances to be adhered to. Swept path analysis is included within the accompanying Transport Statement.

Parking

- 5.41 All properties will benefit from having their own off-street car parking spaces and will be provided with a secure and weatherproof means of cycle storage.
- 5.42 On-plot parking will be provided by way of garages, car ports and driveways. The proposed site layout plan shows provision for visitor parking in addition to those allocated to each of the properties.
- 5.43 The level of parking proposed will be appropriate for properties of this size and has been calculated in line with the parking standards contained within Appendix 4 of the Local Plan. Within Phases 2 and 3, a total of 115 allocated car parking spaces will be provided as well as 27 visitor spaces.
- 5.44 Further details are provided within the accompanying Transport Statement.

Drainage

- 5.45 The application is accompanied by a Drainage Strategy , prepared by SDP, which follows the principles set out in the FRA and Drainage Assessment & Strategy that was submitted as part of the hybrid application and agreed following consultation with the Lead Local Flood Authority. Submissions to discharge conditions 14 (Surface Water) and 16 (Foul Drainage) and contain the detailed drainage design will follow this Reserved Matters application.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This Supporting Planning Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for reserved matters for Phases 2 and 3 following the grant of outline planning permission in March 2024, as part of a hybrid application, for a residential development comprising up to 84 new dwellings. (Ref. 21/00434/HYA). Under the hybrid application all matters for the outline Phases 2 and 3 element were reserved except for access.
- 6.2 The application seeks the approval of details for layout, scale, landscaping and appearance pursuant to conditions 7, 8 and 9 of the planning permission.
- 6.3 The principle of the development has been established under the hybrid planning application. This Statement presents a case to support bringing forward Phases 2 and 3 of this suitable and sustainable site for development, in order to make a valuable contribution to the Council's five year housing land supply.
- 6.4 The scheme is in conformity with the details submitted under the hybrid application including the parameters plan which was approved under that application. The proposals also allow the requirements of the Section 106 agreement which was completed under the hybrid application, including the affordable housing, to be delivered. Additionally, the proposed Phase 2 and 3 development seeks to maintain the design principles proposed under the hybrid application, ensuring that the site-specific requirements of Policy HT2 are met. The development will present a suitable transition between the built-up area of Hitchin to the north of the site and the open countryside to the south.
- 6.5 Overall, the proposal will result in the creation of a high-quality, attractive residential environment, offering a range of housing types and tenures including affordable housing mix that will allow a new mixed community to develop. The scheme will benefit from adequate on-site parking provision, well designed amenity space, recreation and open space and will present a strong sense of identity through its carefully considered design.

