



PLANNING STATEMENT

Site: Grange Farm
Hitchin Road
Great Wymondley

For: Letchworth Garden City Heritage
Foundation

Project Ref: 25088

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CONTENTS PAGE



Section	Title	Page
1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Site Context & History	3
3.0	The Proposed Scheme	6
4.0	Planning Policy	7
5.0	Planning Assessment	13
6.0	Planning Balance & Conclusion	24

Plans and Documents Accompanying the Application

Application Form
Site Location Plan
Indicative Masterplan
Planning Statement

1.0 **Introduction**

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared on behalf of our client, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation ("the applicant") to support the submission of an application for 'permission in principle' for up to 9no. residential dwellings at Grange Farm, Hitchin Road, Great Wymondley ("the application site").

1.2 The full description of development is:

Demolition of existing stable building and erection of up to 9 dwellings.

1.3 The scope of matters which can be considered for a permission in principle application are limited to the location of the site, the type of land use proposed and the amount of development.

1.4 This Statement demonstrates that the proposed scheme complies with all relevant planning policy and guidance and constitutes sustainable development by virtue of making best use of an underutilised site within the settlement boundary of Great Wymondley for much needed housing.

1.5 Section 2 of this Statement outlines the context of the site including the relevant designations and planning history. Section 3 sets out the details of the proposed works. Section 4 outlines the relevant local and national planning policy. A planning assessment can be found at Section 5 and the conclusions of this statement setting out the reasons permission in principle should be granted are discussed at Section 6.

2.0 Site Context & History

Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is located to the rear of Nos 1-6 Hitchin Road in Great Wymondley. An indicative site location plan is included below.



Figure 1 – Indicative Site Location Plan

- 2.2 The site has been in use most recently as a paddock and contains a small, single-storey stable building on the western boundary. There is dense vegetation and tree planting around the perimeter of the site.
- 2.3 The site is currently accessed off Hitchin Road between No. 1 Hitchin Road and the Green Man Public House, which is located on the junction of Hitchin Road and Arch Road.

- 2.4 The application site is located within the established village of Great Wymondley and is bound by built development on all sides. To the north of the site is Nos 1-6 Hitchin Road, to the north-east is the Green Man Public House, to the east is the Great Wymondley Village Hall, to the south east and south are residential properties and to the west is a large agricultural building.
- 2.5 The nearest bus stops to the site are located on Arch Road, approximately 150 metres from the site, which are served by the No. 80 bus which runs between Hitchin and Stevenage.
- 2.6 There are no listed buildings within or directly adjacent to the site. The Grange Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed building, but this is divorced from the site by the large agricultural building.
- 2.7 The site is within the Great Wymondley Conservation Area.

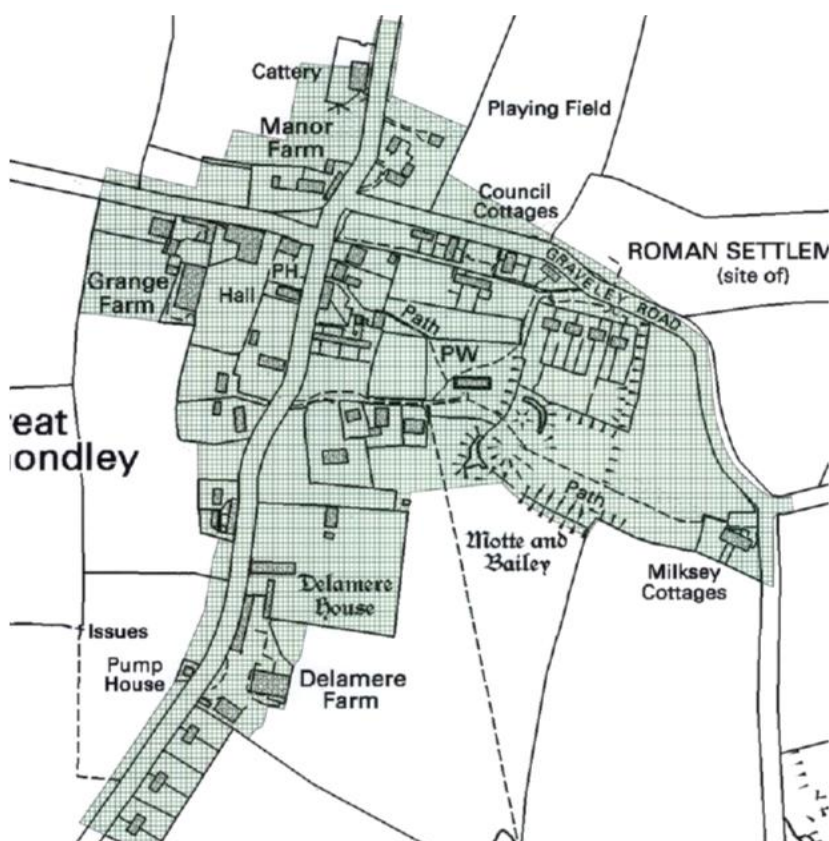


Figure 2 - Great Wymondley Conservation Area

2.8 The Conservation Area Appraisal considers that the character of the western part of the village to be the linear form of development along Arch Road.

2.9 The Green Man, The Croft and the Village Hall, all adjacent to the site and fronting Arch Road, are considered noteworthy buildings in the Conservation Area.

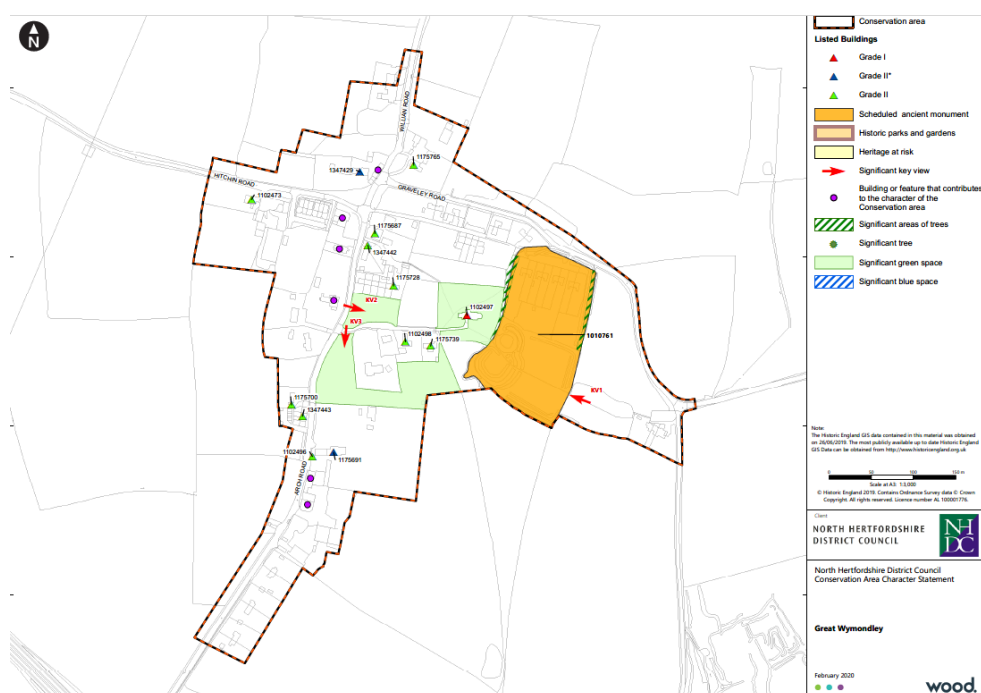


Figure 3 - Conservation Area Map

2.10 The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is therefore at low risk of flooding.

Planning History

2.11 The residential properties at Nos 1-6 Hitchin Road to the north of the application site were granted consent in June 2010 under reference 10/00065/1. This permission also included the erection of a new stable block of 2 stalls which is located within the application site on the western boundary.

2.12 There is no other relevant planning history associated with the site.

3.0 **The Proposed Scheme**

3.1 This application seeks permission in principle for the development of the site for up to 9no. residential dwellings following demolition of the existing stable building. The single storey stable building is located on the western boundary of the application site. It was erected following the grant of consent in June 2010 under application reference 10/00065/1.

3.2 As this is an application for permission in principle, consideration is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Notwithstanding this, an indicative site layout has been submitted to support the application which demonstrates that the quantum of housing proposed can be comfortably accommodated within the site.

3.3 Dwellings are shown as set within large plots with rear gardens and off-street parking, in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. This is one way in which development could be achieved on this site, but details would be reserved for the technical details stage.

3.4 A new vehicular access from Hitchin Road would be created to the west of No. 6 Hitchin Road, utilising an existing access point on Hitchin which serves the rear car parking area of Nos. 1-6 Hitchin Road. The creation of the access into the site would necessitate the removal of two existing trees.

3.5 The proposed development will be landscape led and seek to retain the boundary tree planting and include additional tree planting and associated landscaping.

3.6 Further detail of the proposed development can be considered at technical details stage, subject to permission in principle being granted.

4.0 **Policy Context**

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for development must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. At present, the adopted Development Plan for the borough comprises:

- North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (2022)
- Wymondley Neighbourhood Development Plan (2019)

4.2 The following policies in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan are considered relevant to the proposals for permission in principle:

- Policy SP1 – Sustainable Development in North Hertfordshire
- Policy SP2 – Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution
- Policy SP5 – Countryside and the Greenbelt
- Policy SP8 – Housing
- Policy SP9 – Design and Sustainability
- Policy SP13 – Historic Environment
- Policy D1 – Sustainable Design
- Policy HE1 – Designated Heritage Assets
- Policy HE3 – Non-designated Heritage Assets

4.3 In addition, the Wymondley Neighbourhood Development Plan was made on 26 September 2019 and forms part of the Development Plan for North Hertfordshire.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

3.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as updated in December 2024, provides the planning policies for England and how these should be

applied. This is a material planning consideration. The 2024 version was published by the new Labour Government as part of their ambition to achieve significant economic growth and housing delivery, including delivering 1.5 million homes over this term. The NPPF should be considered within this set context and a number of key paragraphs relevant to the determination of this application are as follows:

- 3.8 Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
- 3.9 Paragraph 8 of the NPPF highlights that achieving sustainable development has three overarching objectives – an economic, a social and an environmental objective, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:
- An economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive economy
 - A social objective – to support strong, vibrant and health communities; and
 - An environmental objective – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment.
- 3.10 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but in so doing, should take local circumstances into account, to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.
- 3.11 Paragraph 11 states that plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development and identifies how decision taking should be undertaken. Paragraph 11 c) states development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay. Paragraph 11 d) states that where there are no relevant development plan

policies, or the policies are out of date (including where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites granting permission unless i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect an area or asset of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposals; or ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.

- 3.12 Paragraph 61 outlines the importance of supporting the government's goal of increasing the number of homes available. It highlights the need for a diverse range of land to be made available in suitable locations, catering to various housing requirements, and ensuring that land with planning permission is developed promptly and efficiently. This includes people who desire to live in rural locations yet within sustainable reach of larger urban centres.
- 3.13 Paragraph 110 states that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. It recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.
- 3.14 Paragraph 124 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the needs for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions.

- 3.15 Paragraph 125 outlines that planning decisions should a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land, including through mixed use schemes and taking opportunities to achieve net environmental gains such as developments that would enable new habitat creation or improve public access to the countryside; b) recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions; c) give substantial weight to the value of using brownfield land; d) promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet the identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively; and e) support opportunities to use the airspace above existing residential and commercial premises for new homes.
- 3.16 Paragraph 130 further states that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified needs, it is especially important that planning decisions avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site.
- 3.17 Paragraph 135 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure development enhances the area's quality, is visually attractive, respects local character, fosters a strong sense of place, makes effective use of land, and creates safe, inclusive, and healthy environments with a high standard of amenity.
- 3.18 Paragraph 143 sets out that Green Belt serves five purposes of a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns and e) to assist in urban regeneration.
- 3.19 Paragraph 155 outlines that development of homes, commercial and other development should not be considered inappropriate when certain criteria

can be met. More details are set out further below in Section 6 of this Statement.

- 3.20 Paragraph 156 – 159 set out the 'Golden Rules' that apply to potential grey belt development and the interpretation of those Rules.
- 3.21 Paragraph 207 to 211 considers proposals affecting heritage assets. These include describing the significance of any heritage assets affected, the requirement to submit a desk-based assessment, local planning authorities taking account of the positive contribution that heritage assets make, and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 3.22 Paragraph 212 to 215 consider the potential impacts to heritage assets and state that great weight should be given to asset conservation. Any loss or harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear justification. Local authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated the loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm, or that it prevent all reasonable uses of the site, no viable use of the asset can be found in the medium term, or the loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back to use.

Consultation Draft NPPF (December 2025)

- 3.23 In December 2025, a revised version of the NPPF was published for consultation. Whilst this is still at consultation stage and therefore can only be afforded limited weight, a number of draft Policies are relevant to the proposals, notably:
- 3.24 Draft National Decision-Making Policy (NDMP) L2 which states that substantial weight should be given to the benefits where a development

proposal would make better use of vacant and under-utilised land (criterion b). NDMP L2 also states that proposals for land which is not previously developed should use development footprints which optimise a site's development potential.

- 3.25 Draft DNMP L3 sets out that development proposals should make efficient use of land taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other development, local market conditions, the availability of infrastructure and its scope for improvement, a site's connectivity and the importance of securing well-designed, attractive and healthy places. Within this context, development proposals for residential development within settlements should contribute to an increase in the density of the area in which they are situated. The existing character of an area should be taken into account but should not preclude development which makes the most of an area's potential. Development proposals that do not make efficient use of land in accordance with NDMP L3 should be refused.

5.0 **Planning Assessment**

5.1 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains that permission in principle is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development as part of a two-stage procedure. Permission in principle, at the initial stage, is limited to the consideration of location, land use and the amount of development which, in the event of an approval, would leave the remaining matters to be considered in a technical details' application.

5.2 The following planning assessment therefore focuses on the considerations of location, land use and the amount of development.

Location & Land Use

5.3 The application site is located within the settlement boundary of the village of Great Wymondley and is bound on three sides by residential development. The proposed land use for housing would be consistent with the prevailing land use in this area.

5.4 Great Wymondley is classified as a Category B village in the North Hertfordshire Local Plan where, as per Policy SP2, infilling that does not extend the built core of the village into the surrounding countryside will be allowed.

5.5 The site is a greenfield site within Great Wymondley, but ~~, but~~ which is surrounded on all sides by built development. To the north of the site is Nos 1-6 Hitchin Road, to the north-east is the Green Man Public House, to the east is the Great Wymondley Village Hall, to the south east and south are residential properties and to the west is a large agricultural building. Due to the contained nature of the site, the proposal would not result in extension

of the built core of the village into the surrounding countryside and would largely accord with the principles of infilling.

5.6 Notwithstanding the above, the entire village of Great Wymondley, including the site, is located within the Green Belt. Policy SP5 of the Local Plan states that development proposals will only be permitted in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development.

5.7 NPPF Paragraph 154 advises that development in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless one of the listed exemptions applies. The proposed development of this site does not fall within any of the exemptions set out in NPPF Paragraph 154.

5.8 The publication of the NPPF 2024 introduced the concept of 'grey belt' and Paragraph 155 which states:

The development of homes, commercial and other buildings in the Green Belt should also not be regarded as inappropriate where all the following apply:

- a. The development would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes of the Green Belt (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the Plan;*
- b. There is demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed;*
- c. The development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of this Framework; and*
- d. Where applicable the development meets the 'Golden Rules' requirements set out in paragraphs 156-157 below.*

5.9 It is important to work through the tests in turn.

Grey Belt

5.10 Grey belt is defined in the NPPF Glossary as follows:

For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, 'grey belt' is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143. 'Grey belt' excludes land where the application of policies relating to the areas or assets in footnote 7 (other than Green Belt) would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.

5.11 The site does not comprise previously developed land and therefore it needs to be confirmed whether the site strongly contributes to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) of the Green Belt as set out in NPPF paragraph 143.

5.12 Purpose (a) relates to the need to check the unrestricted sprawl of large-built up areas. The PPG (Paragraph: 005 Reference ID: 64-005-20250225) advises that Villages should not be considered to be large built-up areas.

5.13 Great Wymondley is identified within the Local Plan as a Category B Village and is therefore itself, not a large built-up area.

5.14 Within the North Hertfordshire Green Belt Assessment (2016), the site falls within Green Belt Parcel 10. It is located on the north-eastern boundary of that parcel which extends from the north-west edge of Stevenage to the southern edge of Hitchin, and specifically within sub-parcel 10c.

5.15 The Green Belt Assessment notes that Parcel 10 and sub-parcel 10c are considered to play an important role in preventing the expansion of Stevenage northwards into gap between Hitchin, Letchworth and Stevenage.

- 5.16 In terms of the assessment, this is in respect of a much wider parcel. Given the size of the site and its distance from Hitchin, Letchworth and Stevenage, it cannot reasonably be said that this site in isolation plays an important role in preventing the unrestricted sprawl of the large-built up area of Stevenage and it is considered this rating can be significantly reduced to negligible in terms of the impact of the site on Green Belt purpose (a), especially when having regard to the enclosed nature of the site itself.
- 5.17 Purpose (b) seeks to prevent towns merging into one another. As above, Great Wymondley is a village and therefore would not result in towns merging.
- 5.18 The 2016 North Hertfordshire Green Belt Assessment makes reference to Parcel 10 and sub-parcel 10c playing a critical role in preventing Hitchin and Stevenage merging. As noted, the site is some distance away from both Hitchin and Stevenage and development of the site would not result in the two towns merging. Again, it is considered this rating can be reduced to negligible for the impact of the site on purpose (b).
- 5.19 Purpose (d) seeks to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns. Great Wymondley is not considered to be a historic town and accordingly, there is no contribution to this Green Belt purpose.
- 5.20 Overall, the site does not perform strongly against Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d) either independently or cumulatively, particularly given the size of the site and it not being adjacent to a large-built up area.
- 5.21 The definition of 'grey belt' requires consideration of designations within NPPF footnote 7 (except Green Belt) and whether they provide a strong reason for refusal. To note, this requirement is omitted from the draft NPPF,

but given this is at consultation stage, limited weight can be applied, the current NPPF definition of 'grey belt' is deemed to apply.

5.22 Footnote 7 states:

The policies referred to are those in the Framework (rather than those in development plans) relating to: habitats sites (and those listed in paragraph 194) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park (or within the Broads Authority) or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets of archaeological interest referred to in footnote 75); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

5.23 For the purpose of this site, consideration needs to be given to the designated heritage assets.

5.24 There are no listed buildings within or directly adjacent to the site. The nearest statutorily listed building is the Grade II Listed Grange Farmhouse to the west of the site, but this is separated from the site by the large agricultural building.

5.25 The other nearest Listed Buildings are the Grade II Listed Box Tree Cottage and Grade II Listed 1 Post Office Row on the eastern side of Arch Road. There are no views of the site from these buildings due to the presence of the Green Man Public House, the Village Hall, and mature tree planting. The proposed development is therefore unlikely to have an impact upon the setting and significance of these Listed buildings.

5.26 The Great Wymondley Conservation Area Appraisal makes no reference to the application site and does not identify it as a significant green space.

- 5.27 The Green Man, The Croft and the Village Hall, all adjacent to the site and fronting Arch Road are considered noteworthy buildings in the Conservation Area.
- 5.28 Views of the application site from these non-designated heritage assets are largely restricted due to the dense vegetation and mature tree planting. Any views of the site are framed by the existing agricultural building and surrounding residential properties that already exist. Further as community buildings and an existing residential property, the provision of additional residential development adjacent to them would not undermine the intrinsic nature and purpose of those buildings.
- 5.29 Whilst the design and appearance of the residential properties would be considered at technical detail stage, the principle of residential development on the application site would be unlikely to result in substantial harm to the Conservation Area or non-designated heritage assets given the location of the site, the limited views of it and the existing residential setting. It is therefore our opinion that, at most, the scheme would result in '*less than substantial harm*' to the setting of the Conservation Area and non-designated heritage assets on Arch Road and on the lower end of the spectrum.
- 5.30 Paragraphs 215 of the NPPF requires this low level of harm identified to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In addition, NPPF Paragraph 216 requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the non-designated heritage asset.
- 5.31 There are a number of public benefits associated with the proposed development including the provision of up to 9no. residential properties to assist with meeting the demonstrable need for housing in this area; making optimal use of a vacant site; and the associated economic benefits of the proposed development (including additional expenditure to the Green Man

Public House, limited spend from the construction phase and additional Council Tax revenue).

5.32 These significant public benefits would outweigh the heritage harm, which is afforded great weight in the balance, such that there would be is no strong reason for refusal arising as a result of heritage impact.

5.33 Accordingly, the application site should not be excluded from the definition of 'grey belt' as there would be no strong reason for refusal relating to the areas or assets listed in footnote 7 of the NPPF.

5.34 On the basis of this assessment, the site can reasonably be considered as 'grey belt' and therefore the remainder of the NPPF Paragraph 155 assessment can be applied.

Green Belt Purposes

5.35 As set out above, Paragraph 155 of the NPPF states that the development of homes in the Green Belt should not be regarded as inappropriate where a number of criteria apply.

5.36 As established above, the site can reasonably be considered as grey belt as per criterion (a).

5.37 The second part of criterion (a) requires consideration of all Green Belt purposes (taken together) to ascertain whether the proposal would fundamentally undermine the purpose of the Green Belt across the area.

5.38 The North Hertfordshire Green Belt Review (July 2016) sets out that the current designated area of Green Belt in North Hertfordshire is 14,247ha out of a total district area of 37,537ha (approx. 38%). This site is therefore a small

parcel of land (0.0028%) in the overall District and will not fundamentally reduce the scale of the Green Belt or its purpose of protecting the District as a whole.

- 5.39 Purpose (c) of the Green Belt seeks to safeguard the countryside from encroachment. The proposed development comprises the use of underutilised paddock land for residential purposes. It will on face value result in encroachment into the countryside; however, the enclosure of the site by mature trees and vegetation, residential properties to the north, south-east and south, village hall to the east and a large agricultural building to the west, results in a contained site.
- 5.40 The proposal is therefore considered to have a moderate impact on this Green Belt purpose.
- 5.41 Further, it is acknowledged that the development of green field sites does not expressly encourage the recycling of derelict or other urban land (purpose (e)) and as such would have a moderate impact on this Green Belt purpose.
- 5.42 However, when considering all five purposes of the Green Belt taken together, as criterion (a) of Paragraph 155 requires, it is not considered that the development of this modest site would fundamentally undermine the extensive Green Belt provision or purpose within the District. It is therefore considered that criterion (a) of Paragraph 155 is satisfied.

Demonstrable Need

- 5.43 Paragraph 155 criterion (b) requires there to be a demonstrable unmet need for the proposed development, in this case housing.

5.44 As set out in the Council's most recent Housing Land Supply Update (November 2025), the total requirement for housing delivery in the District from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2030 is 6,976 dwellings. The position as of 31 March 2025 is that there is a deficit of 3,347 dwellings over the five year period of 2025/26 – 2029/30. Therefore, the Council can only demonstrate a five-year housing land supply position of 2.6 years against the adopted housing requirement.

5.45 As such, there is without a doubt a demonstrable need for housing within North Hertfordshire and thus the proposal satisfies criterion (b).

Sustainable Development

5.46 Paragraph 155 criteria (c) seeks to direct development to sustainable locations, having regard to NPPF Paragraphs 110 and 115.

5.47 Great Wymondley is an established village and includes a public house, village hall and church. The village is served by the No. 80 bus route which runs between Stevenage and Hitchin on an hourly basis Monday-Saturday. The village is also in proximity of Little Wymondley (which is also on the No. 80 bus route) which has a school, shop and additional churches and public houses.

5.48 The nearest bus stops to the site served by the No. 80 bus in both directions are located approximately 150m from the site on Arch Road.

5.49 It is therefore considered that the site is in a sustainable location with access to facilities and non-car modes of transport. Criterion (c) is therefore satisfied.

Golden Rules

- 5.50 Criterion (d) of Paragraph 155 requires development proposals to meet the 'Golden Rules' set out in Paragraphs 156-157 of the NPPF where applicable.
- 5.51 The Golden Rules only apply to major development for housing. The proposed development is for up to 9no. residential properties and therefore would be classified as a minor development. As such, the Golden Rules do not apply, and criterion (d) is not applicable.

Summary

- 5.52 Overall, in satisfying all the relevant criteria of Paragraph 155, the proposed development would not represent inappropriate development in the Green Belt. The proposed development would therefore not conflict with Local Plan Policy SP5 which only permits development proposals in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development. As such, it can be concluded that, subject to all other material planning considerations, the principle of development should be supported.
- 5.53 The location of the proposed development and the use for residential accommodation should therefore be considered acceptable.

Amount

- 5.54 The proposed development is for up to 9no. dwellinghouses which would be set within generous plot sizes.
- 5.55 As demonstrated by the indicative site layout, this would be a quantum of development that could be accommodated comfortably within the site, in

order to make the best use of land without detracting from the character and appearance of the area.

5.56 The quantum proposed would also ensure the development could provide the required residential amenity space, landscaping, parking areas, refuse stores, road access and sufficient turning space that would be expected by planning policy for a residential scheme of this nature.

5.57 It is also clear that the direction of travel as set out in the draft NPPF (2025) is to ensure that development proposals make efficient use of land and contribute to an increase in the density of an area. Draft NDMP L3 explicitly states that the existing character of an area should be taken into account, but should not preclude development which makes the most of an area's potential.

5.58 As such, the density of the proposed development would be in keeping with the pattern of housing of the local area, whilst also making the best use of land.

5.59 Accordingly, the amount of development proposed should be considered acceptable as the proposed development would be consistent with requirements of Policies SP1, SP9 and D1 of the 2011-2031 Local Plan and sections 2 and 12 of the NPPF 2024.

Other Matters

5.60 Matters such as vehicular and pedestrian access, parking, scale, design and appearance, landscaping, relationship with neighbours and environmental matters such as land contamination, flood risk and ecological issues should be considered at technical details stage subject to the permission in principle being granted.

6.0 **Planning Balance & Conclusion**

- 6.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 6.2 Having regard to Development Plan compliance, this Statement sets out that the proposal would be in compliance with the Local Plan, including Policies SP2 and SP5.
- 6.3 The site is located within the settlement boundary of the village of Great Wymondley. Policy SP2 permits infill development which does not extend the built core of the village into the surrounding countryside.
- 6.4 As demonstrated by this Statement, the proposed development of the application site would be largely contained due to the presence of built development on all four boundaries and would therefore not result in encroachment of built form further into the surrounding countryside.
- 6.5 Moreover, Policy SP5 states that development proposals will only be permitted in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development. This Statement has set out that the site would comply with the requirements of NPPF Paragraph 155 and should therefore not be regarded as inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- 6.6 Accordingly, the proposed development would be in compliance with the relevant national, local and neighbourhood planning policy. The Statement has demonstrated that the location, use and amount of development proposed would be acceptable and as such, permission in principle should be granted.

- 6.7 Should the Council take a different view in respect of compliance with Policies SP2 and SP5, it is relevant to consider Paragraph 11d of the NPPF.
- 6.8 NPPF Paragraph 11d sets out what the presumption in favour of sustainable development means for decision-taking. Paragraph 11d explains how to apply this presumption in instances where the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date.
- 6.9 It is accepted that the tilted balance does not change the statutory presumption in favour of the Development Plan set out in Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It does however mean that some of the policies may need to be afforded reduced weight in accordance with the Suffolk Coastal Supreme Court judgement. Otherwise, those policies will continue to block and frustrate the national aim to significantly boost the supply of housing.
- 6.10 The most important policies for determining this application (Policies SP1, SP2 and SP5) are out-of-date for a number of reasons and afforded less weight. The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and for this reason alone, the tilted balance under paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the NPPF must be applied.
- 6.11 The above assessment also demonstrates that footnote 7 constraints do not provide a strong reason for refusing development that would disengage the tilted balance.
- 6.12 It therefore follows that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
- 6.13 The benefits associated with the proposed development are as follows:

- The provision of up to 9no. residential dwellings, that can be delivered within the current plan period, and which will contribute towards meeting the Council's housing need.
- Short-term economic benefits associated with the construction phase of the development.
- Long-term benefits that future occupiers will contribute to the local economy.
- Making optimal use of a vacant site.

6.14 It is acknowledged that the proposed development could result in '*less than substantial harm*' to the Great Wymondley Conservation Area and adjacent non-designated heritage assets. However, in terms of the planning balance, the benefits associated with the development should be afforded significant weight collectively and any harm as a result of the proposed development would be outweighed by the scheme benefits.

6.15 As such, in the context of Paragraph 11(d), there are no adverse impacts of permitting the development that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

6.16 Therefore, in the event the Council does consider there would be some conflict with Local Plan Policies pertaining to the settlement strategy, it has been demonstrated that the proposal represents an appropriate mechanism of delivering housing in a sustainable manner.

6.17 In the context of the planning benefits associated with the scheme and that the tilted balance must be applied to residential development in the District, the Applicant requests that permission in principle be granted without delay.