



AFFORDABLE HOUSING STATEMENT

Land at Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3RA

Outline Planning Application - 30 Residential Dwellings - All Matters Reserved

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Site	Land at Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3RA
Proposal	Outline application for 30 residential dwellings - all matters reserved
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1. Introduction

This Affordable Housing Statement has been prepared by PSK Rural Limited in support of an outline planning application for the erection of 30 residential dwellings, with all matters reserved for subsequent approval, on land at Pirton, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG5 3RA.

The submitted Indicative Site Layout Plan identifies the application site as “Land at Pirton, Hitchin SG5 3RA - Indicative Site Layout Plan - Proposed Residential Development”. The plan illustrates residential development parcels set within a landscape-led scheme incorporating new grass and mixed scrub planting, a playground, entrance, internal roadways, pedestrian link to Pirton Village and continued access to adjoining agricultural land.

The application is submitted in outline with all matters reserved, the detailed location, size, design and distribution of individual dwellings are not fixed at this stage. The purpose of this Statement is therefore to establish a clear and policy-compliant framework for the amount, tenure, affordability, mix and future delivery of affordable housing, capable of being secured through a Section 106 Agreement and subsequently reflected within the Reserved Matters submission.

This Statement proceeds on the basis that the development will make full policy-compliant affordable housing provision. No viability case is advanced to reduce the affordable housing contribution.



Figure 1: Indicative Site Layout Plan - extract (PSK Rural, Drg. No. LAP SITE 001 A)

2. Development Plan and National Policy Context

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework - August 2026

The current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 17 August 2026. The national decision-making policies of direct relevance to affordable housing are Policy HO7, Meeting the need for homes, and Policy HO8, Providing affordable homes.

Policy HO7 requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of providing homes which contribute towards meeting the evidenced accommodation needs of the community, having regard to local needs assessments and other relevant evidence. Policy HO8 requires development proposals to meet or exceed up-to-date development plan requirements for the proportion and mix of affordable housing tenures relevant to the location, including any applicable minimum proportion of Social Rent. On-site delivery is the national starting point unless an alternative approach is robustly justified.

The proposal responds positively to these national objectives by committing to the full local policy requirement for affordable housing on the application site.

2.2 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 was adopted in November 2022 and forms part of the statutory Development Plan. Policy SP8 supports a range of housing tenures, types and sizes and identifies an overall plan-period objective to secure affordable housing for local needs. Policy HS2 provides the detailed development management requirements for affordable housing.

Policy HS2 sets the following target percentages for affordable housing, subject to viability:

Gross development size	Affordable housing target
11-14 dwellings	25%
15-24 dwellings	35%
25 dwellings or more	40%

The proposed development of 30 dwellings therefore generates a policy requirement for 12 affordable dwellings. Policy HS2 also expects the affordable housing to be provided on-site unless robustly justified otherwise and establishes a starting tenure expectation of 65% rented affordable housing and 35% other forms of affordable housing. The size, type and tenure are to respond to the housing needs

of the area, including local authority housing register data, Neighbourhood Plan evidence and settlement- or parish-level information.

2.3 Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document - June 2026

North Herts Council adopted its updated Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in June 2026. Section 5.2 specifically encourages the submission of an Affordable Housing Statement alongside relevant planning applications. The SPD confirms the Policy HS2 thresholds, reinforces the strong presumption in favour of on-site provision, and provides detailed guidance on affordability, tenure, housing mix, design, accessibility, legal agreements, nomination rights and rural allocation cascades.

The SPD is particularly relevant to an outline application because the detailed affordable housing layout is not fixed at this stage. The amount, tenure, mix, standards and delivery mechanisms can be secured through the Section 106 Agreement and then translated into the detailed Reserved Matters scheme.

2.4 Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031

The Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan was made on 27 April 2018 and forms part of the Development Plan. Policy PNP1 - Meeting Local and Wider Needs - seeks mixed housing growth which responds to the needs of young families, elderly downsizers and households requiring affordable homes. It identifies particular demand for 2 and 3-bedroom properties, requires an element of social and affordable housing in accordance with North Herts policy and local needs, and seeks arrangements to ensure that affordable housing remains affordable for local people.

Policy PNP1 also provides that a residential development proposal should be for no more than 30 houses on any one development site. The present outline proposal is for 30 dwellings. Matters concerning the principle and location of development relative to the village development boundary are addressed separately within the Planning Statement; this Affordable Housing Statement is concerned with the housing contribution arising from the proposal.

3. Evidence of Affordable Housing Need

The latest published North Herts and Stevenage Strategic Housing Market Assessment Part II Update (November 2023) identifies substantial continuing affordable housing need. For North Herts, the assessment identifies 2,519 households unable to afford market rent or market purchase over the

2022-2031 period, equivalent to approximately 280 households per annum. When households with a realistic prospect of accessing affordable home ownership are included, the assessed affordable housing need rises to 3,110 households over the same period, or approximately 346 households per annum.

The SHMA identifies a particularly strong requirement for 2 and 3-bedroom affordable accommodation. Its overall North Herts affordable housing need, including households aspiring to affordable home ownership, comprises 432 one-bedroom, 951 two-bedroom, 1,429 three-bedroom and 299 four-plus-bedroom households. This evidence is consistent with the Pirton Neighbourhood Plan emphasis on 2 and 3-bedroom homes.

The importance of policy-compliant affordable housing has also been recognised very recently by North Herts Council in Pirton. In the officer report for application 25/02064/OP at land adjacent to 10 Hambridge Way, Pirton, the Council recorded unmet affordable housing need and consistent under-delivery. That scheme proposed 20 affordable homes from up to 50 dwellings, equivalent to 40%, and the officer concluded that the policy-compliant affordable housing contribution should be afforded “very significant weight” in favour of the proposal. The Planning Control Committee resolved to grant that application on 3 September 2026, subject to completion of a satisfactory legal agreement.

The Hambridge Way decision relates to a separate site and does not determine the merits of the present proposal. It does, however, provide recent local evidence of the significant weight North Herts Council attaches to full affordable housing delivery in Pirton where the policy requirement is met.

4. Proposed Affordable Housing Provision

The application will provide affordable housing at the full Policy HS2 rate of 40%. On a development of 30 dwellings this equates to 12 affordable homes, all provided on-site.

Housing provision	Number	Percentage
Market housing	18	60%
Affordable housing	12	40%
Total	30	100%

No off-site provision or commuted payment is proposed. The affordable housing will therefore form an integral part of the residential development.

Applying the Council's 65% rented / 35% other affordable housing starting point, and the SPD approach of rounding the rented requirement to the nearest whole dwelling, the indicative tenure provision will be:

Affordable tenure	Number	Approx. proportion
Rented affordable housing (including Social Rent where required)	8	66.7%
Other affordable housing, indicatively shared ownership	4	33.3%
Total affordable housing	12	100%

This is the closest whole-unit application of the Policy HS2 tenure split. The precise form of the four other affordable housing units can be agreed with the Council's Housing Team through the Section 106 process, having regard to affordability and the most up-to-date evidence available at determination.

5. Affordable Housing Mix

Because layout, appearance, scale and landscaping are reserved matters, it would be inappropriate at outline stage to prescribe the precise location and house type of every affordable dwelling. Nevertheless, the application can establish a clear mix framework which responds to current evidence.

The SHMA and Policy PNP1 both indicate a strong need for 2 and 3-bedroom homes. An appropriate indicative starting mix for the 12 affordable dwellings is therefore:

Dwelling size	Indicative number
1 bedroom	2
2 bedrooms	4
3 bedrooms	5
4 bedrooms	1
Total	12

This mix is deliberately expressed as indicative rather than inflexible. The final mix will be agreed with

North Herts Council having regard to the latest SHMA, housing register evidence, any current Pirton parish-level evidence and the detailed scheme at Reserved Matters stage. The intention is to secure a meaningful range of homes whilst retaining sufficient flexibility to respond to evidenced need at the point of delivery.

6. Affordability

The affordable homes will be genuinely affordable having regard to Policy HS2 and the June 2026 Developer Contributions SPD. The SPD currently identifies the following rent levels: 1 and 2-bedroom properties at no more than 80% of market rent; 3-bedroom properties at no more than 70% of market rent; and 4-bedroom or larger rented properties at Social Rent. All rents are to remain within the applicable Local Housing Allowance rates, with relevant service charges, management fees or similar costs taken into account.

For intermediate housing, affordability is assessed having regard to local incomes and local house prices. The SPD uses an assumption that households should not devote more than approximately 35% of gross household income to housing costs. For shared ownership, the current SPD provides for initial equity shares between 10% and 75% and rent on unsold equity capped at 2.75% in accordance with the Homes England model lease requirements.

This affordability framework is particularly relevant in Pirton, where the Neighbourhood Plan expressly recognises the relationship between high market property values and the ability of local households, including younger households, to remain within the village.

7. Pirton Designated Protection Area

Pirton is identified by the Council's June 2026 SPD as a Designated Protection Area for shared ownership purposes. Within these areas, any shared ownership product is required to restrict staircasing to a maximum 80% equity share where the relevant statutory provisions apply. The purpose is to protect the long-term supply of affordable housing in rural communities where replacement opportunities are limited.

Any necessary staircasing restriction will therefore be incorporated into the Section 106 Agreement and associated affordable housing arrangements.

8. Integration and Design

The affordable dwellings will be designed on a tenure-neutral basis and will be physically indistinguishable in architectural quality, materials, landscaping and external appearance from comparable market dwellings.

The June 2026 SPD advises that affordable housing should, wherever practicable, be distributed across larger developments in small clusters rather than concentrated in one part of a site. It also expects affordable residents to have equivalent access to facilities, schools, shops and open space. At Reserved Matters stage, the 12 affordable dwellings will therefore be appropriately integrated within the residential parcels and will not form a visually or physically segregated enclave.

Residents of the affordable homes will have equal access to the proposed playground, landscaped areas, walking routes and wider open-space infrastructure forming part of the development. The detailed scheme will also be required to comply with the applicable nationally described space standards and accessibility requirements.

The SPD records that where more than 10 affordable homes are provided, 10% of the affordable housing requirement should be to the higher M4(3) wheelchair user standard, rounded to the nearest whole dwelling, and provided within rented tenure units wherever possible. On a requirement for 12 affordable homes, this gives a minimum of one M4(3) affordable rented dwelling, subject to the detailed design and Reserved Matters process.

9. Section 106 Agreement and Long-Term Delivery

The affordable housing will be secured through a Section 106 Agreement. This approach accords with Policy HS2, Policy PNP1 and the June 2026 Developer Contributions SPD, which expressly expects affordable housing obligations to be secured through a legal agreement other than in rare and exceptional circumstances.

The principal affordable housing provisions to be secured are anticipated to comprise:

Matter	Proposed obligation
Affordable housing quantum	40% of the development, equating to 12 dwellings where 30 dwellings are delivered
Location	On-site

Matter	Proposed obligation
Tenure	Indicatively 8 rented and 4 other affordable dwellings, subject to final Housing Team agreement
Housing mix	Final mix to respond to the latest SHMA, housing register and relevant Pirton evidence
Design	Tenure-neutral and integrated with market housing
Accessibility	At least 1 affordable rented M4(3) dwelling, subject to detailed design
Affordability	Rent and affordable ownership controls in accordance with current North Herts requirements
Shared ownership	Maximum 80% staircasing where Designated Protection Area provisions apply
Nomination arrangements	Council nomination and local connection arrangements
Delivery	Appropriate construction, transfer and occupation triggers to prevent affordable provision being back-loaded
Long-term retention	Affordable housing secured for eligible households in accordance with the legal agreement

The SPD states that the Council will normally seek 100% initial nomination rights and at least 75% of nomination rights for subsequent re-lets. Within rural Designated Protection Areas, the normal allocation cascade gives priority first to applicants from within the parish, then adjoining parishes, then other rural parishes in North Hertfordshire and finally applicants from elsewhere in the District. These provisions are particularly appropriate at Pirton and maximise the prospect that affordable housing benefits meet local as well as district-wide needs.

10. Planning Benefits

The affordable housing element represents a substantial social benefit of the development. The provision of 12 new affordable dwellings will deliver the full 40% requirement sought by Policy HS2 and will directly address an identified and continuing shortfall in affordable housing provision within North Hertfordshire.

The proposal will provide a range of rented and affordable home ownership opportunities and will assist younger households, families and other households who may otherwise be unable to access suitable accommodation within the local market. National Policy HO7 of the August 2026 NPPF

requires substantial weight to be given to the benefits of providing homes which contribute towards meeting evidenced accommodation needs.

The recent Hambridge Way decision in Pirton is also a material local indicator of the Council's approach to this issue: the officer report attributed very significant weight to the policy-compliant affordable housing contribution because of unmet need and consistent under-delivery. The present proposal likewise offers a full 40% contribution and should attract substantial positive weight in the planning balance.

11. Conclusion

The proposed development will provide a fully policy-compliant affordable housing contribution of 12 dwellings from a total of 30 homes, equivalent to 40% of the development.

All 12 affordable dwellings will be provided on-site and integrated throughout the detailed scheme. The current policy starting point gives an indicative tenure split of 8 rented affordable dwellings and 4 other affordable homes, with the precise products and dwelling-size mix agreed with North Herts Council having regard to the most up-to-date evidence of need.

The proposal therefore accords with the affordable housing objectives of Policies SP8 and HS2 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, the June 2026 Developer Contributions SPD and Policy PNP1 of the Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan. It also responds directly to Policies HO7 and HO8 of the August 2026 NPPF, which respectively require substantial weight to be attached to meeting evidenced housing needs and expect development proposals to meet or exceed up-to-date development plan affordable housing requirements.

The 12 affordable homes will make a material and significant contribution towards addressing demonstrable unmet affordable housing need in North Hertfordshire and Pirton. This benefit should attract substantial positive weight in the determination of the outline planning application.

For clarity, this Affordable Housing Statement addresses the affordable housing component of the application only. It does not seek to determine the separate planning merits of the site location, the principle of residential development or other development plan considerations, which are appropriately addressed in the accompanying Planning Statement.

References

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. National Planning Policy Framework, August 2026.

North Herts Council. North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted November 2022.

North Herts Council. Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, adopted June 2026.

Pirton Parish Council / North Herts Council. Pirton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2031, made 27 April 2018.

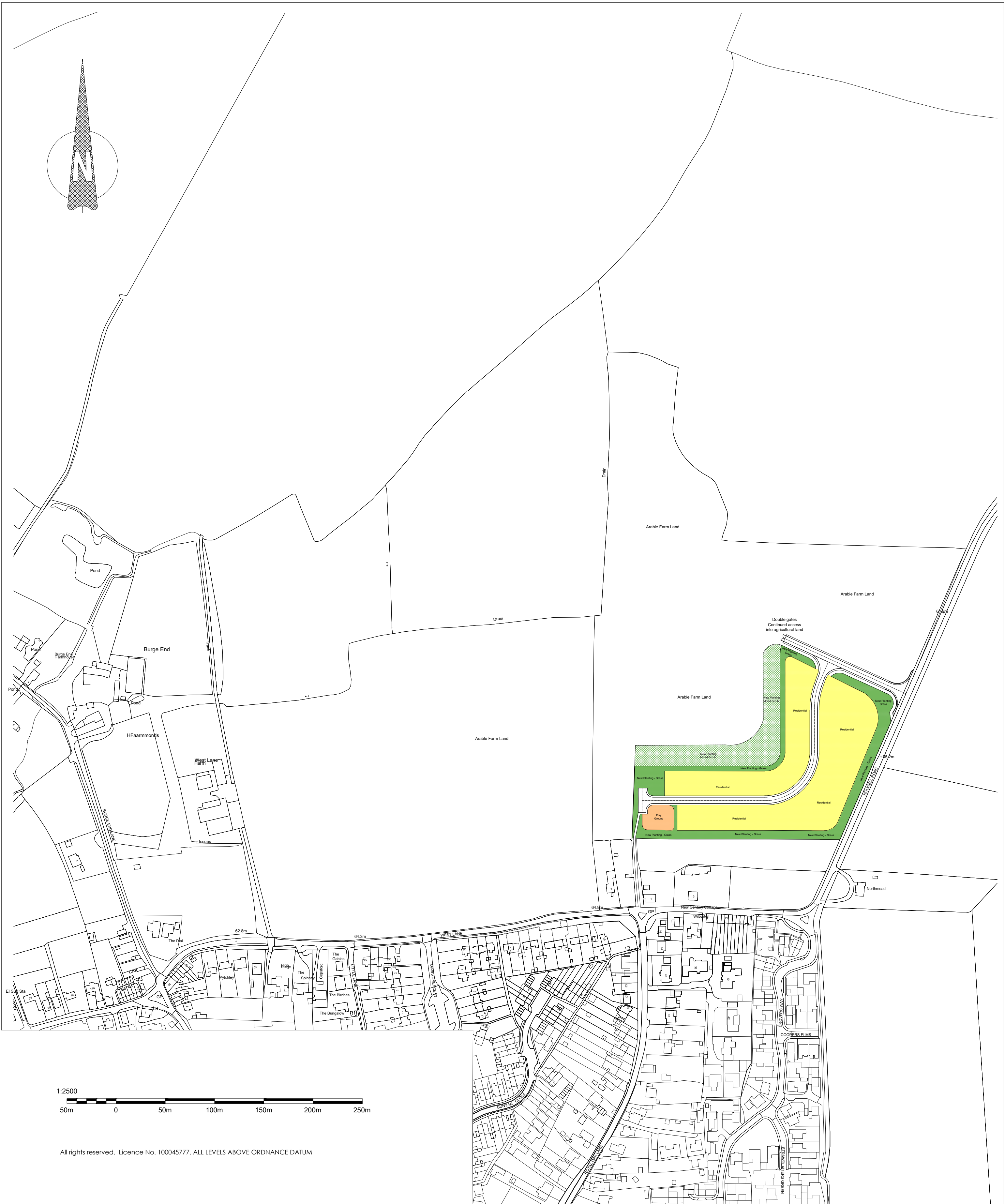
Opinion Research Services. North Hertfordshire and Stevenage SHMA Part II Update Including Impact of First Homes 2023, November 2023.

North Herts Council Planning Control Committee. Application 25/02064/OP, Land Adjacent to 10 Hambridge Way, Pirton - officer report and committee resolution, 3 September 2026.

PSK Rural Limited. Indicative Site Layout Plan - Proposed Residential Development, Land at Pirton, Hitchin SG5 3RA, Drg. No. LAP SITE 001 A, August 2026.

Appendix 1

Indicative Site Layout Plan



Revisions	Drawings Notes
	1. this is not a survey drawing - all dimensions to be checked on site.
	2. do not scale off this drawing
	3. the copyright of this drawing is the property of Pike Smith and Kemp Rural
	4. all discrepancies to be reported to the architect
	5. please ensure that this drawing is read together and cross referenced with all other relevant architectural drawings, schedules and specifications.
	6. please ensure that this drawing is read in conjunction with all other consultants/specialist contractors relevant drawings, schedules and specifications.



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Project	Land at Pilton Hitchin SG5 3RA
Title	Indicative Site Layout Plan - Proposed Residential Development
Dwg No.	LAP SITE 001
Rev	A
Drawn	TMC
Checked	JPH
Date	08/20/26
Scale	1:2500 (A2)
Status	Planning