

MEMORANDUM

To: Naomi Reynard
Senior Planning Officer

From: Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer
Ext: 4526

Your Ref: 24/02889/FP

Date: 14th September 2026

Full Planning Permission: Residential development of 281 dwellings and associated roads, parking, realignment of Back Lane, drainage, landscaping, open space, servicing facilities and associated works (as amended).

Land At Roundwood, Back Lane, Graveley, Hertfordshire.

Case Ref No: 24/02889/FP

Dear Naomi,

Thank you for your email of memo dated 10 September 2026 in respect of the above application for full planning permission following submission and testing of a viability report.

The affordable housing requirement is 40% on sites which will provide 25 dwellings and above, in accordance with the Local Plan. Within the overall 40% affordable housing requirement a 65%/35% rented/ other affordable housing tenure split is required, in accordance with the Local Plan and the Council's Developer Contributions SPD and the 2016 Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) Update.

The applicant's submitted viability report suggests that the onsite affordable housing provision would need to be halved/ reduced to 20%. Based on 281 dwellings and 20% affordable housing overall would equate to 56 affordable dwellings.

On a 65% rented/ 35% affordable home ownership (AHO) split this would equate to 36 rented/ 20 AHO.

The 2023 SHMA indicates a higher need for larger family accommodation for rent at 62% and 38% one and two bed flats and houses. For affordable home ownership there is a higher need for one and two bed flats and houses at 80%, with 20% for three bed houses only.

The 2023 North Herts and Stevenage SHMA update has been adopted and identifies a different tenure mix for both rented and affordable home ownership tenures to that of the 2016 SHMA. The affordable housing requirements for this site were primarily based on the 2016 SHMA. Following further discussions/

negotiation an affordable housing mix was agreed which is reflected in the s106 agreement.

Within the 65% rented affordable housing element the following tenure mix best meets housing needs, as identified in the 2016 SHMA:

36 x 21% x 1 bed flats (8)
36 x 12% x 2 bed flats (4)
36 x 26% x 2 bed houses (9)
36 x 35% x 3 bed houses (13)
36 x 6% x 4+ bed houses. (2)

Within the 35% intermediate affordable housing element the following tenure mix best meets housing needs as identified in the 2016 SHMA:

20 x 8% x 1 bed flats (2)
20 x 8% x 2 bed flats (2)
20 x 20% x 2 bed houses (4)
20 x 54% x 3 bed houses (10)
20 x 10% x 4+ bed houses (2)

The agreed mix was based on the provision of a 40% policy compliant scheme and included a greater number of flats. Based on 20% affordable housing provision overall, I note and accept the applicant's comments/ explanation as to why the 2016 SHMA mix cannot be delivered, particularly working with the approved layout.

The number of flats has been halved with some of the flat blocks now given over to market housing. This makes sense as neither the developer nor registered providers are keen on mixed tenure blocks.

There are still a good supply of two-bedroom family housing and the retention of all the four-bedroom homes including the M4(3) wheelchair accessible homes is welcomed.

Following submission of a viability assessment and 20% affordable housing provision has resulted in a revised mix as follows:

Rented:

33% x 1 bed flats (12)
42% x 2 bed flats (15)
5.5% x 2 bed houses (2)
5.5% x 3 bed houses (2)
14% x 4 bed houses (5)

Affordable home ownership:

40% x 1 bed flats (8)
25% x 2 bed flats (5)

20% x 2 bed houses (4)

15% x 3 bed houses (3)

There is a growing need for larger (3 and 4 bed) M4(3) wheelchair accessible homes for rent which we will seek to deliver through the requirements of Policy HS5: Accessible and adaptable housing of the Local Plan.

The applicant agreed to provide two x four bed houses to M4(3) wheelchair accessible standards. If the percentage of affordable housing is halved the Council would still require one four bed house to meet M4(3) wheelchair accessible standard with the remaining homes being ground floor flats to meet HS5 policy requirements.

The affordable homes should be owned and managed by a registered provider, should be spread across the site in small clusters rather than be situated on one or two parts of the site and be physically indistinguishable from the market housing. The affordable housing is still distributed across the site.

Registered providers (RPs) and developers alike are not keen on mixed tenure blocks of flats and any flats for rent would need to be separate from any flats for affordable home ownership tenure.

Where a need for affordable housing is identified the definition in Annex 2 of the Framework should be applied to the type of affordable housing required.

The definition for affordable housing includes housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers).

The Council currently accepts social rent and affordable rent for the rented tenure dwellings, although the 2023 SHMA shows that a large majority of households will require social rented homes.

Where affordable rented tenure is provided it should be noted that the affordable rent for one or two bedroom dwellings should be no more than 80% of the equivalent local market rent (including service charges, where applicable).

For three bedroom dwellings the affordable rent should be no more than 70% of the equivalent local market rent (including service charges, where applicable) and for a four bedroom dwelling the rent should be no more than the equivalent rent (excluding service charges, where applicable) for a social rented home in the locality, to ensure affordability.

All rents must be within Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates, in accordance with the Local Plan, the Council's Tenancy Strategy and the Developer Contributions SPD.

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

Parking courts are not desirable as there is often limited or no natural surveillance and residents prefer to park outside or near to their homes. To minimise on street parking, parking spaces should be provided in front or adjacent properties with good natural surveillance wherever possible.

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

I hope this information assists you. Please contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Regards

Debbie Ealand
Housing Supply Officer