

Planning Statement

Planning application

Redevelopment of site for the erection of a chalet bungalow

Fen Farm, Rabley Heath Road, AL6 9UA

DLA Ref: 2025/487

July 2025

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 Background

1.1.1 This report relates to a planning application for the redevelopment of the site for the erection of a chalet bungalow at Fen Farm, Rabley Heath Road.

1.2.0 Scope

1.2.1 This document comprises an overarching Planning Report. Sections 2 to 4 consider the physical, economic, social and historical context of the site, identifying the relevant local, regional and national planning policy framework; Section 5 sets out the details of the proposal; and Section 6 details the consultations undertaken prior to the submission of the application. All these sections inform the evaluation of the proposal in Section 7 against the identified planning policy framework. The overall conclusions are set out in Section 8 and which are summarised below at paragraph 1.3.0.

1.3.0 Summary

1.3.1 The proposal seeks the redevelopment of previously developed land for the erection of a dwelling. The scheme would result in the demolition of the 7x existing buildings, with the proposed development would resulting in 35% reduction in built volume, 58% reduction in the built footprint, and 17% reduction in the floorspace, all of which would be of a significant benefit in the openness of the Green Belt. As the proposals would result in the redevelopment of previously developed land that would not be causing substantial harm, the application is therefore in accordance with Paragraph 154(g) of the NPPF.

1.3.2 The site is not located within an isolated location and is adjacent to a number of residential properties along Rabley Heath Road, as well as there being a footpath in the vicinity which provides a means of access to the services and facilities within the village of Codicote.

1.3.3 The proposals would constitute sustainable development in accordance with Paragraph 8 of the NPPF.

1.3.4 The proposed dwelling would have a positive impact in meeting the housing targets as set out by the Council.

1.3.5 The proposed dwelling would not be out of character to the local area, improving the street scene when compared to the existing situation. The proposed dwelling would also not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring occupiers, and would provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers.

1.3.6 The proposed development would utilise an existing and safe form of access, provide a suitable level of parking and ensure sufficient space for vehicles to manoeuvre effectively.

2.0 SITE & CONTEXT ANALYSIS

2.1.0 Location

2.1.1 The site, shown in Figure 1 below, is located to the south of Rabley Heath Road, to the west of the large village of Codicote.



Figure 1 - Site location

2.2.0 Application Site

2.2.1 The application site consists of a large two storey detached dwelling that was approved and constructed by virtue of approved application reference 10/00134/1. The site also consists of a large detached garage, a large detached stable block and barn, as well as number of other associated outbuildings and structures. The site also has an extant consent under reference 25/00044/FP for the conversion of existing stables into a dwelling following the 'demolition of outbuildings.

2.3.0 Context

2.3.1 The character of the area is predominantly characterised by residential dwellings within a broadly rural area. The site is bound on either side by residential dwellings, with an open field located to the north on the other side of Rabley Heath Road.

2.4.0 Planning Constraints

2.4.1 The only planning designation upon the site is that it is located with the Metropolitan Green Belt. The site is located within Flood Zone 1, is not within a Conservation Area, nor are there any Listed Buildings in close proximity to the site.

2.5.0 Local Services & Accessibility

2.5.1 The site is located less than 100m to the east of a public footpath that leads into the designated settlement of Codicote as shown in Figure 2 below. Codicote has a good range of services and facilities within the village, including a school, a pharmacy, a doctors surgery, and a number of different shops and pubs. Codicote also has a number of buses that run through the village, providing a regular service to nearby towns and large villages including Welwyn Garden City and Hitchin.

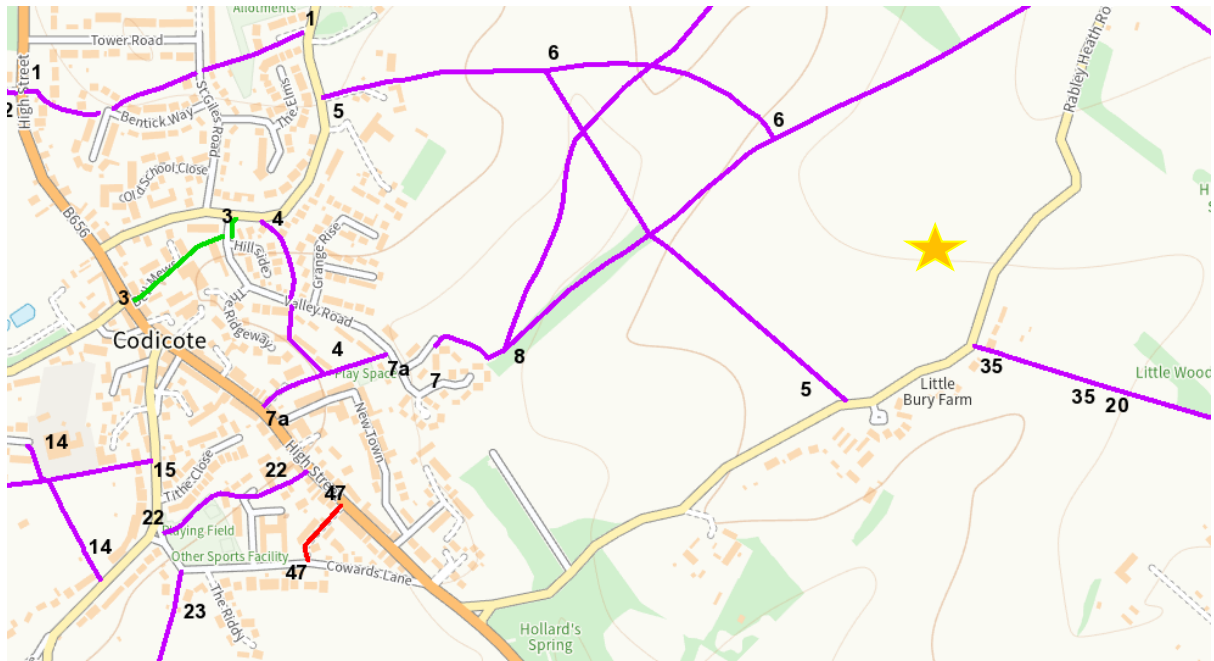


Figure 2- site shown within the Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way map

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

3.1.0 Application Site

3.1.1 The relevant history of the application site is summarised in Figure 3.1.0 below.

LPA Ref	Proposal	Outcome
09/01267/1	Erection of one four bedroom dwelling with detached garage following demolition of existing dwelling	Approved
10/00134/1	Erection of one four bedroom dwelling with detached garage following demolition of existing dwelling (as variation to planning permission 09/01267/1 granted on 30 September 2009)	Approved
12/01033/1	Erection of a Barn for the storage of hay (as amended by drawings received 2/07/12).	Refused
25/00044/FP	Conversion of existing stables into dwelling following demolition of outbuildings	Approved

4.0 POLICY CONTEXT

4.1.0 National Policy / Guidance

4.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, sets out the Government’s planning policies for England. Chapters 2 (Achieving sustainable development), 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes), 11 (Making effective use of land), 12 (Achieving well-designed places), and 13 (Protecting Green Belt Land) are of particular relevance to this application.

4.2.0 North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

Policy No.	Title
SP1	Sustainable Development in North Herts
SP2	Sustainable Hierarchy
SP5	Countryside and Green Belt
SP8	Housing
D1	Sustainable Design
T1	Transport
T2	Parking
HS5	Accessible and Adaptable Housing
D3	Protecting Living Conditions

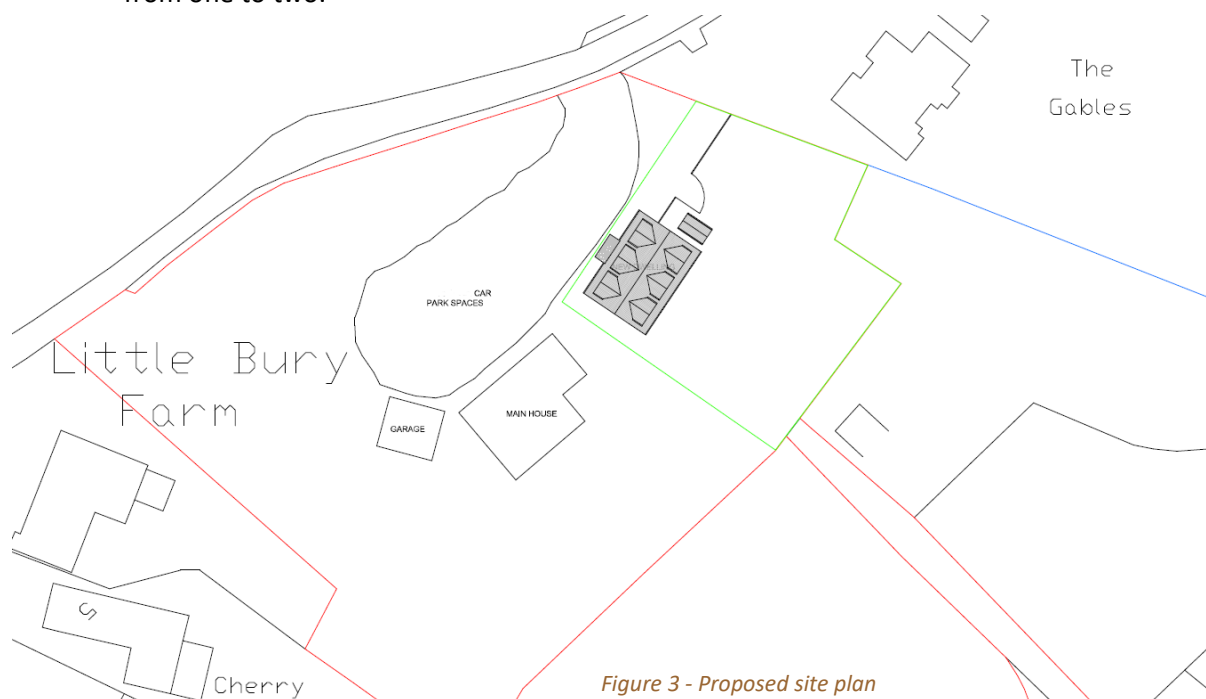
4.3.0 Supplementary Planning Guidance

Vehicle Parking at New Developments November 2011;
Design SPD July 2011;
Sustainability SPD 2024.

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

5.1.0 Use

- 5.1.1 The proposals seek to demolish the existing stables, barn and outbuildings and to replace them with a dwelling, increasing the number of residential dwellings on the overall site from one to two.



5.2.0 Layout

- 5.2.1 The site layout, shown in Figure 3 above would result in the removal of the various outbuildings, stables and barn, which are located in the eastern part of their site, with their built footprint measuring 290m². The buildings would be replaced with a chalet bungalow, with parking to the front and an area of private amenity space to the rear and side of the property.
- 5.2.2 Internally, as shown in Figure 4 below, the ground floor would consist of a lounge, a kitchen/dining room, a study, a utility room, and a w/c. At first floor there would be four bedrooms (one as an en-suite) and a bathroom.

5.3.0 Appearance & Scale

- 5.3.1 The proposed dwelling would be a chalet bungalow design, incorporating rooms within the roofspace with front and rear dormer windows. The dwelling would be constructed from traditional materials including low level brickwork, render, and clay roof tiles. The property would also include a small front porch, and a designated bin/bike store to the side of the dwelling. The proposed front and side elevations are shown in Figure 5 below.

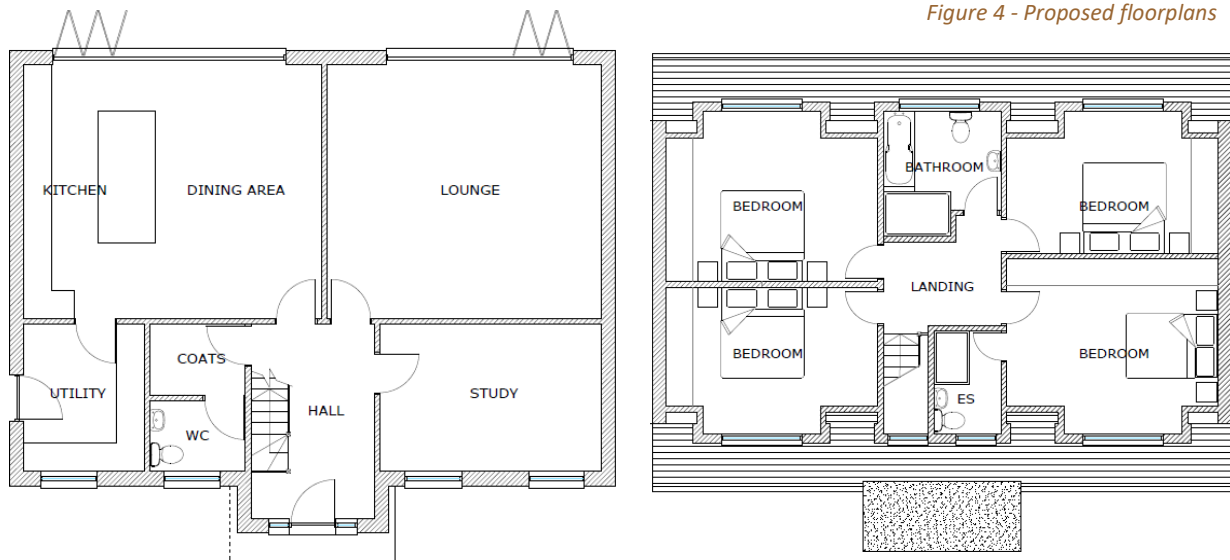


Figure 4 - Proposed floorplans

5.4.0 Landscaping

5.4.1 The proposals would not result in the loss of any existing landscaping features on the site, whilst the proposed scheme would provide opportunities for improvements to landscaping. This could be in the form of hedgerow boundaries and planting in the rear garden, both of which could be secured via a condition if required.

5.5.0 Access & Parking

5.5.1 Both dwellings would utilise the existing access onto Rabley Heath Road. Within the site the existing parking and turning area would be retained to provide sufficient parking spaces for both the existing and proposed dwellings.

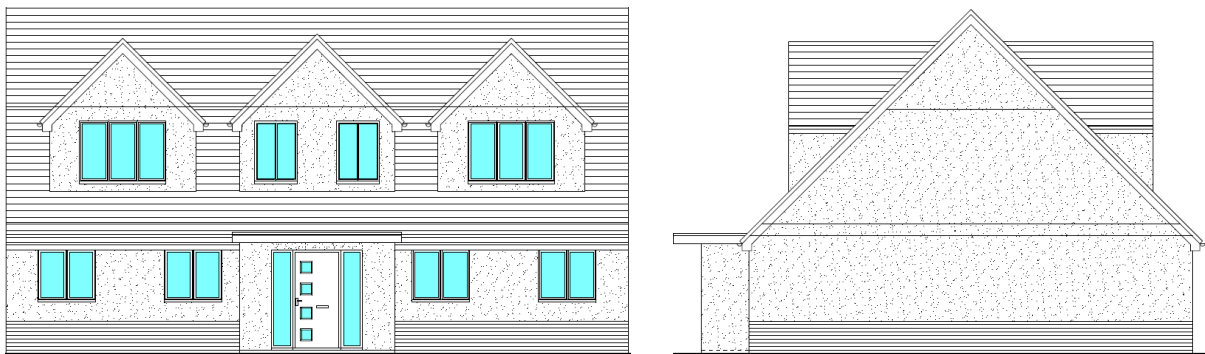


Figure 5 - Proposed front and side elevation

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1.0 Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 6.1.1 To accompany the application, a preliminary roost assessment was undertaken by ACP. The report confirmed that *“Due to the lack of evidence of bat presence and high levels of internal light ingress, the suitability of bat roosts being present on-site is negligible. The proposed work is considered unlikely to cause disturbance that would significantly affect the ability for bats to survive, breed, reproduce, nurture young and hibernate if bat roost(s) are found within the building. Therefore, no further surveys have been recommended.”*

6.2.0 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 6.2.1 To accompany the application, a biodiversity net gain assessment has been undertaken by ACP. The report confirms that the proposals will result in a 23.13% gain in habitat units. The report confirmed that *“the Proposed Development is considered to comply with national, regional or local planning policies and offers ecological improvement to the site and surrounding area.”*

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Based on the analysis set out in Sections 2 to 5, I consider that the application proposal raises the following issues, which I will consider in turn below:

1. Principle
2. Layout & Design
3. Highway Safety & Access
4. Ecology

7.1.0 Issue No 1: Principle

- 7.1.1 As noted in section 2.3.0 of this report, the application site is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt wherein there is a presumption against inappropriate development. This is also echoed in Policy SP5 of the Local Plan which states “*we will only permit development proposals in the Green Belt where they would not result in inappropriate development or where very special circumstances have been demonstrated*”.

Previous consent

- 7.1.2 On the 26th March 2025 a consent was granted under reference 25/00044/FP for the conversion of existing stables into a dwelling following demolition of outbuildings.

7.1.3.0 Redevelopment of previously developed land

- 7.1.3.1 The NPPF states in Paragraph 154 that there are forms of development that are not inappropriate in the Green Belt. One of the exceptions listed is *g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land (including a material change of use to residential or mixed use including residential), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.*

- 7.1.3.2 As the application proposals consist of the demolition of the existing stable block (which has consent to be converted into residential under reference 25/00044/FP), a barn, and other outbuildings and structures for the erection of a chalet bungalow it would therefore constitute the redevelopment of previously developed land. The next test to meet the exception set out at Paragraph 154 (g) is whether the redevelopment would cause ‘substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt’, which will be explored below.

- 7.1.3.3 In terms of the intensity of use and its impact on openness, it was noted in the approved application under reference 25/00044/FP for the conversion of the stables to a dwelling on the site that “*Existing containers and outbuildings would be demolished as part of the development, and it is considered that the proposed intensification of the use of the site and any associated residential paraphernalia would be off-set by the removal of these*

structures.”. This view that a new dwelling would likely have a similar intensification of as the existing barns and outbuildings that would be demolished is agreed upon by the applicant, and would be the same for this revised proposal.

- 7.1.3.4 In terms of physical openness, a comparison of the footprint, floorspace and volume between the proposed dwelling and the existing situation is provided in the table below.

	Volume	Footprint	Floorspace
Existing buildings	933.1m ³	290.92m ²	270.2m ²
Proposed dwelling	607m ³	123.4m ²	224.5m ²
Existing vs proposed	-326.1m ³ (-35%)	-167m ² (-58%)	-45.7m ² (-17%)

- 7.1.3.5 As shown in the table above, the proposed dwelling would result in a significant reduction in the built volume and built footprint on the site when compared to the existing buildings. The proposed dwelling would also result in a sizable reduction in the amount of useable floorspace. The large reductions in all 3x metrics of built form would demonstrate that the scheme has an improvement to the openness of the Green Belt when compared to the existing situation. In addition to this, large areas of hardstanding, as well as other associated structures and equestrian paraphernalia (skips, horse boxes, feeding troughs, etc) would be removed from the site to be replaced with appropriate landscaping, all of which are also a benefit to openness. Pictures of the outbuildings that are proposed to be demolished are shown in Figure 3 below. Although it is accepted that there would be an increase in height, with the ridge of the proposed chalet bungalow being 2.1m higher than the highest point of the existing barn, it is considered that the overall amalgamation of built development in this part of the site is significantly improved, something which would offset any potential harm caused by a relatively modest increase in height.

- 7.1.3.6 In summary, it is considered that, despite the modest increase in ridge height, the spread in built development and amalgamation of built form, combined with the significant reductions in built volume, footprint and floorspace would result in an improvement to the openness of the Green Belt. Even if these same conclusions were not reached, it cannot be considered that the scheme would cause ‘substantial harm’ to the openness of the Green Belt when compared to the existing situation. Therefore, as the scheme would result in the redevelopment of previously development land that does not cause substantial harm, the exemption at Paragraph 154(g) of the NPPF is met and the scheme would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

7.1.4 The five purposes of the Green Belt

The proposal would not harm any of the 5 purposes of maintaining Green Belt land as set in section 13 of the NPPF. It would not result in the unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up area, would not contribute to neighbouring towns merging into one another, would reduce the amount of built development on the site which would assist from countryside encroachment, and it would not also impact on the setting or special character of historic towns.



7.1.5 Location

The application site is not an isolated location and is within walking distance to the village of Codicote. This is demonstrated in Paragraph 2.5.0 of this report, as well as being acknowledged in the Councils previous pre-application report on this site, reference 24/01517/PRE, stating *“the site is not considered remote given its proximity to Codicote, a Category A Village or Welwyn just over the border”*. The application site is also located within a cluster of existing dwellings along this part of Rabley Heath Road.

7.1.6 Sustainable development

The proposal reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development and sustainable growth as required in paragraph 8 of the NPPF. The proposal fulfils the aims of the NPPF in promoting sustainable development in that it will result in an economic boost through the construction of a new dwelling, and would bring social benefit through reducing the housing need in the District. The scheme would also provide environmental sustainability as the dwelling would be constructed to a high standard in compliance with current building regulations that would require the provision of EV charging, a high efficiency boiler, and low flow water fittings, as well as providing a 23.13% gain in biodiversity on the site.

7.1.7 Housing need

The Local Plan Policy SP2 states that during the Local Plan period the Council aims to provide 13,000 new homes within the District. Although the application proposal would only be for one dwelling, this would still have a positive impact on the Council meeting these housing targets.

7.1.8 Conclusion

In summary, the site consists of previously developed land, the redevelopment of which is not considered to cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt. This would therefore meet the exception of not inappropriate development in the Green Belt as per Paragraph 154 of the NPPF, consequently the Principle of development in this location is considered acceptable.

7.2.0 Issue No 2: Layout & Design

7.2.1 NPPF paragraph 131 advises that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Likewise, paragraph 135 seeks to ensure that developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history; and establish or maintain a strong sense of place. These elements of good design are echoed in Policy D1 of the Local Plan and the Councils supplementary design guide.

7.2.2 The proposals would result in the removal of 7x existing buildings on the site, including a barn, stables and other outbuildings. There would also be the removal of other associated structures, equestrian paraphernalia (i.e. skips, jumping equipment, trailers, etc), as well the removal of large areas of hardstanding – all of which detract from the existing street

scene. This would be replaced with a modest, one and a half storey dwelling with rooms within the roofspace. The design of the dwelling ensures the property is not visually impeding and would be read as being subservient to the existing dwelling that is located on the site. The proposed dwelling would be a similar design as the existing dwelling, with a gable end roof with front and rear dormer windows, however would have a reduced scale and footprint. The property would also utilise traditional materials of external facing brickwork, render and slate roof tiles, as well as also including areas of new landscaping which could be secured via a condition. The demolition of the various outbuildings, stable and barn, along with the removal of hardstanding and associated paraphernalia to be replaced by a modest, well designed, chalet bungalow with associated landscaping is considered to result in an improvement to the street scene and the setting of the local area.

7.2.3 The proposed dwelling would be one and a half stories in height, located circa 7m away from the existing property, so would not give rise to any issues of overlooking or overbearing impact to the existing dwelling. The amount of activity associated with a single dwelling would not give rise to any concerns in respect of noise and disturbance to any neighbouring occupiers. It is therefore considered that the amenity of neighbouring occupiers would be preserved.

7.2.4 Future occupiers would be afforded good living conditions, with a convenient and usable internal layout that comfortably meets the nationally described space standards. The dwelling would have a total amenity area to comfortably meet the Local Plan requirements, as well as providing a small, but secure, space for bike and bin stores. The main living areas would be dual-aspect and so would be afforded good levels of natural light and outlook. It is therefore considered that the proposed dwelling would provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers.

7.3.0 **Issue No 3: Highway Safety & Access**

7.3.1 The proposed dwelling would utilise the existing vehicular access onto Rabley Heath Road as per the current dwelling on the site. Both properties would share the large area of hardstanding to the front of the site which provides ample room for parking and space for vehicles to manoeuvre as to exit the site in a forward gear. The proposed parking provision would be sufficient and therefore in accordance with Policy T2 of the Local Plan.

7.4.0 **Issue No 4: Ecology**

7.4.1 To accompany the application, a preliminary roost assessment was undertaken by ACP. The report confirmed that *“Due to the lack of evidence of bat presence and high levels of internal light ingress, the suitability of bat roosts being present on-site is negligible. The*

proposed work is considered unlikely to cause disturbance that would significantly affect the ability for bats to survive, breed, reproduce, nurture young and hibernate if bat roost(s) are found within the building. Therefore, no further surveys have been recommended”.

- 7.4.2 The application has also been submitted with a biodiversity net gain assessment, which confirmed that the proposals will result in a 23.13% gain in habitat units. The application proposals are therefore acceptable in terms of their impact on ecology.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1.0 Background

8.1.1 This report relates to a planning application for the redevelopment of the site for the erection of a chalet bungalow at Fen Farm, Rabley Heath Road. The proposal is promoted in the following circumstances:

- The proposals would result in the redevelopment of previously developed land that does not cause substantial harm to openness, therefore being in accordance with Paragraph 154(g) of the NPPF.
- The proposed development would result in a reduction of 35% in built volume, 58% in the built footprint, and 17% in the floorspace on the site when compared to the existing situation, all of which would be a significant benefit in the openness of the Green Belt.
- The site is not located within an isolated location and is adjacent to a number of residential properties along Rabley Heath Road.
- There is a public footpath in the vicinity which provides a means of access to the services and facilities within the village of Codicote.
- The proposals would constitute sustainable development in accordance with Paragraph 8 of the NPPF.
- The proposed dwelling would have a positive impact on meeting the Council's housing target.
- The proposed dwelling would not be out of character to the street scene, improving the existing situation with the removal of numerous outbuildings to be replaced with a well designed dwelling.
- The scheme would not have a detrimental impact on neighbouring occupiers, and would provide a good standard of accommodation for future occupiers.
- The proposed development would be acceptable in parking and highway safety terms.

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