



Planning Statement

Roundwood, Back Lane, Great Ashby

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Croudace Homes

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Planning Statement

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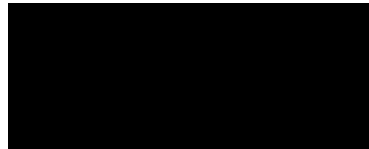
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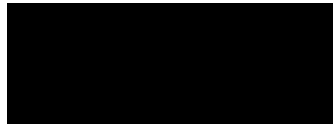


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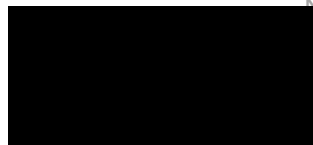


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Appendices

Appendix A	Site Location Plan
Appendix B	Full List of Submitted Plans and Documentation



1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Stantec on behalf of Croudace Homes Limited (the 'Applicants'), pursuant to a planning application for a residential development of 281 homes on land known as Roundwood, Back Lane, Great Ashby, Stevenage, set within the Parish of Graveley. The site is also referred to in this report as 'Roundwood' and is shown in **Appendix A**.
- 1.1.2 The planning application seeks full detailed planning permission under the following description of development:
- “Residential development of 281 dwellings and associated roads, parking, realignment of Back Lane, drainage, landscaping, open space, servicing facilities and associated works.”**
- 1.1.3 This Planning Statement provides the planning rationale for the proposals including a review of the submitted proposals considering prevailing planning policy and the planning balance.
- 1.1.4 This application follows a previous planning application for 292 dwellings on the site (please see chapter 3 for details). Following discussion with officers, it was considered that a redesign of the layout was necessary, and an agreed schedule of workshops were undertaken to ensure an appropriate redesign came forward. This planning application is therefore the product of those workshops.
- 1.1.5 In accordance with the national and local validation criteria, the application is supported by a number of plans and technical reports. These are listed within **Appendix B**.
- 1.1.6 This Planning Statement is presented in the following sections:
- Section 2 - Site Context
 - Section 3 - Planning History
 - Section 4 - Description of Proposed Development
 - Section 5 - Planning Policy
 - Section 6 - Planning Balance
 - Section 7 - Conclusion



2 Site Context

2.1 Site Description and Location

- 2.1.1 The Site comprises a rectangular and flat arable field that measures approximately 10.7 hectares. It adjoins the northwestern boundary of Great Ashby on the northern edge of Stevenage. Back Lane runs along the eastern and southern boundary of the site, beyond which are existing residential properties, whilst trees and fields are located beyond the northern and eastern boundary.
- 2.1.2 The site is located administratively within the parish of Graveley in North Hertfordshire District. The boundary to Stevenage Borough runs along Back Lane just outside the southern boundary of the site (all of which is situated within North Hertfordshire District).
- 2.1.3 The northern boundary of the site comprises a footpath within a developing area of woodland plantation. Back Lane runs along the eastern and southern boundary of the site, and is also known as Weston Road along the eastern boundary. From the southern boundary, Back Lane runs from the junction with Calder Way westwards to the hamlet of Chesfield, where it becomes Church Lane and continues into Graveley village. Along most of the western boundary the site adjoins an area of woodland called Round Wood, from which the site's name is taken. Hedgerows and mature trees follow much of the site boundary.
- 2.1.4 The residential area of Great Ashby is located to the south and east of the site. Previously, this land was designated Green Belt, however in 1992, the boundaries were altered (as part of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan No.2) to allow for the development of Great Ashby. Great Ashby was developed between the mid-1990s and early-2010s as an urban extension to Stevenage. Back Lane links Great Ashby and the villages of Weston and Graveley with each other.
- 2.1.5 To the west of the site, beyond the Round Wood itself is an area of mixed farmland, paddock and parkland, associated with the hamlet of Chesfield, the buildings of which lie about 300m to 400m west of the site.

2.2 Site Context

- 2.2.1 Stevenage (including Great Ashby) has been identified in the adopted North Herts Local Plan as one of the towns where a portion of the District's development will be located in order to make maximum use of existing facilities, social networks and infrastructure, and to maximise opportunities to deliver new infrastructure. Within Great Ashby neighbourhood centre, these existing services include:
- A community centre
 - A small supermarket
 - Retail facilities; and
 - A primary school (Round Diamond)
- 2.2.2 Located near Great Ashby neighbourhood centre is St Nicholas Park which contains associated leisure facilities. The area is also served by the Great Ashby District Park to the east. Directly south of St Nicholas Park is The Leys Primary School.



3 Planning History

3.1 Planning History

- 3.1.1 The site has a long history of promotion for development, appearing in a number of consultation documents going back to at least 2007.
- 3.1.2 The Roundwood site appeared in the Stevenage and North Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment of 2008, referred to as both 'SNAP6' and 'NES3'. NES3 is a reference which continued the numbering of the 1996 North Hertfordshire Local Plan, which called the area now known as Great Ashby south of the pylon lines 'North East Stevenage 1' (NES1) and north of the pylon lines 'North East Stevenage 2' (NES2).
- 3.1.3 A full planning application was submitted in 2023 for residential development of 292 dwellings with associated works on the site (reference 23/02492/FP). At present, this application remains undetermined.
- 3.1.4 North Hertfordshire Council has digital records of planning applications dating back to approximately 1995. Table 1 below provides a summary of further planning applications relevant to the Site.

Table 1: Relevant Planning History

Planning Reference	Application Description	Outcome
22/03016/SO	Screening Opinion for the proposed housing development of 330 units	EIA not required
16/01713/1	Hybrid (part outline, part full) application for residential development of up to 360 dwellings (including 40% affordable housing). Provision of open space and landscaping, transport and pedestrian infrastructure and ancillary facilities. Phase 1: full application for 108 dwellings. Subsequent phases: outline application - all matters reserved except for access. (As amended by plans and supporting documents received 28th and 31st July 2017)	Withdrawn
16/00185/1SO	Screening Opinion: Proposed residential development of up to 360 dwellings with associated ancillary open space and infrastructure	Decision not required
10/00583/1	Residential development of up to 360 dwellings (including 35% affordable housing). Provision of open space and landscaping, transport and pedestrian infrastructure and ancillary facilities (Outline application: All matters reserved apart from means of access [except Phase 1 - see below]). Provision of vehicular access off Haybluff Drive and Church Lane. Phase 1 development of 67 dwellings as follows: 15 no. two bedroom dwellings (of which 11 as affordable housing); 34 no. three bedroom dwellings (of which 8 as affordable); 16 no. four bedroom dwellings	Withdrawn

	(of which 2 as affordable) (Matters of landscaping reserved for Phase 1 only).	
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3.2 Pre-Application Process

- 3.2.1 Following the comments received regarding the current planning application 23/02492/FP, it was agreed with officers of North Hertfordshire District Council to run a set of workshops to inform the preparation and submission of a new application at the site. The workshops were also in dispersed with other meetings to discuss various other matters to inform a revised scheme. The purpose of this process was to overcome objections received during the consultation period of the submitted application.
- 3.2.2 The following table sets out the meetings undertaken with officers to discuss and progress a new layout for the site. These meetings included officers from a variety of technical disciplines and also highway officers from Hertfordshire County Council.

Table 2: Summary of Pre-Application Meetings

Workshop Details	Comments
Inception Meeting 21 May 2024	Presentation of a Briefing Note and discussion of the site, its constraints and opportunities and setting targets for the upcoming workshop programme.
Croudace Presentation 4 June 2024	Croudace undertook a presentation of the site and then a Question-and-Answer session took place to fully understand the site and its potential.
Workshop 1 26 June 2024	Discussion points included the vision and parameters constraints and opportunities and contextual analysis. Key conversations took place regarding the relationship with the Ancient Woodland, active travel opportunities and Back Lane
Workshop 2 10 July 2024	Croudace produced initial ideas, forming a basis for discussions on highways and active travel routes and identifying destinations, ecology and blue/green infrastructure, block analysis for the site, and commencing discussions on energy and sustainability.
Highways Meeting 19 July 2024	Initial discussion with officers regarding off-site mitigation and the preferred bus diversion route.
Workshop 3 24 July 2024	The workshop was split into 2 sessions, with the first focused on the development blocks and the scale of development. This also included discussion on access routes and the relationship with the surrounding countryside. The second session focused on green spaces, housing mix and updates on highway matters.
Energy and Sustainability 30 July 2024	A focused session to discuss the draft Sustainability SPD and its targets for future residential development.
Workshop 4 11 September 2024	Croudace presented an up to date layout plan taking into account findings from the previous sessions. The session was beginning to look in detail at the scheme with particular reference to the linear play area, amenity space around apartment blocks, confirming preferred active travel routes, affordable housing locations, and parking provision and dimensions



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2 October 2024 Planning Obligations	A focused sessions covering matters that may form part of a future section 106 Agreement, including biodiversity net gain, maintenance and management of open spaces, off-site highway works and infrastructure contributions.
17 October 2024 Workshop 5	A session for feedback from the evolving layout plan, including comments on urban design, affordable housing, green spaces, highway works and sustainability.
6 November 2024 Workshop 6	Final feedback on design and layout following receipt of additional drawings.

- 3.2.3 The new application is therefore the result of this inclusive process, ensuring a layout that all parties are in general agreement is appropriate for the site.



4 Description of Proposed Development

4.1 Application Description

4.1.1 The proposed development seeks full planning permission for the following uses:

- Construction of 281 dwellings (use class C3), including 112 affordable dwellings representing 40% of total dwellings;
- Internal site layout to include pedestrian and vehicular routes, with policy compliant residential parking;
- Separate access to be provided off Haybluff Drive (east) and Back Lane (south) and improved pedestrian links to existing external routes (including Public Rights of Way);
- Provision of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and other associated infrastructure including swales and mitigation basins; and
- Associated open space, including a linear park introducing 'play-on-the-way', and associated landscaping.

4.2 Residential Development for 281 Dwellings

- 4.2.1 The residential element of the planning application comprises 281 new homes. The design and layout of the dwellings is provided within the accompanying drawing pack, informed by the pre-application process undertaken. The finalised residential layout together with all other uses including necessary drainage provision can be accommodated within the defined development parameters.
- 4.2.2 The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application provides greater detail on the further design evolution of proposals which the scheme has gone through accounting for site specific constraints and the need to respect the local landscape and character.
- 4.2.3 40% affordable housing (112 units) will be provided on Site. The tenure split for affordable rent and shared ownership has been informed by the Local Plan policy and discussion with officers through the pre-application procedure, and is outlined later in this statement.

4.3 Open Space and Green Infrastructure

- 4.3.1 The open space provision has evolved through the pre-application procedure to now include a play-on-the-way feature within a central linear park. This encourages activity from residents, visitors, pedestrians and cyclists. A large open area is created around the drainage basins, with a network of pedestrian and cycle routes provided.
- 4.3.2 The proposal includes a number of tree-lined streets, including green connections to the surrounding woodland. This creates green corridors through the site aimed at existing destinations.
- 4.3.3 The proposal requires a foul water pumping station, located towards the western part of the site. This is surrounded by hedgerows and tree planting to screen from public views within the site.
- 4.3.4 Existing trees and hedgerows will be retained as far as possible. Removal will be limited to the creation of the new access points.



4.4 Vehicular, Cycle and Pedestrian Access

- 4.4.1 The proposal includes two points of vehicular access, from Haybluff Drive in the east and Back Lane to the south. Unlike previously, these access points will not be directly linked. An emergency access will be available for emergency vehicles only.
- 4.4.2 The existing Back Lane will be stopped up for motor vehicle traffic. It will be narrowed to allow a 2m tarmac strip with a 1m verge for horse use, and will also cater for pedestrian and cycle use.
- 4.4.3 Pedestrian access is proposed linking to the North Hertfordshire Way along the northern boundary. Access is also created onto the 'old' Back Lane to the east. In the southeast corner, a more formal cycle and pedestrian connection is proposed to link with Botany Bay Lane, a key route to local services. Further pedestrian/cycle access is available to the south, opposite Orwell Avenue.
- 4.4.4 Vehicular parking has been provided in line with Policy T2 & Appendix 4 of the Local Plan. Required visitor parking spaces are distributed around the site.
- 4.4.5 Regarding cycle storage, each dwelling will have the opportunity to provide safe storage space for cycles within their garden areas. If considered appropriate, the requirement for a shed for those dwellings without a garage can be secured through an appropriately worded condition. The apartment blocks include designated cycle stores for the future occupiers.



5 Planning Policy Review

5.1 Policy Status

- 5.1.1 This section sets out the relevant planning policies applicable to the submitted proposal. It then assesses other material considerations including the relevant policies within the Local Plan and national planning policy. For the purposes of this application the development plan and material considerations are listed below:

Development Plan

- North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031
- Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan adopted in 2007 (HCC)
- Hertfordshire Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document, 2012 (HCC)
- Hertfordshire Waste Site Allocations Document, 2014 (HCC)

Material Considerations

- National Planning Policy Framework 2023 (NPPF)
 - Planning Practice Guidance
 - National Design Guide 2019
 - Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
- 5.1.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning Compulsory Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permissions must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In addition, the NPPF makes clear at paragraph 47 that decisions on applications should be made as quickly as possible and within statutory timescales unless agreed otherwise.
- 5.1.3 There is no Neighbourhood Plan area designation that covers the Roundwood Site.

5.2 The Development Plan

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031

- 5.2.1 The North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (NHLP) was adopted on 8 November 2022 and replaced the saved policies of the District Plan Second Review with Alterations (1996). The new Local Plan sets out how and where new homes, jobs and infrastructure will be delivered in the district.
- 5.2.2 Policy SP1: *Sustainable development in North Hertfordshire* outlines that the Plan will support the principles of sustainable development within North Hertfordshire.
- 5.2.3 Policy SP2: *Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Distribution* states that approximately 80% housing development will be located within the adjusted settlement boundaries of certain towns within North Hertfordshire, including Stevenage (including Great Ashby). For the areas of North Hertfordshire adjoining the Stevenage urban area, the number of planned, permitted and completed developments for the period 2011-2031 is 1,705. The background to the policy supports the focusing of growth to the allocation development sites within the plan. The plan also acknowledges, for Great Ashby, that whilst the main part of Stevenage is located outside



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North Hertfordshire's administrative area, the urban area already lies partially within the district.

- 5.2.4 Policy SP6: *Sustainable Transport* aims to promote the use of sustainable transport modes in line with the NHDC Transport Strategy and provisions of the Local Transport Plan. The policy encourages sites to implement sustainable travel infrastructure in order to influence the behaviour of occupiers or users, along with supporting Travel Plans in order that sustainable travel patterns become embedded at an early stage.
- 5.2.5 Policy SP7: *Infrastructure Requirements* seeks the provision of infrastructure or financial contributions to accommodate the additional demands outside of the site that will come as a result of development.
- 5.2.6 Policy SP8: *Housing* states that housing growth will be supported across the district over the plan period and that the Council aim to release sufficient land to deliver at least 11,600 net new homes including 600 homes on the Strategic Housing Site North-east of Great Ashby in Weston parish (Policy GA2) which is directly relevant to the application site. The policy also aims to provide: an average of 33% affordable provision over the plan period (scaling from 25% up to 40%, see Policy HS2), broadly split between smaller and larger properties subject to housing needs and provide a further 56 plots on specified Strategic Housing Sites to address demand for self-build development over the plan period.
- 5.2.7 Policy SP9: *Design and Sustainability* sets out the expectations for the Strategic Housing Sites regarding design and the need for comprehensive masterplanning. Section 6 below discusses how the masterplanning policies have been applied to the site, and the accompanying Design and Access Statement gives more detail on how the design policies outlined in Policy SP9(C) have informed the design of the proposed development.
- 5.2.8 Policy SP10: *Healthy Communities* aims to provide and maintain healthy and inclusive communities for residents. The policy seeks to encourage developers to protect, enhance and create new physical and green infrastructure to foster healthy lifestyles.
- 5.2.9 Policy SP12: *Green infrastructure, biodiversity and landscape* aims to ensure that whilst significant growth is being accommodated during the plan period, the natural environment is also being protected and enhanced. The development meets this policy as the existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands will have a 12-metre buffer to ensure habitat protection. Furthermore, the development will include new tree and hedgerow planting.
- 5.2.10 Policy SP13: *Historic environment* seeks to ensure proper protection and enhancement of the historic environment, balanced with the need for growth within the District. In line with the national stance, the policy states that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight will be given to the asset's conservation and the management of its setting.
- 5.2.11 Policy T1: *Assessment of transport matters* states permission will be granted where development would not lead to highway safety problems or cause unacceptable risks to the highway network. The policy seeks major development to demonstrate how the site is served by public transport, safe direct and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists, and a comprehensive integration into the existing pedestrian and cycle, public transport and road networks.
- 5.2.12 Policy T2: *Parking* sets out the parking standards for development.
- 5.2.13 Policy HS1: *Local Housing Allocations* sets out the method within the Local Plan of allocating smaller scale residential sites across the District's numerous parish areas. The policy states that planning permission for residential development and associated infrastructure on these sites will be granted provided that:
- a. Development broadly accords with the indicative number of homes shown;



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- 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.
- 5.2.14 Policy HS2: *Affordable housing* sets out that sites of 25 or more dwellings are required to provide 40% affordable housing. The size, type and tenure should be in accordance with the needs of the area, delivered on-site unless robustly justified and genuinely affordable to local people where rents or prices are linked to open-market values.
- 5.2.15 Policy HS3: *Housing mix* seeks to ensure that development provides an appropriate range of house types and sizes by considering the council's latest SHMA, the location and accessibility of the site and recent completions and existing permissions and sites in the five-year supply. In design and layout terms, the policy requires that schemes provide a density, scale, and character of development appropriate to its location and surroundings.
- 5.2.16 Policy HS5: *Accessible and adaptable housing* states that major residential development sites must demonstrate that at least 50% of homes can be built to the M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable standard and on schemes where 10 or more affordable units are delivered, 10% of these can be built to the M4(3) wheelchair standard.
- 5.2.17 Policy D1: *Sustainable Design* sets out the key design principles of the Local Plan. These are covered in greater detail within the Design and Access statement and include elements of public realm, SuDS, energy consumption, accessibility and visual impact.
- 5.2.18 Policy D3: *Protecting Living Conditions* seeks to grant permission for developments that do not cause unacceptable harm to living conditions. Appropriate mitigation measures will be considered.
- 5.2.19 Policy D4: *Air Quality* requires proposals to give due consideration to the potential or actual impact on local air quality, both during demolition/construction phase and a result of its final occupation.
- 5.2.20 Policy NE2: *Landscape* focuses mainly on the impact of schemes on the District's Landscape Character Areas. However, the policy sets out some key principles of landscaping management and maintenance and avoidance of harm to the character and appearance of a site's surrounding area.
- 5.2.21 Policy NE4: *Biodiversity and geological sites* requires all development to deliver measurable net gains for biodiversity and geodiversity, contribute to ecological networks and the water environment, and/or restore degraded or isolated habitats where possible.
- 5.2.22 Policy NE7: *Flood risk* seeks to ensure that new development addresses water management, quality and flood risk. Site specific flood risk assessments will be required to be submitted in support of development of this scale. This is closely linked to Policy NE8: *Sustainable Drainage* Systems (SuDS) which requires all development to include sustainable surface water drainage systems. These are addressed as part of the FRA and the proposed surface water drainage scheme incorporates SuDs.
- 5.2.23 Policy NE11: *Contaminated Land* requires proposals that may affect contaminated land to submit a risk assessment or study as part of any application.
- 5.2.24 Policy HE1: *Designated heritage assets* requires planning applications relating to Designated heritage Assets or their setting to be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment/Justification Statement. The policy requires that developments lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset where this harm is outweighed by the public benefits of the development.



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- 5.2.25 Policy HE3: *Non-Designated Heritage Assets* states that proposals that would result in harm to or the loss of a non-designated heritage asset will only be granted provided a balanced judgement has been made.
- 5.2.26 Policy HE4: *Archaeology* seeks developments to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where justified, an archaeological field evaluation.
- 5.2.27 Section 4 of the Local Plan is divided into the individual communities within the District, outlining the service provision, settlement characteristics and any strategic housing allocations that have been designated within the community area. The plan acknowledges that Great Ashby is a relatively new parish, representing the residential area adjoining Stevenage that has been substantially completed since the turn of the century. For the purposes of the Local Plan settlement hierarchy, it is considered to be part of a town.
- 5.2.28 Two sites are allocated in and around Great Ashby for an estimated 930 new homes. There have been no new homes built or granted planning permission within Great Ashby since 2011.
- 5.2.29 GA1: Land at Roundwood specifies the allocation details of this site, allocated for 330 homes. The site is allocated as a Local Housing Allocation with site specific policy criteria, as opposed to being encompassed by those policies affecting the District's Strategic Housing Sites. The allocation criteria are set out in chapter 6 below.

5.3 Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

- 5.3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was first published in March 2012 and the latest update was in December 2024. It sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.
- 5.3.2 The NPPF (paragraph 7-8) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, meeting the three overarching objectives (economic, social and environmental) in a mutually supportive way. The application proposals have been formulated and evolved with this objective, of promoting the most effective use of the Site to achieve a development that promotes healthy and sustainable life choices.
- 5.3.3 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 10), which relates to both plan-making and decision-taking within the context of town planning (paragraph 11). With specific reference to decision-taking (the determination of planning applications), the presumption in favour of sustainable development means "approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date plan without delay". Paragraph 11 adds that where policies are considered out-of-date, permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing a development, or where any adverse impact would 'significantly or demonstrably outweigh the benefits' when assessed against the Framework as a whole.
- 5.3.4 Likewise, Chapter 4 of the NPPF deals with decision-making, stating that local planning authorities should (paragraph 39):
- “...approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way”
- “... work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area”
- And
- “...seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.”



Planning Practice Guidance

- 5.3.5 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) on specific topics is also published by the Government. It is to be read in conjunction with national policy contained within the NPPF.
- 5.3.6 PPG on Design (updated October 2019) advises whilst design is only part of the planning process it can affect a range of economic, social and environmental objectives beyond the requirement for good design in its own right. The PPG was updated alongside the National Design Guide (NDG) released at the same time.
- 5.3.7 Paragraph 001 outlines the 10 characteristics of good design. Matters of design are addressed more comprehensively in the accompanying Design and Access Statement. This provides a clear rationale on the design considerations, including those listed above. Careful consideration has been given to the character of the Site and the wider landscape setting, and how the design has responded through the location of development and landscape interventions.

National Design Guide (2019)

- 5.3.8 The NPPF is clear that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. The National Design Guide illustrates how well-designed places that are beautiful, enduring and successful can be achieved in practice. It forms part of the Government's collection of planning practice guidance. The DAS associated with this application provides a detailed response setting out how the proposals will deliver high-quality design.

5.4 Housing Need

- 5.4.1 The proposed development at Roundwood is allocated within the Local Plan and sits on the Council's housing trajectory through the existing plan period. The allocation within the Plan is for circa 330 dwellings.
- 5.4.2 In order to provide appropriate levels of open space and land to allow for a full 10% biodiversity net gain on site, the proposal seeks 281 dwellings. This will assist the Council in achieving their target of housing delivery within the Local Plan period.

6 Planning Balance

6.1 Planning Consideration

- 6.1.1 Paragraph 60 of the NPPF sets out that to support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

6.2 Principle of Development

- 6.2.1 The site remains allocated for residential development through policy GA1 of the adopted North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-31. The allocation seeks an estimated 330 dwellings on the site, and no planning permission has been achieved at this stage.
- 6.2.2 This planning application is a resubmission following the comments received in respect of application 23/02492/FP. It follows the PPA process undertaken with officers at North Hertfordshire District Council and Hertfordshire County Council which has included a full strategy in preparing an application to overcome those comments, as described in chapter 3 above.
- 6.2.3 With regards to policy GA1 itself, it sets out a number of site-specific policy criteria that development must seek to adhere to. These requirements are set out in the table below, alongside an updated compliance response relating to the revised development:

Allocation Principle	Development Compliance
Detailed drainage strategy identifying water infrastructure required and mechanism(s) for delivery	A detailed drainage strategy, including updated technical specification of the provision and delivery of SUDS, surface water and foul water drainage at the site supports this application. The basins and swales will form part of the landscaping of the site.
Sensitive integration into existing settlement in terms of development layout and building orientation	The proposal continues to respect existing boundary planting, with minimal disruption in order to retain the green edge. Significant levels of planting are proposed throughout the site.
Principal vehicular access taken from existing residential streets within Great Ashby	The access into the site has been realigned. Two access points remain from Haybluff Drive (east) and Back Lane (south), but there is no connection between them except for an emergency access point. The Transport Assessment sets out the justification for this new layout.
Provision for sustainable modes of transport having regard to the Stevenage Mobility Strategy	The development will have connections to the existing pedestrian and cycle network. Internally, travel corridors seek to shorten journeys into and out of the site where possible. Space will be reserved within the site for Beryl Bikes. Contributions towards an efficient service, or a rerouting of the bus service will also be incorporated.
Transport Assessment to identify and secure measures to manage traffic flows	An updated Transport Assessment accompanies the application and assesses the new access arrangement and layout plan,

arising from the development along Back Lane	including the Haybluff Drive and Back Lane access points, as well as any off-site impacts.
Contribution towards appropriate GP provision across the north of Stevenage sites	Whilst the NHS are yet to comment on extant application 23/02492/FP, it is expected that financial contributions towards GP provision will be secured via an appropriately worded legal agreement.
Maintain general integrity of Weston Road, including as a through route for pedestrians and cyclists	Back Lane will be in effect diverted through the site, with the existing course used as a pedestrian/cycle way and for equestrian use.
Retention and sensitive treatment of priority woodland habitats surrounding site to north and west	The woodland along the north and west boundaries will have a 12m or 15m buffer to ensure habitat and species protection. Protection of the existing Back Lane planting strip will also be in place.
Consider and mitigate against any adverse impacts upon adjacent local wildlife site at Parsonsgreen Wood	The preliminary ecology appraisal and report demonstrates how the scheme can be delivered with negligible impact on the LWS; furthermore, where necessary any mitigation measures recommended by the ecologist will be implemented.
Integration of Footpath Graveley 010 as a perimeter feature around the north of the site	The proposal will include direct links to this Footpath from the perimeter route within the proposed development site.
Sensitive design and landscaping around northern and western peripheries to minimise impacts upon wider landscape and heritage assets, including the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument at Chesfield Church.	The existing boundary planting will be retained and strengthened in parts. The necessary buffer will ensure the development does not impact on the setting of Chesfield Church or the proposed Chesfield Conservation Area.

6.3 Design and Layout

- 6.3.1 This planning application is 'full' in nature, ensuring that all detail is provided for consideration. The application therefore includes the proposed layout, as well as full details of all house types. The design evolution is set out within the accompanying Design and Access Statement. The application follows application 23/02492/FP, which at the time of writing remains undetermined. However, from the consultation responses received, there were clear concerns regarding the layout of the site. The extent of changes required were considered by the Council to be too great to be dealt with via amendments to that application.
- 6.3.2 As a result, the applicant agreed to undertake a series of workshops with the Council to create a new scheme that would overcome the previous concerns and inform a new planning application. The workshop programme undertaken is shown within chapter 3 above. The process took the opportunities and constraints plan and sort to redesign in effect from scratch.
- 6.3.3 There were two key areas where change was needed from the 2023 application layout. Firstly, the buffer from the boundaries was reviewed. The previous application included a 12m separation from the boundary planting to the north and west boundaries. However, it was identified that parts of the woodland at Round Wood meet the definition of Ancient Woodland. A 15m buffer was therefore implemented along these trees as per national requirements. There are swales within the buffer zone, but these will be shallow and carefully dug to ensure no root damage to the trees.



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- 6.3.4 The second key area was the connection points. The previous application saw significant concerns regarding rat-running through the site towards the village of Weston at peak times. Rather than seek to revise the route through the scheme, this planning application seeks to include two separate access points which are unconnected, except via an emergency access only. Haybluff Drive in effect becomes an extended cul-de-sac, with pedestrian and cycle connections through to a new spine road linking Back Lane to the north and south. This is explained further below and within the accompanying Transport Assessment.
- 6.3.5 Through discussions with the Council, the proposed play provision now incorporates a play-on-the-way area that runs north to south through the southern part of the site. This runs through the heart of the site on a key route to Botany Bay Lane in the southeast corner, with the location a key driver in encouraging passing play. The equipment does also allow for longer periods of play when required by local residents.
- 6.3.6 The drainage basins remain at the southern part of the site, the lowest part of the site. These are divided up by road and active travel routes, which allow public access and walking/cycling routes around these areas. A pumping station is also proposed within the site.
- 6.3.7 Adopted policy SP9 highlights the key for good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development. The policy references the need to provide a Strategic Masterplan for the allocated sites over 100 dwellings. This application is a full planning application, and therefore it is not accompanied by an illustrative masterplan. However, the design evolution and the finalised layout plan are set out within the Design and Access Statement. For the bespoke circumstances of this application, the finalised layout plan represents the site masterplan in this instance.
- 6.3.8 Criteria c) of policy SP9 sets out the reasoning behind the requirement for Strategic Masterplans for the proposed allocated sites. The policy requirements of having a site masterplan are demonstrated through the Design and Access Statement and resultant Proposed Site Layout plan (PL-01 B), with the table below summarising how the masterplanning requirements of policy SP9 have been met:

Policy SP9 Criteria C	Design Response
Create buildings, spaces and streets which positively reflect and respond to the local landscape, townscape and historic character	The Design and Access Statement sets out how the design rationale for the proposals has further evolved in line with the Workshop process, and provides detail of the existing site context and the opportunities and constraints to inform the design.
Create integrated, accessible and sustainable transport systems with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of transport and effectively linking into the surrounding areas	A key driver in the revised site layout is the active travel routes in and around the site to encourage sustainable modes of transport.
Create integrated, accessible and sustainable transport systems with walking, cycling and public transport designed to be the most attractive forms of transport and effectively linking into the surrounding areas	The proposal comprises two primary tree-lined streets; one entering from Haybluff Drive and running east to west, and the diverted Back Lane running north to south. These are linked by a number of connecting routes enabling safe progress within and towards the edge of the site.
Plan for integrated and mixed-use communities with walkable locally accessible community, employment and retail facilities	The site is located within walking distance of existing facilities, notably at the Great Ashby neighbourhood centre on Whitehorse Lane, which is within 800m walk of the site, mostly along the traffic-free route of Botany Bay Lane, allowing for most of the site to be



	within a 15 minute walk of the facilities there.
Positively integrate with adjacent rural and urban communities and positively contribute to their character and the way the area functions, including addressing cumulative, cross boundary planning and infrastructure matters	The proposal seeks to respect the existing built form to the east and south of the site, whilst also respecting its countryside boundaries to the north and west. The entrance point into existing road infrastructure seeks to ensure direct access to facilities. The design rationale seeks has been informed by development in the vicinity, whilst introducing its own character areas within the road layout.
Create and accessible multi-functional green infrastructure network that provides: - a key structuring and functional place-making feature supporting healthy lifestyles, sport, play and recreation linking into the wider Green Infrastructure Network; and - a high-quality integrated network to support ecological connectivity, biodiversity net gain, climate adaptation and mitigation linking into the wider Ecological Network	The proposal includes a play-on-the-way facility that moves from the south to the centre of the site. It seeks to encourage movement around the development. It also connects to the open space proposed around the drainage basins at the south of the site. Buffers are retained around the edge of the site to protect existing woodland, with removal only taking place where robustly justified.
Ensure the effective use of sustainable urban drainage and sustainable water management	The development includes a sustainable urban drainage system throughout the site, with mitigation basins located to the southern part of the site, fed in part by a system of swales.
Ensure a hierarchy of linked, high quality and attractive public spaces and public realm that is safe, attractive and supports social interaction for all age groups	The public areas have been carefully designed to ensure they benefit from natural surveillance and promote social cohesion. Care has been taken in the layout design to ensure that all public areas are overlooked and/or lit to ensure they would be safely used.
Design to last with a clear stewardship, management and maintenance strategy	Croudace has commenced discussions regarding offering the landscape and open space areas to the Council for adoption. If that does not occur, a private management company will be set up to secure the long-term maintenance of such areas.

6.3.9 Criteria d) of policy SP9 sets out criteria to ensure that Strategic Masterplans are informed by a technical and design evidence base. These are set out below alongside a response as to how these criteria have influenced the planning application:

Policy SP9 Criteria D	Design Response
Site specific vision and place-making principles	The Vision for the site is set out within the Design and Access Statement, particularly through the character areas and strategies.

Masterplan setting out the quantum, scale, type, mix and distribution of land uses, housing and community facilities	The application is 'full' and therefore provides a fixed layout. The opportunities and constraints that inform the layout are set out within the Design and Access Statement.
Green Infrastructure Framework identifying the scale, distribution, type and design of green spaces, biodiversity net gain, strategic drainage and on and off-site linkages	The application seeks to place open space at its heart, with the main play-on-the-way central to the scheme, and other infrastructure spread across the site. The tree-lined streets create direct green connections across the site. The requisite buffers and identified planting provide biodiversity opportunities, as does the retention of permanent water in the mitigation basins.
Movement Framework setting out the key access points, strategic highways, street hierarchy and footways and cycleways (on and off site)	The proposed layout has informed the layout plan and highlights the connection points, which have resulted from discussions with both North Hertfordshire District and Hertfordshire County Councils.
Urban Design Framework and design principles identifying how the site responds to local character and context and key structuring elements and layout principles (including heights and densities)	The Design and Access Statement sets out the design rationale for the proposal, and sets out identified characters areas within the proposed development.
Sustainability & Energy Framework identifying site-wide and building scale opportunities for low and zero carbon	The proposal seeks to utilise renewable technologies and focusses on fabric first principles.
Illustrative Masterplan Layout	The proposal is a full application and therefore it provides a fixed layout. As such, there is no requirement within the application for an illustrative masterplan layout.
Infrastructure Delivery, Phasing & Management Strategy	The proposal will include infrastructure requirements that will be secured through a Section 106 agreement, which will provide the trigger points for provision. Draft Heads of Terms are set out in this Statement.

6.3.10 Criteria e) of policy SP9 encourages the submission of Strategic Masterplans for the Council's consideration and agreement before the submission of a planning application, but acknowledges that where applications had already been submitted (as is the case for Roundwood) the masterplan could be agreed as part of the planning permission. This planning application is therefore informed by the consultee responses to the previous planning application, as well as the workshops undertaken in consultation with the Council. The layout plan is therefore defined by the collaborative approach to design.

6.3.11 The policy references the potential cumulative impact of proposed allocations. Whilst Roundwood is in close proximity to allocations GA2 and NS1, no design impacts from Roundwood would impact upon those sites. This is due to its location and the existing boundary planting and built form that ensure it would not be read in context with the identified forthcoming sites. In terms of infrastructure requirements, the proposal is cognisant of these

adjacent sites (Croudace Homes will develop site NS1). Infrastructure cumulative impacts will be considered through the agreed Heads of Terms to be included within the Section 106 Agreement. The Local Plan process has already accessed the need for major infrastructure such as schools, health provision etc. Roundwood is expecting to contribute financially to these infrastructure requirements. Those sites are considered as committed sites within technical documents and therefore help to inform strategies at Roundwood.

- 6.3.12 The proposal therefore meets the aims and objectives of policy SP9 and the site specific requirements set out within policy GA1 of the adopted Local Plan.

6.4 Housing Need

- 6.4.1 Over the period 2011-2031, the District seeks to release sufficient land to deliver at least 11,600 net new homes for North Hertfordshire's own needs. Of these around 11,500 net new homes will be provided within that part of the District falling within the Stevenage Housing Market Area (HMA) while around 100 net new homes will be provided within that part of the District falling within the Luton HMA. The District also seeks to provide additional land within the Luton HMA for a further 1,950 net new homes as a contribution towards the unmet needs for housing arising from Luton with approximately 1,400 of these being delivered over the Plan Period to 2031.
- 6.4.2 These homes are to be delivered through the sites and allowances identified in the Local Plan that will support approximately 5,100 homes from completions and permissions achieved since 2011, 7,700 homes from six Strategic Housing Sites delivering approximately 5,560 of these by 2031 and 4,000 homes through local housing allocations that will provide homes on further sites within the adjusted settlement boundaries of the towns and villages.
- 6.4.3 The development would provide 281 market and affordable dwellings within Great Ashby settlement and therefore would contribute to the district's identified need within the 'local housing allocations' apportionment of the overall housing need across this and neighbouring district. The proposal allows for the delivery of housing early within the plan period and accords with the District's overarching housing delivery strategy and adopted Local Plan policies SP2 and SP8.

6.5 Affordable Housing

- 6.5.1 Policy HS2 of the adopted Local Plan seeks schemes of over 25 dwellings to provide 40% affordable housing. The proposal seeks to provide 112 affordable dwellings on site, which would be secured by Section 106 agreement.
- 6.5.2 The proposed affordable housing schedule is set out below:

Beds	Affordable Rent		Affordable Shared Ownership		Total
	Flat	House	Flat	House	
1	24		8	8	40
2	30	8	10	7	55
3		6		6	12
4+		5			5
Total	73		39		112

- 6.5.3 The tenure mix as proposed is set out on the above. The planning policy seeks a 65/35 percentage split between affordable rent and shared ownership properties. The proposal

seeks a 57/43 percentage split. The table below summarises how the affordable housing numbers relates to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2016:

Affordable Housing			
Bedrooms	Number	Roundwood %age	SHMA 2016 Target
1B	40	33%	17%
2B	55	45%	34%
3B	12	10%	41%
4B	5	4%	7.5%
Total	112		

- 6.5.4 The proposed affordable housing mix has been discussed with the Council's Housing Supply Officer through the pre-application workshops and is considered to be acceptable from the Council's perspective. The proposal does include a lower portion of 3 bedroom units, but there is strong need for 1 bedroom affordable units and the development would provide a suitable number.
- 6.5.5 The location of affordable units was also discussed with the Housing Supply Officer, who has confirmed the proposed layout is acceptable. Care has been taken to ensure appropriate distribution of affordable dwellings across the site, which given their design, will be tenure blind.
- 6.5.6 It is therefore considered that the application complies with relevant Local Plan policy HS2 in this regard.

6.6 Housing Mix

- 6.6.1 The Local Plan states that on most suburban and edge-of-settlement sites, applicants should therefore make an initial assumption of 60% larger (3+ bed) and 40% smaller (1 or 2 bed) homes to ensure an overall mix is achieved, more precise and area-specific mixes would be outlined within the SHMA 2016. The SHMA informed the housing mix policy within the recently adopted Local Plan.
- 6.6.2 The table below shows the market mix proposed within the application:

Market Housing			
Bedrooms	Number	Roundwood %age	SHMA 2016 Target
1B	8	5%	2%
2B	21	12%	12%
3B	95	56%	53%
4B	39	23%	25%
5B	6	4%	8%
Total	169		

- 6.6.3 The proposed development therefore is generally in line with the housing mix target set out within the SHMA. It therefore provides a mix of housing types across the development, to the benefit of future occupiers

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- 6.6.4 Policy HS4 of the Local Plan seeks specialist housing on sites of this scale, although no requirement is set out within policy GA1 itself. Criteria 1 of policy HS4 requires good access to local services and facilities. The site is set in a sustainable location given the active travel routes proposed to create such links to existing services and facilities. However, these links may not be as appropriate for C2 uses, and therefore no specific housing is provided within the development.
- 6.6.5 All dwellings on the proposed development would meet the National Described Space Standards. The proposal therefore meets the requirements of policies HS2 and HS3 of the adopted Local Plan.
- 6.6.6 The proposal will include all dwellings to meet M4(2) accessible and adaptable standards. 10% of the affordable dwellings will meet M4(3) wheelchair user standards, being 11 homes. These comprise 9 ground floor affordable apartments (two shared ownership, seven rented) and 2 houses (both rented), spread across the site. As such, the development meets the requirements set out within policy HS5 of the adopted Local Plan.

6.7 Open Space

- 6.7.1 The Council have a number of adopted policies in relation to provision of Open Space, these are built upon within the Open Space Review and Standards SPD. The SPD provides information on how calculation and requirements can be established by applicants and ensure adequate provision is introduced early in the design process. The draft local plan, in its early stages, had a prescriptive policy outlining these requirements, which was subsequently removed in place of two more generalised policies around provision, protection and maintenance.
- 6.7.2 The proposal is informed by the workshop discussion with officers ahead of the submission of this application. There were concerns regarding the offset requirements of a typical LEAP, which would have an impact on the quantum of development the site could provide. As such, the discussions led to a play-on-the-way system being an appropriate way forward. This presents as a series of interlinked play spaces where people can pass through and utilise whilst on a journey or as a more centralised space. The precise detail is set out within the landscape masterplan.
- 6.7.3 The development also includes significant open space around the edges of the site. This has been widened from 12m to 15m around the areas of woodland that show characteristics of an Ancient Woodland classification. Additional open space is proposed in the northwest corner of the site as the pathways link to the Public Footpath. Towards the southern boundary of the site, there is an area of mitigation basins, some of which will hold water permanently. This includes an area of timber boardwalk and a bridge, to creating a meeting and sitting point in this area.
- 6.7.4 Discussions continue regarding whether North Hertfordshire District Council will adopt the open spaces. If not, they will be maintained by a management company. The proposal does not include on-site sports provision or allotments given the lack of suitable space. It is proposed these will be secured through offsite financial contributions as set out within a Section 106 agreement.
- 6.7.5 The agreed play-on-the-way feature is an agreed strategy put forward as a result of the joined-up approach to the layout of the development. For a development of this nature, it is considered the best method of achieving the efficient use of the land. Finalised details of play equipment can be agreed through an appropriately worded condition.
- 6.7.6 Outdoor sport is proposed to be dealt with through an offsite financial contribution, which could potentially include a provision for allotments within Great Ashby parish.



6.8 Landscape Impact

- 6.8.1 This planning application is supported by a Landscape and Visual Appraisal. The landscape consultant has been involved through all workshop phases to ensure the development maximises the opportunities whilst being cognisant of the constraints of the site. The site is moderately enclosed by woodland, trees and hedgerows along all boundaries. This differs from the broader pattern of fields, lands and boundaries within the Green Belt designation to the north and west.
- 6.8.2 The landscape study at the site highlights that the site is visible in local views as part of the rural agricultural setting of the site. It is visually contained and enclosed. There is identified visual influence from adjacent areas of the settlement which reflects the local character.
- 6.8.3 A key landscape feature, also serving ecological requirements, is the 12m buffer around the site to comply with Policy NE4 (d) of the Local Plan. The proposal keeps a 12m boundary to the north and west boundaries, which widens to 15m adjacent to the Round Wood. This ensures development is set back from the adjacent Green Belt. The boundary towards Back Lane has been reduced to approximately 7m in length. Care will be taken to ensure the protection of the hedgerow during the construction phase
- 6.8.4 The proposed tree-lined primary streets will create a distinct character within the site, and promotes greenery within the site. The location of the open space seeks to meet on-site requirements for the benefit of future occupiers, whilst also reinforcing local character.
- 6.8.5 Overall, the landscape assessment recognises a slight to moderate adverse impact on the landscape given its current use as an agricultural field and the introduction of residential development within. This change in character would have been understood by the Council when allocating the site.
- 6.8.6 With regard to visual impacts, the landscape assessment recognises a moderate adverse impact from the proposed development. This acknowledges its visibility from Back Lane and the Hertfordshire Way. The upper floors of buildings will be visible from further vantage points around the site.
- 6.8.7 The proposal does seek to maximise those opportunities within the site to create a comprehensive green infrastructure and ensure a good landscape setting to the development. This includes the play-on-the-way feature and direct sightlines and green links to the edges of the scheme. The high quality design also minimises adverse landscape and visual effects.
- 6.8.8 As such, the proposal meets the aims and objectives of policy NE2 of the adopted Local Plan.

6.9 Sustainability

- 6.9.1 This planning application is accompanied by an Energy and Sustainability Statement, which seeks to demonstrate the sustainability of the design in line with national and local planning policy, including the recently adopted Sustainability SPD. The proposed development has followed a number of key sustainable themes within its design, and these include climate change mitigation and carbon reduction, climate change adaptation, community and economy, transport, sustainable design, waste minimisation and management, and landscaping and biodiversity.
- 6.9.2 The Statement confirms that fabric energy efficiency of the proposed dwellings has been designed to reduce heat demand and energy needs in line with policy requirements. This includes providing high levels of insulation and low air permeability, with consideration for thermal bridging junctions. The fabric specification exceeds the fabric standards of Part L 2021.
- 6.9.3 It adds that the proposed heating strategy adopts an electric-led approach. This includes the use of Air Source Heat Pumps and Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery to all houses



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which are anticipated to become a primary heating strategy in line with the Future Homes Standard, expected to be introduced by 2025.

- 6.9.4 In line with the Sustainability SPD, the Statement demonstrates how the proposal would align with the requirements of the SPD. The proposal is expected to reach 'Silver' target level for 'Optimising Passive Design & Fabric Performance' and 'Promoting Diversity'. All other themes would meet 'Bronze' level.
- 6.9.5 The proposed development also seeks to incorporate a small number of exemplar sustainable homes in the southwest corner of the development, labelled the Green Collection. These 18 units will not appear visually different, demonstrating that a traditional aesthetic can be delivered irrespective of their sustainability credentials. The dwellings would utilise timber frames, innovative external brick cladding, triple glazing, battery storage and Air Source Heat Pumps.
- 6.9.6 The proposal therefore is in accordance with policy D1 of the Local Plan, the Sustainability SPD and provides an exceedance of the standards set out in Part L of the National Building Regulations.

6.10 Transport

- 6.10.1 Matters relating to access formed a key part of the pre-application workshops undertaken, with Hertfordshire County Council contributing directly. The key change from the previous application therefore is the removal of connectivity between Back Lane and Haybluff Drive. This is in response to concerns regarding rat-running at peak times, where vehicles could utilise the route northwards to Weston and avoid Junction 8 of the A1M.
- 6.10.2 Haybluff Drive would extend into the site from the east. It would serve 185 dwellings, but the only connection from the extended Haybluff Drive to the diverted Back Lane running through the site would be for emergency vehicles only. The form of the emergency connection is an area of narrowed shared surface where a bollard will prevent vehicles passing. Pedestrians and cyclists will still be able to pass through, allowing sustainable connection through the site.
- 6.10.3 A portion of Back Lane will be closed to cars. The proposal seeks it to be diverted through the site in the form of a new spine road. This proposed road would enter the site in the northeast corner and rejoin the original Back Lane to the south, in a location west of the Calder Way junction. Cars would not be able to go beyond the Calder Way junction eastwards. 96 dwellings within the site would be accessed from the diverted Back Lane through the site.
- 6.10.4 The old Back Lane would then become a pedestrian/cycle route. The cross-section of the proposed realigned route is set out within the Landscape Sections Plan (Sheet 1). It shows the tarmac area will be reduced in width to 2m, with a 1m minimum grass verge provided to allow for usage by horse riders.
- 6.10.5 A key driver for the scheme is to promote sustainable modes of transport through the site and providing good connections to existing facilities to encourage longer sustainable journeys. A pedestrian/cycling connection to the site will come from Back Lane in the southeast corner of the site, using the existing pedestrian/cycle link known as Botany Bay Lane (itself a former road that was closed to traffic when Great Ashby was built). This then allows a connection through the existing link directly onto Mendip Way. Connections will also be made for pedestrians to access the Hertfordshire Way, which runs across the northern boundary of the site.
- 6.10.6 Internally, connections are provided between the spine road and the Haybluff Drive extension. This seeks to filter cyclists onto the quieter areas of the scheme and towards the play-on-the-way area. Direct links to the old Back Lane and Botany Bay Lane again seek to take cyclists and pedestrians away from the main spine road and onto appropriate facilities where road traffic is expected to be lower (or in the case of Back Lane, where there would be no vehicular traffic).



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- 6.10.7 The application is supported by a Transport Assessment. This document is informed by the workshops undertaken. It undertakes a review of junction capacities in the area and notes there are no highway reasons to preclude development of this allocated site.
- 6.10.8 Discussions have also taken place regarding bus access to the site. Croudace Homes are flexible as to how this would come forward. The preferred option is to divert the bus service along Mendip Way, with the creation of a bus stop in an appropriately agreed location. The bus would then turn back at the Haybluff Drive roundabout. Discussions will continue during the course of the application. The service may then be extended to serve site GA2 in the future.
- 6.10.9 It is acknowledged that to allow a safe route for buses, there will likely be a requirement for changes to the existing parking arrangement along Mendip Way. It is expected to be secured through a Section 106 legal agreement, with Traffic Regulation Orders and subsequent monitoring surveys to be used to implicate the necessary parking restrictions. Indicative proposals are set out within the accompanying Transport Assessment.
- 6.10.10 Space has also been allocated within the site for a future expansion of the Beryl Bike scheme currently operational in Stevenage. The scheme provides rental bikes that can be cycled across Stevenage to other collection points, thus promoting green travel. If the opportunity arises to extend the scheme, then a 'station' can be provided, where bikes are stored for use. This is expected at the northern end of the play-on-the-way facility, where Sheffield stands are shown on the landscape plan.
- 6.10.11 The application is supported by a Framework Travel Plan. This sets out the process for implementing an effective Travel Plan, including input from Croudace Homes and utilising their experience in the area. It seeks to achieve the overall goal of reducing the level of vehicular traffic generated by the development and to improve accessibility for active and sustainable modes of transport. This seeks to take advantage of the opportunities provided by the design and layout of the proposal and the connections to existing infrastructure.
- 6.10.12 The Travel Plan identifies those opportunities, particularly for walking and cycling, as well as understanding the existing public transport infrastructure in the vicinity. This supplements the main objectives of a targeted 20% reduction in the number of car trips forecast within the Transport Assessment.
- 6.10.13 The Travel Plan sets out the measures and initiatives to allow for an influence on modal choice. This includes the appointment of the Travel Plan coordinator, provision of a welcome pack to new residents including details of sustainable and active transport, issuing of travel vouchers to first residents, promotion of walking and cycling, and promotion of a local car-share scheme. These are set out within a full Action Plan.
- 6.10.14 The proposal therefore meets the aims and objectives of policies T1 and SP6 of the adopted Local Plan, and paragraph 111 of the NPPF 2023.

6.11 Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.11.1 The application is accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment, which seeks to assess the drainage potential of the site and its revised layout, and inform the appropriate surface water and foul water drainage strategies. The Flood Risk Assessment is set out in accordance with the guidelines set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Plan guidance. It identifies that the site lies within flood zone 1, the area least at risk of flooding. It adds that no significant sources of flood risk have been identified in the proximity of the site.
- 6.11.2 The Flood Risk Assessment also includes drainage plans for the proposed scheme. The surface water drainage strategy ensures appropriate levels of attenuation to ensure surface water can be controlled across the site as a whole. The full drainage plan is set out within Appendix G of the Flood Risk Assessment. It includes a network of swales, tree pits, rain gardens and some tanks, with mitigation basins located to the southern part of the site. Care



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will be taken to ensure the provision of swales adjacent to the Round Wood will not impact upon tree roots in the area.

- 6.11.3 In terms of foul water drainage, the proposal seeks to connect to the existing foul sewer network at Orwell Avenue to the south of the site. Details of the connection has been agreed with Thames Water. Whilst part of the site will be drained by gravity, a pumping station is included within the development and located towards the western part of the site.
- 6.11.4 The proposal therefore meets the requirements of adopted policies NE7 and NE8 of the adopted Local Plan, and guidelines set out within national planning policy.

6.12 Ecology

- 6.12.1 The application is accompanied by an Ecological Impact Assessment. The site is in agricultural use and is regularly farmed and ploughed. A desk study and walkover was undertaken to understand the on-site ecology and to understand what survey work was considered appropriate. Survey work was undertaken in relation to a number of species, such as bats and breeding birds. There has been no material change to the site since these surveys were undertaken.
- 6.12.2 Of note, trees within the site were considered to have a low potential to support roosting bats, although no individual bats were identified. There was however bat activity around the fringes of the site, with only limited activity in the field centre. The proposal therefore seeks to retain and supplement the existing boundary planting in order to retain the commuting routes. The development provides an opportunity to add bat boxes within the site to encourage habitation of the site following construction.
- 6.12.3 The report makes further recommendations with respect to other identified species and habitats. This includes adhering to sensitive working practices, provision of hedgehog hole sin fencing, addition of bird boxes around the site, and provision of suitable planting. These recommendations are set out in table 5.1 of the Ecological Impact Assessment.
- 6.12.4 The layout of the development has been informed by the need to provide a 10% biodiversity net gain on site. This requirement has assisted the creation of the green spaces, and the need for the 12m or 15m buffers around the site, whilst also making this a meaningful area to complement the existing habitats along the boundaries and the species within.
- 6.12.5 Utilising the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculation tool, the proposed development can demonstrate a total net biodiversity increase of 17.77% in habitat units and 14.27% in hedgerow units.
- 6.12.6 The proposal therefore meets the requirements of policy NE4 of the adopted Local Plan, and national requirements set out within the NPPF and the Environment Bill.

6.13 Noise

- 6.13.1 The application is supported by the Acoustics Assessment that also supported previous application 23/02492/FP. This was informed by survey work undertaken at the site, along with modelling predictions resulting from the proposed development. The Assessment concludes that the British Standard lower-criterion level will be satisfied at all garden locations without the need for mitigation. The changes to the layout are not considered to materially alter these findings.
- 6.13.2 Internally, mitigation measures are set out to ensure future occupiers of the dwellings would not be harmed by predicted noise. The modelling confirms that the scheme can be satisfied through appropriate thermal double glazing, with either direct airpath window mounted trickle vents, or acoustically attenuated trickle ventilators. The assessment also looks at impacts to existing properties along Mendip Way and Haybluff Drive. There would be 'Minor' and



'Moderate' short term impacts to these properties, although given the low baseline level, these would usually be mitigated through standard double glazing and trickle vents.

- 6.13.3 The findings of the Acoustics Assessment remain relevant and demonstrate that the development meets the aims and objectives of policy D3 of the adopted Local Plan.

6.14 Air Quality

- 6.14.1 The site is not located within a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). An Air Quality Assessment was undertaken to support the application 23/02492/FP and that document forms part of this resubmission. Given the reduction in housing numbers, the findings of the Assessment would lead to reduced levels of pollutants.
- 6.14.2 The Air Quality Assessment was carried out in accordance with Local Air Quality Management guidance and these indicate that the baseline figure for receptors adjacent to all roads have values below the current annual mean air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter 10. This is consistent with both North Hertfordshire District Council and Stevenage Borough Council air quality review and assessments.
- 6.14.3 When assessing the ambient concentrations of local traffic emissions, the percentage concentration of particulates relative to the Air Quality Assessment Level is calculated to be less than 1% for all roads. As such, the developments impact on local air quality will be negligible. With regards to dust soiling, the risk assessment indicates that with no mitigation, the earthworks and construction phase would present a 'Medium Risk', whereas the track-out phase would present a 'Low Risk'.
- 6.14.4 When considering the Assessment during the determination of application 23/02492/FP, the Council's Environmental Health Officer made no objection subject to a planning condition, the wording for which was not included within the response. The revised application and reduced quantum of development is therefore expected to lead to a similar conclusion.
- 6.14.5 In line with the findings of the supporting Air Quality Assessment, the proposal would meet the aims and objectives of policy D4 of the adopted Local Plan.

6.15 Heritage

- 6.15.1 This planning application is supported by the same Heritage Statement that supported application 23/02492/FP. The changes to the layout are not considered to materially impact the findings of the report. The revised scheme does remove three-storey properties from the western edge of development and widens the buffer to the trees to 15m in parts. As such, there is the potential for reducing any harm identified.
- 6.15.2 To recap, the Statement identifies heritage assets in the vicinity of the site that may be affected by the proposed development. Four assets are identified, those being the grade II Manor farmhouse, the grade II listed gates and wall to the farmhouse, the grade II listed ruins of the Church of St Etheldreda and the Chesfield Church Scheduled Monument (covering the area around the ruined church). The non-designated heritage asset of the Chesfield Park House wall has also been identified.
- 6.15.3 At the time the Heritage Statement was prepared, the Council was considering the possibility of designating a new Chesfield Conservation Area covering an area west of the site. In November 2024, the Council decided not to designate such a conservation area. In any event, the Heritage Statement confirms there would be no harm to this potential area if it were to be designated in the future.
- 6.15.4 The Heritage Statement has assessed the significance of those heritage assets and concludes that the development proposals are not considered to result in any harm to the significance of the identified heritage assets at Chesfield or their setting. The proposals meet the statutory

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and policy tests and are in accordance with the requirements set out in policies HE1, HE3 and GA1 of the adopted Local Plan.

- 6.15.5 The application is also accompanied by an Archaeological Trial Trenching report. Whilst this document is dated 2010, it summarises the agreed methodology for site investigation, and sets out the results of trial trenching which took place in August 2010. The trenches were positioned to investigate the site including a selection of anomalies identified within the geophysical survey. It is noted the majority of these anomalies proved not to be archaeological in origin.
- 6.15.6 The trenching uncovered some archaeological features. This included a gully dating to the late Bronze/early Iron Age, a pit and posthole dating to the early Iron Age, where the quantity of pottery suggested they are likely to be associated with small-scale settlement activity. Items from later period agriculture and land division, including several boundary/drainage ditches, were also identified.
- 6.15.7 The remains uncovered are considered to be regionally important due to their rarity and potential to contribute to the understanding of landscape development and settlement patterns during the last Bronze Age and early Iron Age. The post-medieval agrarian landscape remains are only considered to be of limited local interest.
- 6.15.8 Given the trenching work already undertaken, no additional investigation should be necessary. The proposed development is considered in line with policy HE4 of the adopted Local Plan.

6.16 Land Contamination

- 6.16.1 The planning application is accompanied by a Desk Study, Preliminary Site Investigation and Risk Assessment Report 2022 undertaken at the site. This contains an extensive review of the site and the potential contaminants within. Within the intervening period from its completion, the land continues in agricultural use and therefore the findings of the report are not expected to have changed in any material way.
- 6.16.2 The Council's Environmental Health Officer has already reviewed the report when considering planning application 23/02492/FP. The recommendations were considered acceptable and a planning condition proposed for a further Phase 2 report. There are no concerns about use of such a planning condition in relation to this application.
- 6.16.3 In line with the recommendations of the report, the proposal continues to meet the aims and objectives of policy NE11 of the adopted Local Plan

6.17 Section 106 Head of Terms and CIL

- 6.17.1 North Hertfordshire does not currently charge a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Council continue to use legal agreements to secure contributions from new development. In March 2021, the Council's Cabinet resolved not to pursue CIL at this time.
- 6.17.2 The below sets out the proposed Section 106 Heads of Terms expected for the development. These will be discussed and confirmed through the determination of this planning application:
- Affordable Housing: to be provided at 40% of total dwellings on-site. The proposal aims to achieve 65% affordable and social rented units (73 dwellings) with the remaining 35% to be other forms of affordable housing; in this case we proposed shared ownership (39 dwellings);
 - Healthcare: contribution to be made to existing healthcare provision in the area. Contribution rather than on-site provision proposed;
 - Highways: Strand 1 and strand 2 contributions in line with Hertfordshire County Council toolkit, contributions towards supporting new bus routing or other public transport



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accessibility improvements, and provision to allow for the Beryl Bike scheme to be extended into the site

- Public Open Space and its Management: to cover the provision of on-site public open space including the play-on-the-way provision and informal amenity space. The maintenance of this space is to be agreed, but will be either via adoption by the Council or maintenance by a management company;
- Community facilities and public realm: contributions towards community facilities in the locality, including sports contributions as requested by Sport England
- Education contributions: contributions towards improving education provision in Great Ashby and the wider area;
- Allotments: to contribute towards an off-site provision;
- Ecology: habitat management monitoring for 30 year period to secure long-term biodiversity net gain



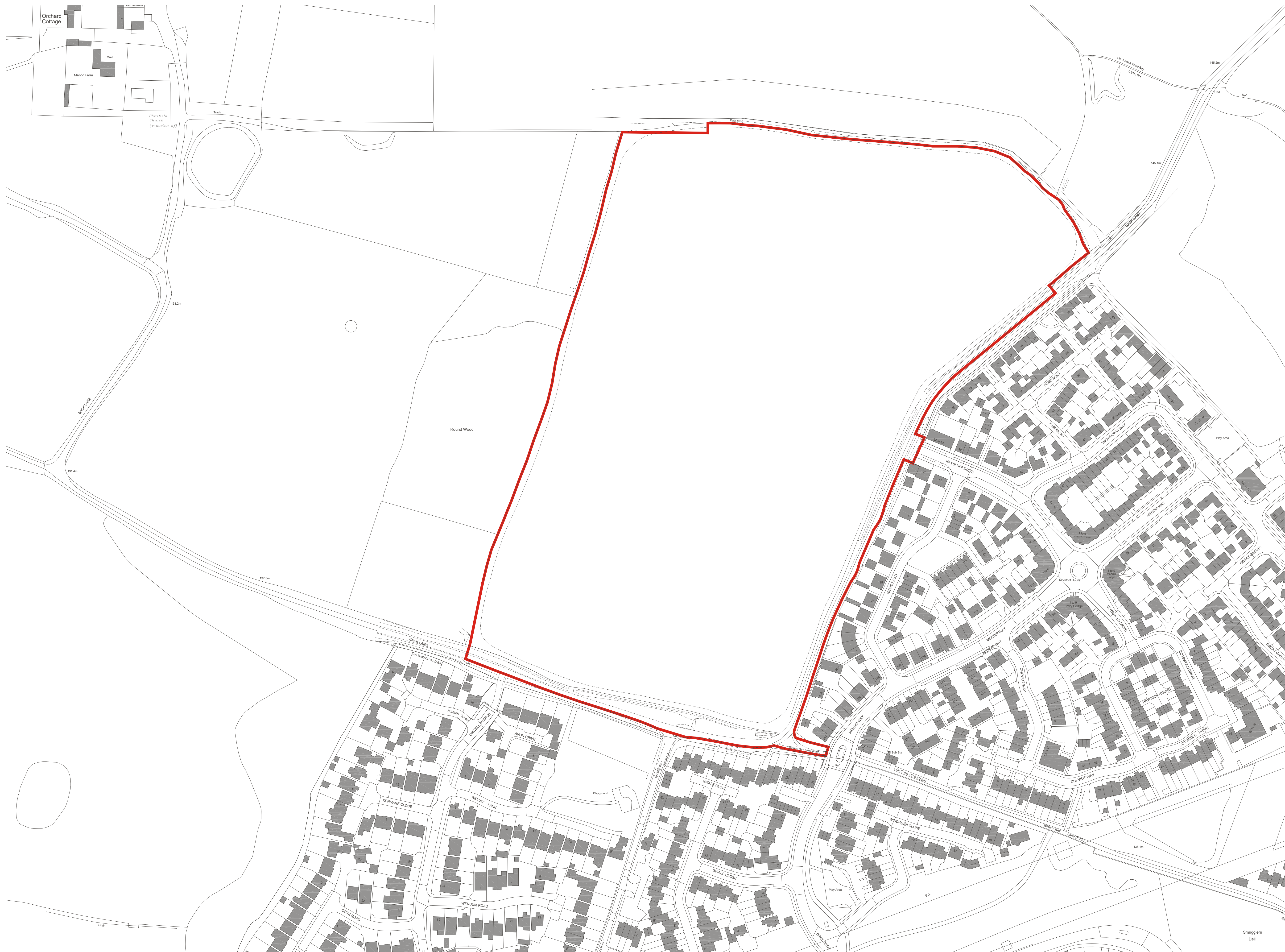
7 Conclusion

- 7.1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of the detailed planning application for the development of 281 dwellings on land known as 'Roundwood', situated off Haybluff Drive and Back Lane within Great Ashby. The site is allocated within the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 as site GA1.
- 7.1.2 This application follows a previous scheme on the site for 292 dwellings (reference 23/02492/FP) which remains undetermined. Following the consultation responses received when considering that application, the applicant, Croudace Homes, has undertaken a number of pre-application Workshops with officers at North Hertfordshire District Council and Hertfordshire County Council to redesign the layout to overcome those previous concerns.
- 7.1.3 The result of the workshop programme is a revised layout to the site, which can you provide 281 dwellings. This statement and the accompanying Design and Access Statement set out the changes. The key matters are the vehicle routes into and out of the site, and the separation from the potential Ancient Woodland at Round Wood. The scheme also introduces a central play-on-the-way facility, with other areas of open space spread around the site.
- 7.1.4 The proposal also seeks to promote sustainable modes of transport around the site and towards local services and facilities, as well as longer journeys towards Stevenage centre. This is achieved by the connection link to Botany Bay Lane, and internally, links allow for routes between the diverted spine road and the Haybluff Drive area. This reduces journeys times to areas such as the bus stops.
- 7.1.5 The proposal also includes 18 dwellings referred to as the Green Collection. These dwellings benefit from enhanced sustainability features, with further detail provided within the accompanying Design and Access Statement.
- 7.1.6 The application is supported by a suite of further technical documents. None of these documents identify any matters that would preclude development coming forward.
- 7.1.7 The Government is committed to delivering sustainable development. Local Authorities should adopt a positive approach to sustainable development, which will meet identified needs and which will not compromise the key sustainable development principles set out in the national planning policies.
- 7.1.8 Overall, the proposals comprise sustainable development that will provide significant benefits to the local and wider community. There are no adverse impacts or material planning reasons that 'significantly or demonstrably' outweigh the many benefits of the scheme.



Appendix A Site Location Plan





Appendix B Full List of Submitted Plans and Documentation



List of Submitted Documents

Planning Drawings

- DES-716-100 Rev O – Site Location Plan
- DES-716-101 Rev O – Site Layout Plan
- DES-716-102 Rev O – Tenure Locations Plan
- DES-716-103 Rev O - Housing Mix Plan
- DES-716-104 Rev O – Housing Typologies Plan
- DES-716-105 Rev O – Storey Heights Plan
- DES-716-106 Rev O – Elevation Materials Plan
- DES-716-107 Rev O – Roof Materials Plan
- DES-716-108 Rev O – Enclosures Plan
- DES-716-109 Rev O – Surface Materials Plan
- DES-716-110 Rev O – Parking Locations Plan
- DES-716-111 Rev O – Refuse Servicing Plan
- DES-716-112 Rev O – Services Plan
- DES-716-113 Rev O – The Green Collection Locations Plan

- DES-716-401 – Pattern Book

- DES 716-200 Rev O - House Type CEDAR Plans and Elevations - Plots 265 As 264 Handed
- DES 716-201 Rev O - House Type HAZEL Plans and Elevations - Plots 45-48
- DES 716-202 Rev O - House Type HAZEL Plans and Elevations - Plot 49
- DES 716-203 Rev O - House Type HAZEL Plans and Elevations - Plots 267-268
- DES 716-204 Rev O - House Type ROWAN Plans and Elevations - Plots 168-169 247-250
- DES 716-205 Rev O - House Type LAUREL Plans and Elevations - Plots 200-201
- DES 716-206 Rev O - House Type MAPLE Plans and Elevations - Plot 50
- DES 716-207 Rev O - House Type MAPLE Plans and Elevations - Plot 204
- DES 716-208 Rev O - House Type MAPLE Plans and Elevations - Plots 215 246 266 As 269 Handed
- DES 716-209 Rev O - House Type BEECH Plans and Elevations - Plot 263
- DES 716-210 Rev O - House Type ASPEN Plans - Plots 216-217
- DES 716-211 Rev O - House Type ASPEN Elevations - Plots 216-217
- DES 716-212 Rev O – House Type WILLOW (WCH) Plans and Elevations - Plots 202-203
- DES 716-213 Rev O – House Type HAWTHORN Plans - Plots 170-171
- DES 716-214 Rev O – House Type HAWTHORN Elevations - Plots 170-171
- DES 716-215 Rev O – House Type HAWTHORN and ASPEN Plans - Plots 218-219
- DES 716-216 Rev O – House Type HAWTHORN and ASPEN Elevations - Plots 218-219
- DES 716-217 Rev O – House Type BIRCH Plans and Elevations - Plots 115 As 87 Handed
- DES 716-218 Rev O – House Type BIRCH Plans and Elevations - Plots 143 As 108 Handed
- DES 716-219 Rev O – House Type BIRCH Plans and Elevations - Plots 86 As 116 Handed
- DES 716-220 Rev O – House Type BIRCH Plans and Elevations - Plots 213-214
- DES 716-221 Rev O – House Type ASTER Plans and Elevations - Plots 4 9 As 206 Handed
- DES 716-222 Rev O – House Type BILBERRY Plans and Elevations - Plots 205 As 260 277 Handed
- DES 716-223 Rev O – House Type ORCHID Plans - Plots 207 208 280

- DES 716-224 Rev O – House Type ORCHID Elevations - Plots 207 208 280
- DES 716-225 Rev O – House Type HEATHER Plans and Elevations - Plot 184
- DES 716-226 Rev O – House Type HEATHER Plans and Elevations - Plots 272 As 271 Handed
- DES 716-227 Rev O – House Type ROSE Plans and Elevations - Plots 276 As 259 273 275 Handed
- DES 716-228 Rev O – House Type ROSE Plans and Elevations - Plots 262 270 279 281
- DES 716-229 Rev O – House Type SORRELL Plans and Elevations - Plots 3 8
- DES 716-230 Rev O – House Type SORRELL Plans and Elevations - Plots 275 278
- DES 716-231 Rev O – House Type JAY Plans and Elevations - Plots 24-31 43-44
- DES 716-232 Rev O - House Type JAY Plans and Elevations - Plots 90-91 140-141
- DES 716-233 Rev O - House Type MERLIN Plans and Elevations - Plots 83 118 As 84 119 Handed
- DES 716-234 Rev O - House Type ROBIN Plans and Elevations - Plots 142 As 89 Handed
- DES 716-235 Rev O - House Type ROBIN Plans and Elevations - Plots 10 18 195 254 As 7 11 174 187 190 255 Handed
- DES 716-236 Rev O - House Type ROBIN Plans and Elevations - Plots 32 258 As 42 220 227 251 Handed
- DES 716-237 Rev O - House Type KITE Plans and Elevations - Plots 12 16 As 13 17 177 Handed
- DES 716-238 Rev O - House Type KITE Plans and Elevations - Plots 175-176 188-189 191-194 198-199 223-226
- DES 716-239 Rev O - House Type SISKIN Plans - Plots 172-173
- DES 716-240 Rev O - House Type SISKIN Elevations - Plots 172-173
- DES 716-241 Rev O - House Type SISKIN Plans and Elevations - Plot 261
- DES 716-242 Rev O – House Type SISKIN and MERLIN Plans - Plots 221-222 As 196-197 Handed
- DES 716-243 Rev O – House Type SISKIN and MERLIN Elevations - Plots 221-222 As 196-197 Handed
- DES 716-244 Rev O – House Type HERON Plans - Plots 34-41 103-106 145-148 179-182 210-211
- DES 716-245 Rev O – House Type HERON Elevations - Plots 34-41 103-106 145-148 179-182 210-211
- DES 716-246 Rev O – House Type RAVEN Plans and Elevations - Plots 63 92 149 183 212 As 19 102 109 139 178 209 Handed
- DES 716-247 Rev O – House Type RAVEN Plans and Elevations - Plots 82 As 120 Handed
- DES 716-248 Rev O – House Type OSPREY Plans - Plots 52-57
- DES 716-249 Rev O – House Type OSPREY Elevations - Plots 52-57
- DES 716-250 Rev O – House Type OSPREY Plans - Plots 185-186 252-253 256-257
- DES 716-251 Rev O – House Type OSPREY Elevations - Plots 185-186 252-253 256-257
- DES 716-252 Rev O – House Type HARRIER Plans - Plots 20-23 59-62 110-113
- DES 716-253 Rev O – House Type HARRIER Elevations - Plots 20-23 59-62 110-113
- DES 716-254 Rev O – House Type SWIFT Plans and Elevations - Plots 6 15 33 51 As 5 14 58 Handed
- DES 716-255 Rev O – House Type TAWNY Plans and Elevations - Plots 2 As 1 Handed
- DES 716-256 Rev O – House Type GOLDCREST Plans and Elevations - Plot 85
- DES 716-257 Rev O – House Type GOLDCREST Plans and Elevations - Plot 117
- DES 716-258 Rev O – House Type WAGTAIL Plans and Elevations - Plots 107 As 144 Handed
- DES 716-259 Rev O – House Type WAGTAIL Plans and Elevations - Plots 88 As 114 Handed
- DES 716-260 Rev O – Flat Block Type A and B Plans - Plots 64-81 93-101 121-138 150-158 228-245

- DES 716-261 Rev O – Flat Block Type A Elevations - Plots 64-81 150-158 228-245
- DES 716-262 Rev O – Flat Block Type B Elevations - Plots 93-101 121-138
- DES 716-263 Rev O – Flat Block Type C Plans - Plots 159-167
- DES 716-264 Rev O – Flat Block Type C Elevations - Plots 159-167
- DES 716-265 Rev O – Bins and Cycle Storage Plans and Elevations
- DES 716-266 Rev O – Carports Plans and Elevations Sheet 1
- DES 716-267 Rev O – Carports Plans and Elevations Sheet 2
- DES 716-268 Rev O – Garages Plans and Elevations Sheet 1
- DES 716-269 Rev O - Garages Plans and Elevations Sheet 2

- DES-127-300 Rev O – Street Scene – Sheet 1
- DES-127-301 Rev O - Street Scene – Sheet 2

Landscape Documents

- 10666 NPA XX XX DR L 3010 S4 P05 – Landscape GA Plan
- 10666 NPA XX XX DR L 4101 S04 P01 – Landscape Sections Sheet 1
- 10666 NPA XX XX DR L 4102 S04 P01 – Landscape Sections Sheet 2
- 10666 NPA XX XX DR L 4103 S04 P01 – Landscape Sections Sheet 3
- 10666 NPA XX XX DR L 7101 S4 P01 – Illustrative Landscape Details
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5101 – Planting Plan Sheet 1
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5102 – Planting Plan Sheet 2
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5103 – Planting Plan Sheet 3
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5104 – Planting Plan Sheet 4
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5105 – Planting Plan Sheet 5
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5106 – Planting Plan Sheet 6
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5107 – Planting Plan Sheet 7
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5108 – Planting Plan Sheet 8
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5109 – Planting Plan Sheet 9
- 10666-NPA-XX-XX-DR-L-S4-P01-5110 – Planting Plan Sheet 10
- Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

Technical Documents

- Acoustics Assessment
- Air Quality Assessment
- Archaeological Trial Trenching
- Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool
- Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments
- Botanical Survey of Round Wood
- Design and Access Statement (split into 8 parts)
- Desk Study, Preliminary Site Investigation & Risk Assessment Report (split into 8 parts)
- Ecological Impact Assessment
- Energy and Sustainability Statement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage Statement

- Planning Statement
- Transport Assessment (split into 8 parts)
- Travel Plan
- Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment in Accordance with BS 5837:2012
 - 11056-D-AIA Existing Site Plan
 - 11056-D2-AIA Proposed Site Plan