

Reserved Matters for Construction of Phase 2a Residential Dwellings (and the associated Partial Discharge of Conditions 7, 10, 11, 12) in respect of 18/01154/OP at Highover Farm, Hitchin, SG4 0RQ

Planning Statement for
Redrow

7th September 2026

Our Ref: SRS/503/55/1/Phase2aResRM



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Quality Assurance

This report has been prepared within the quality system operated at Rapleys LLP according to British Standard ISO 9001:2015.

We confirm that the undersigned is an appropriately qualified and experienced Chartered Surveyor/Planner [delete as appropriate] experienced in the commercial property sector.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared by Rapleys LLP in support of a reserved matters application (Condition 3) of 18/01154/OP at Highover Farm, Hitchin on behalf of Redrow ("the Applicant"). This is the third reserved matters application to be submitted, and the second involving the construction of dwellings and is herein 'the Phase 2a Residential RM Application'.

1.2 In addition, a number of conditions require a partial discharge where the information is required as part of each reserved matter application (condition 7 – detailed highway plans, condition 9 – lighting, condition 10 – waste management, condition 11 – landscape, condition 12 – sustainability strategy).

1.3 The Phase 2a Residential RM Application therefore seeks approval for the following –

'The construction of Phase 2a Residential comprising 157 dwellings, associated highway, drainage, servicing/utilities infrastructure, on plot landscaping in accordance with condition 3 of 18/01154/OP (and the associated partial discharge of conditions 7, 10, 11, 12).'

1.4 The Phase 2a Residential RM Application Site falls within the administrative area of North Hertfordshire District Council ("the Council") and its redline extent is shown on the Site Location Plan.

1.5 This Phase 2a Residential RM Application Site forms part of the wider Highover Farm development site which has outline planning permission (18/01154/OP), granted on 29th November 2024 for the following description of development:

'Outline application with all matters reserved other than access, comprising residential led development of up to 700 dwellings of use class C3, approximately 500sqm of neighbourhood-level facilities, a new 2 FE primary school, open space, play space, green infrastructure, and associated accesses (vehicular, pedestrian and cycle), including a new primary access off Stotfold Road with limited access off High Dane (as amended).'

STRUCTURE OF PLANNING, DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1.6 The Planning Statement explores the key planning issues and considerations relevant to the Phase 2a Residential RM Application Site's development and is structured by the following sections:

- Site, Surrounding Area and Planning History,
- Planning Policy,
- The Proposed Development,
- Planning Assessment, and
- Conclusions.

1.7 The Statement concludes that this Phase 2a Residential RM Application is in accordance with the general principles of the original outline permission, national planning policy, and the Council's adopted Development Plan, Hertfordshire County Council Highway Authority (HCCHA) standards and other adopted and relevant planning guidance and documentation.

1.8 In addition to this Planning Statement, the Phase 2a Residential RM Application comprises the following documents which provide the necessary information to describe, assess and determine the proposals (a full list can be found in the separate Application Documentation Schedule):

- Site Redline Boundary Location Plan,
- General Arrangement Layout,
- Refuse vehicle tracking,
- Fire Tracking,
- Road Construction Detail,
- Drainage detail,
- Lighting Detail (highway),
- Landscaping Plans and Tree Pit Details,
- Tree Survey,
- Phasing Strategy Plan for Phase 2,
- House types – various,
- Layout plans – various,

- Street scenes,
- Covering letter,
- Environmental Impact Assessment Technical Note,
- Sustainability Statement,
- Design Code Compliance Statement including Design Code Checklist.

- 1.9 The Planning Statement also includes a section on the affordable housing provision as part of this RM Application, cross referenced with the S106 Obligational requirements.
- 1.10 The outline planning application 18/001154/OP was accompanied by an Environmental Statement as it was determined to be Environmental Impact Assessment development under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011. Under The Regulations, a 'subsequent application' is *'an application for approval of a matter where the approval – (a) is required by or under a condition to which a planning permission is subject, and (b) must be obtained before all or part of the development permitted by the planning permission may be begun'*, and 'subsequent consent' is *'a consent granted pursuant to a subsequent application'*.
- 1.11 This Phase 2a Residential RM Application is a 'subsequent application'. A separate Environmental Impact Assessment Technical Note accompanies this Phase 2a Residential RM Application having been produced in accordance with Regulation 8 of the aforementioned 2011 Regulations.

2 SITE, SURROUNDINGS AND PLANNING HISTORY

SITE

- 2.1 The Phase 2a Residential RM Application Site is located to the west of Stotfold Road which heads north from the Cambridge Road roundabout on the north-eastern edge of Hitchin. It forms part of the wider Highover Farm development allocation and outline planning permission (18/001154/OP). It is owned by Barratt Redrow.
- 2.2 The redline for this Phase 2a Residential RM Application covers an area to the north of The Avenue and north of the phase 1 residential area sufficient to accommodate the 157 dwellings being applied for.
- 2.3 The Phase 2a Residential RM Application Site is currently greenfield farmland although it has not been actively farmed for circa the last three/four years.

SURROUNDINGS

- 2.4 The land immediately surrounding the Phase 2a Residential RM Application Site will be developed out in further phases of reserved matters for dwellings, open space and associated service and community infrastructure. Beyond the wider development site are existing residential estates to the south, the railway and industrial estates to the west and farmland designated as Green Belt to the east and the edge of Letchworth Garden City.

PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.5 The Highover Farm site was promoted through the review of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan for residential development from circa 2012. In November 2022 the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 was finally adopted, with the site confirmed as allocation HT1 Highover Farm for up to 700 dwellings, primary school and neighbourhood centre.
- 2.6 To support the principle of the allocation during the local plan examination process and show delivery intent, an outline planning permission was submitted in April 2018 for the development of the proposed allocation. Following years of discussion with the Council, Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority (HCCCHA) and Education Authority, stakeholders and local community, during which time various revisions were made, outline planning permission was eventually granted on 29th November 2024 (18/01154/OP).
- 2.7 As part of that outline planning permission, a Strategic Masterplan Framework Document was approved which identifies the broad design layout and principles of the development that subsequent reserved matters and a Design Code should follow. Specifically, condition 6 on the outline permission requires the submission of a Site Wide Design Code as part of or prior to the first reserved matters application – this was submitted as a separate discharge of condition application concurrently with the Infrastructure RM Application and was approved/discharged on 24th October 2025 (24/02906/DOC).
- 2.8 The Infrastructure RM was granted planning permission, subject to conditions, on 27th October 2025 under reference 24/02780/RM. This permission provides for the strategic highway (The Avenue) and drainage necessary to open up the site for the residential development.
- 2.9 This Phase 2a Residential RM Application is the second such submission for the residential dwellings within the overall wider development site. Phase 1 RM was granted approval on 4th May 2026 (25/02794/RM).

3 PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1 This Phase 2a Residential RM Application is assessed against national policy and the adopted planning policies of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan.

NATIONAL POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), August 2026

- 3.2 The NPPF is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which the document identifies as a 'golden thread' running through both plan-making and decision-taking.
- 3.3 Policies S3, S4 are concerned with the presumption and principles in favour of sustainable development. They advise that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should seek to approve development proposals that accord with an up-to-date Development Plan without delay, whilst also granting permission for proposals in instances where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies most important for determining the application are out of date, unless, inter alia, any adverse impact of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.
- 3.4 Paragraph 3 confirms that, in line with planning law, applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.5 Policy HO13 notes that to significantly boost the supply of homes, it is important that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 3.6 Chapter 7 of the NPPF emphasises that planning decisions should help to create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Therefore, in the determination of planning applications, significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into consideration both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 3.7 Chapter 14 is concerned with design and creating well designed places setting out key principles for well-designed places. Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive and establish and maintain a strong sense of place using arrangements of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.

LOCAL POLICY

Adopted Development Plan

- 3.8 At the local level, the relevant Development Plan for the Phase 2a Residential RM Application Site is the North Hertfordshire Local Plan, adopted in November 2022.
- 3.9 There are a number of policies that are relevant within the wider context of the wider development site and therefore of relevance to the Phase 2a Residential RM Application proposals. The position can be summarised as follows -
- 3.10 Policy T1 requires applicants to demonstrate how the proposed scheme provides for public transport, safe, direct routes for pedestrians and cyclists and integration with existing networks. T2 relates to parking strategy.
- 3.11 Policy D1 is concerned with sustainable design, including the incorporation of SuDS, maximising accessibility, legibility and connectivity internally and between neighbourhoods.
- 3.12 Policy H2 relates to provision of affordable housing at 40%; H3 to housing mix and H4 to accessible and adaptable housing.

Supplementary Guidance

- 3.13 At Cabinet on 29 June 2026, a District-wide Design Code SPD was adopted as supplementary planning guidance. On page 9 of this document, it makes it clear that where a site already has an approved Design Code as part of the planning application/permission process, then that takes precedence over the District-wide Code -
- *'where sites benefit from a masterplan and site-specific design code adopted or approved before June 2026, those documents will take precedence over the North Herts Design Code SPD in the determination of compliance and decision-making for the relevant site areas'.*

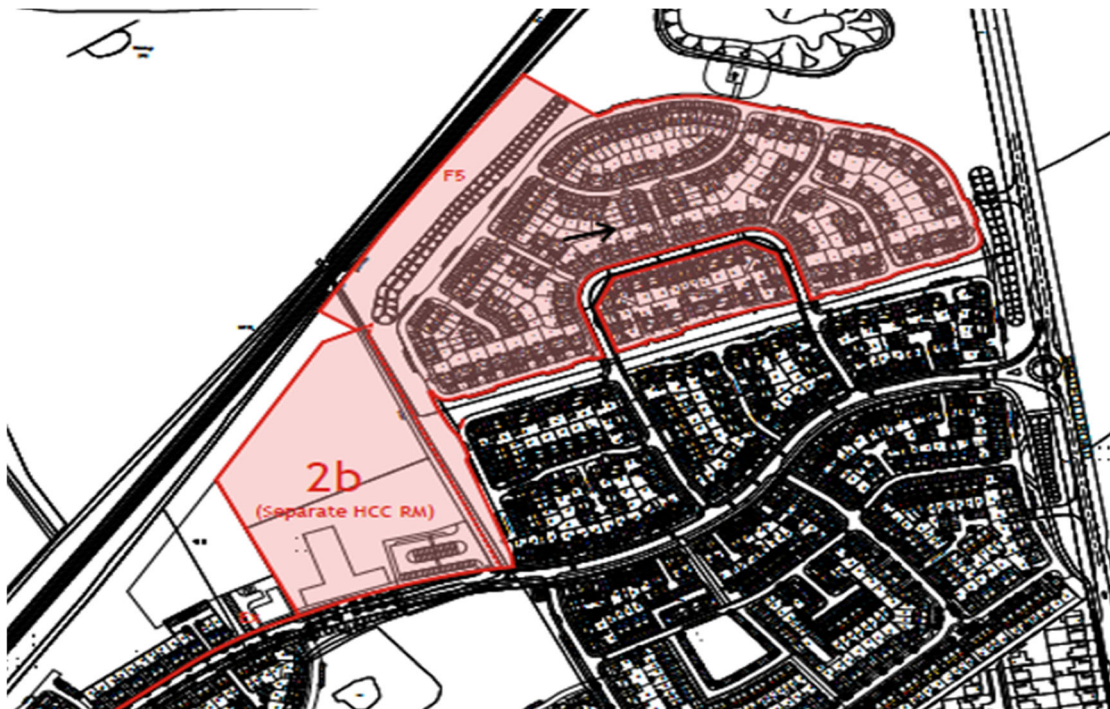
4 THE PHASE 2A RESIDENTIAL RM APPLICATION PROPOSAL

4.1 Condition 3 of 18/01154/OP requires the submission of reserved matters (in whole or in phases) prior to the commencement of built development, and Condition 1 requires the first reserved matters submission before the expiry of 3 years from the date of the outline permission.

4.2 In accordance with the above, this Phase 2a Residential RM Application seeks reserved matters approval for –

“The construction of Phase 2a Residential comprising 157 dwellings, associated highway, drainage, servicing/utilities infrastructure and on plot landscaping in accordance with condition 3 of 18/01154/OP (and the associated partial discharge of conditions 7, 10, 11, 12).”

4.3 The extent of this development is identified within the Redline Boundary Phase 2a Plan HIT100293-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-201-P02 This differs slightly to the approved Phasing Strategy discharged in October 2025 under 24/00076/DOC. Phase 2 is identified in that document as potentially having two sub phases, these being 2a as the residential element and adjacent Icknield Linear Park (north) and 2b as the primary school as per extract below.



4.4 However, for contractual reasons, what was Phase 2a/b in the Approved Phasing Strategy has now been split into Phase 2a the Redrow residential dwellings, Phase 2b Icknield Linear Park, Phase 2c the primary school. Phase 2b Icknield Linear Park is being submitted as a separate Reserved Matters at the same time/within a matter of weeks of the Phase 2a Residential RM submission. Everything else in relation to the approved Phasing Strategy currently remains the same. An updated Phasing Plan for Phase 2 has been provided as part of the Application documentation (HFHIT-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0534-D5-P4-Phase 2).

4.5 The discharge of associated conditions 7, 10, 11, 12 are discussed separately in Section 5 of this Statement.

Design, Layout and Materials

4.6 The design and layout of the dwellings reflects the principles set out in the Design Code (discharged under condition 6, ref: 24/02906/DOC). A separate Design Code Compliance Statement and a Checklist are also submitted as part of this application in accordance with condition 6, which provides a full explanation of compliance/non-compliance.

4.7 Some 157 dwellings are provided within this phase to the north of the phase 1 residential area on a Site area of circa 6.7ha. The dwellings are a mix of 1/2/3/4/5 bed houses as referenced on the Accommodation Schedule. Affordable housing is also identified and located in accordance with policy and S106 requirements (see Section 5 specifically dealing with this), amounting to 55, some 35%

provision being a mix of shared ownership and affordable rent. This has been designed to create an integrated and balanced community.

4.8 The overall dwelling mix for the phase is summarized as –

Dwelling Type	Market	Affordable
2 bed house	0	13
3 bed house	36	26
4 bed house	57	4
5 bed house	9	0
1 bed Maisonette	0	12
TOTAL	102	55

4.9 Building heights within Phase 2a are 2 storeys in accordance with the Design Code. They are mainly detached properties either with integral or separate on plot garaging and parking to the east and south of the parcel. Semi-detached and terraced properties are more prevalent along the Icknield Linear Park edge lane and on some linking streets. The building heights create a cohesive streetscape and ensure that the built form of this phase remains in keeping with its surrounding context on the edge of the expanded urban area.

4.10 One character area is presented within this Phase 2a – Hitchin Meadows, albeit it is acknowledged that fronting Dane Walk and Hitchin Meadows there are specific design requirements to be provided in accordance with the Code. For example, larger detached dwellings are found facing along Dane Walk creating an active and strong frontage and relationship with the open space. The street scene plans provided with the application detail the different characteristics applied to the design of this character area in accordance with the Design Code.

Access/Highways

4.11 Access into each parcel of residential dwellings is provided via secondary roads (residential streets in the Design Code) leading from The Avenue - these are standard T-junctions with The Avenue. Some informal streets also access directly from The Avenue. Lanes or tertiary streets link secondary streets and informal streets and edge lanes.

4.12 Parking is provided in accordance with the Design Code and shown on plan HIT100293-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0234-P01. Visitor parking is provided both within the parcel along internal streets and on the northern side of the edge lane adjacent to Icknield Linear Park and Hitchin Meadows – this parking enables easier access to the Meadows for the less abled as well as visitors.

4.13 Lighting, road signage and carriageway markings are all similarly in accordance with the required standards providing a safe and clear environment for all vehicle and non-vehicular users of the road.

Landscaping

4.14 Landscaping is in the form of street trees and grass verges. Footpath links are provided at convenient points linking the residential area to the surrounding open spaces and green infrastructure of Dane Walk to the south (Phase 1), Hitchin Meadows to the north (Phase 1), Icknield Linear Park to the west/north-west (Phase 2b) and Stotfold Linear Park to the east (Phase 1).

4.15 Incidental seating is provided as large timber logs; natural play on the way opportunities e.g. boulders / timber posts for stepping stones are also provided.

4.16 For the avoidance of doubt, a LEMP and an Open Space Management and Maintenance Plan (OSMMP) are being prepared which will cover both Icknield Linear Park (Phase 2b RM) and this Phase 2a Residential RM area and will be submitted separately under conditions 21 and 13 respectively.

5 AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCHEME

5.1 The S106 Agreement to the outline permission (18/01154/OP) requires, at clause 1.5 of Schedule 2 Part 1, an Affordable Housing Scheme to be submitted for approval in respect of a Phase and/or a Reserved Matters Application containing the following details:

- Number of affordable units in that phase/application,
- A breakdown of type, size, tenure mix in that phase/application,
- The location of each affordable unit in that phase/application,
- The number of M4(3) units within that phase/application including number of bedrooms and tenure.

5.2 Clause 1.1.1 of the aforementioned Schedule requires that 40% of each phase be affordable dwellings, but not less than 35% may be agreed with the Council where there is a demonstration of how the shortfall will be achieved on other phases. Clause 1.2 requires that in each phase at least 65% are to be social rented/affordable rented tenure and 35% intermediate tenure. Clause 1.4 requires the affordable units to be designed in accordance with National Space Standards.

5.3 Plan HIT100293-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0233-P01(Affordable Tenure Plan) identifies the location and tenure of the dwellings provided within this Phase 2a Residential Application. The total number provided is 55 which equates to 35%. These are as per requirements but are tenure neutral in terms of external design.

5.4 The percentage split between social/affordable rent and intermediate tenure is 64% to 36% respectively. It is considered that this very minor 1% divergence with the S106 split is acceptable – this phase is part of a wider site with three other residential phases, where the overall percentage is set to accord with the 65:35% split.

5.5 In terms of M4(3), the requirement is for 10% of affordable dwelling to be M4(3) – this application provides 6 as ground floor rented accommodation.

5.6 The table below details the affordable housing tenure, size, type –

	Size Sqft	RENT		INTERMEDIATE	
		No.	M4(3)	No.	M4(3)
2 bed house	868	4		9	
3 bed house	981	21		5	
4 bed house	1077	0		4	
1 bed maisonette	576/696	5	5	1	1
TOTAL		30	5	19	1

5.7 Due to the nature and location of this phase of The development, i.e. to the north of the Site bordering the main extent of open space, a looser knit, traditional two storey house type has been deployed. It is not a location for apartment buildings which would generally contain 1 or 2 bedrooms – these dwelling size types are provided as maisonettes/2 bed houses, where 1 bed maisonettes are provided at ground and first floor level, designed to fit in with the street scene and look like houses.

6 DISCHARGE OF CONDITIONS

PARTIAL DISCHARGE

Condition 7 – Detailed Highways Plans

6.1 Condition 7 requires –

'All reserved matters applications for each development parcel or sub-phase shall include full details in relation to the design of estate roads (in the form of scaled plans and / or written specifications) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority to detail the following:

- a. Roads;*
- b. Footways;*
- c. New pedestrian and cycle accesses into the site;*
- d. Cycleways (compliant with LTN 1/20);*
- e. External public lighting;*
- f. Minor artefacts, structures and functional services;*
- g. Foul and surface water drainage;*
- h. Visibility splays;*
- i. Access arrangements including temporary construction access;*
- j. Hard surfacing materials;*
- k. Parking areas for vehicles and cycles;*
- l. Loading areas; and*
- m. Turning and circulation areas.*

The development shall be implemented in accordance with those approved plans'.

6.2 The following plans (as set out in the accompanying Documentation Table) provide all of the detailed specification as necessary for parts (a) to (m) of condition 7 in respect of this Phase 2a Residential RM Application –

Highway Design Code Plan	32072 201
Levels Strategy Plan	32072 203
Fire Tracking Plans	32072 202 (2)
Road Construction Details	HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7101; HOF-WSP-ZZ-ZZ-DR-C-7102
Refuse Tracking Plans	32072 202 (1)
Parking Areas for Vehicles and Cycles	HIT100293-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0234-P01
Drainage Layout Plans	32072 204

6.3 These detailed plans have been developed to meet all of the HCC and NHDC and Design Code requirements and specifications.

Condition 11 – Landscape

6.4 Condition 11 requires –

'All reserved matters applications for any development parcel or sub-phase shall include the follow design details:

Soft Landscape

- a) *Details of trees, hedgerows, habitats, ponds and other natural features it is proposed to retain or remove and details of how they will be protected during the construction phase. Such details to include the tree protection measures in accordance with BS5837:2012.*
- b) *Full details of planting plans and written specifications, including cultivation proposals for maintenance and management associated with plant and grass establishment, details of the mix, size, distribution, density and levels of all trees/hedges/shrubs to be planted and the proposed time of planting. The planting plan shall use botanic names to avoid misinterpretation. The plans should include a full schedule of plants;*
- c) *1:100 plans (or at a scale otherwise agreed) with cross-sections of mounding, ponds, ditches and swales and proposed treatment of the edges and perimeters of each development phase;*
- d) *The landscape treatment of roads (primary, secondary, tertiary and green) through each development phase;*
- e) *A specification for the establishment of trees within hard landscaped areas including details of space standards (distances from buildings etc.), tree pit details and details of the species, number and spacing of trees and shrubs;*
- f) *The planting and establishment of structural landscape to be provided in advance of all or specified parts of the site as appropriate;*
- g) *Full details of any proposed alterations to existing watercourses/drainage channels and details of any water features;*
- h) *Details and specification of proposed earth modelling, mounding, re-grading and/or embankment areas or changes of level across the site to be carried out including soil quantities, topsoil storage to BS 3882 : 2007, haul routes, proposed levels and contours to be formed, sections through construction to show make-up, and timing of works;*
- i) *A specification for the Topsoil Strip, storage, re-spread and remediation in accordance with Defra : Construction Code of Practice for the Sustainable Use of Soils on Construction Sites.*

Hard Landscape

- j) *Full details, including cross-sections, of all bridges and culverts;*
- k) *The location and specification of minor artefacts and structures, including furniture, refuse or other storage units, signs and lighting columns/brackets;*
- l) *1:200 plans (or at a scale otherwise agreed) including cross sections, of roads, paths and cycleways;*
- m) *Details of all hard surfacing materials (size, type and colour)'.*

6.5 The detailed landscape specification for the provision of the grassed verge, associated tree planting within it along and within the highway network, on plot tree planting of this Phase 2a Residential RM Application to discharge this condition, is provided as detailed in paragraphs 4.14-16 of this Statement and on plans GL2024 LP32, GL2024 LP33, GL2024 LP34. The specification (GL2024-SP-01) is also in accordance with the Design Code.

6.6 Please note that along the Icknield Linear Park Hitchin Meadows and Dane Walk edge lanes there are small and what look like, 'isolated' areas of planting which might look strange when read in isolation, it should be remembered that these areas actually will form part of the wider areas of open space that have already been approved as part of the Phase 1 RM and Infrastructure RM.

6.7 Plan 32072 203 identifies the general levels within the area of the Phase 2a Residential Application, in accordance with part (h) of the condition.

6.8 Not all parts of this condition (g, j) are of relevance to this Phase 2a Residential RM Application.

Condition 10 – Waste and Recycling Collection

6.9 Condition 10 requires –

'Any reserved matters application pursuant to this outline permission for a development phase shall provide full details of the on-site storage facilities for waste including waste for recycling and/or composting. Such details shall identify the specific positions of where wheeled bins will be stationed, and the specific arrangements to enable collection from within 15m of the kerbside of the adopted highway/refuse collection vehicle access point and walk distances for residents. The approved facilities

shall be provided prior to the commencement of the use hereby permitted and shall be retained thereafter unless alternative arrangements are agreed in writing by the local planning authority'.

- 6.10 Plan HIT100293-MCB-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-0235-P01 identifies the bin store location and the bin collection points within the Phase 2a Residential RM Application. The Design Code identifies that the provision of bins and collection of waste/recycling will be carried out via the Council as per refuse collection arrangements that exist throughout their administrative area.

Condition 12 – Sustainability Statement

- 6.11 Condition 12 requires –
- 'Prior to or concurrently with each reserved matters submitted in each phase identified in Condition 5 Phasing and Delivery a sustainability strategy shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval addressing renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions and water conservation'.*
- 6.12 A Site wide Sustainability setting out the overarching principles for the whole Site was approved as part of the discharge of condition 12 under 25/01299/DOC. For this Phase 2a RM submission, a separate short Sustainability Statement is included, which identifies the specific measures that are incorporated into the RM application (document ref: 02927_SUST, dated July 2026, by Turley).

7 PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Paragraph 2 of the NPPF states that planning law (namely, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) requires all planning applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless there are material considerations that indicate otherwise.
- 7.2 This section provides an assessment of the key planning considerations relevant to the determination of the Phase 2a Residential RM Application and associated conditions and is informed by the information contained within the preceding chapters of this Statement and other supporting application documentation.

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- 7.3 The principle of the Proposed Development has already been established through the outline planning permission, 18/01154/OP for the wider development site. In addition, the outline application documentation included a Design and Access Statement and an approved Strategic Masterplan Framework Document in which the parameters and principles of the layout and design of the Proposed Development were set out. The Design Code provides further detail in terms of design principles that this RM Application has followed and the Design Code Compliance Statement/Checklist confirms this.
- 7.4 The Proposed Development is itself sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF and Development Plan policies and also contributes to the overarching principle of achieving sustainable development in the wider context. In particular –
- In economic and social terms, the proposals will assist in supporting a strong and vibrant community in Hitchin by providing new much needed housing and open space; will provide new employment opportunities for the local workforce, both directly from the physical construction of the road and drainage infrastructure and housing and indirectly through the social benefits that such further development brings with it, and
 - In environmental terms, the proposals will assist in achieving sustainable development through the provision of safe alternative modes of transport, reducing the need to rely on private vehicles with consequential reduced impact on air quality and the delivery of an overall net gain in biodiversity.
- 7.5 Furthermore, the Proposed Development is part of the allocated site HT1 within the adopted Development Plan.
- 7.6 As such, in accordance with the NPPF, planning permission should be granted, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The other material considerations pertaining to this Phase 2a Residential RM Application are considered in turn below.

HOUSING DELIVERY

- 7.7 The Proposed Development provides some 157 (55 of which are affordable) of the 700 dwellings to be built on the Highover Farm site as a whole. The Proposed Development forms part of the largest allocated and consented site within Hitchin and is a major part of the Council's housing delivery requirement over the next few years. Without the Proposed Development, the Council will not be able to meet its social, economic, housing and environmental growth objectives for Hitchin of the District as a whole.

HIGHWAY DESIGN AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.8 the NPPF states that significant development should be located in locations which are, or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering genuine choice of transport modes. Furthermore, adopted Policy SP6 reinforces the Council's position in seeking to minimise private car travel, by providing linkages via footways and cycle paths, and by supporting access to public transport.
- 7.9 The northern loop road which is located within the southern part of Phase 2a was approved as part of the Phase 1 RM (25/02794/RM) and has been designed to allow bus access. Buses may use this loop certainly during the latter stages of construction, but the option remains to run the bus through here was the whole site his completed. In the alternative, where the bus does not use the loop at completion, there is an accessible bus stop on The Avenue just to the south.
- 7.10 The provision of cycleways and pedestrian footpaths that are provided along and linking to The Avenue from the residential parcels, increases the ability of residents to make safe non-vehicular choices to move around the wider development. In the wider Hitchin context, the provision of segregated cycle and pedestrian links through from High Dane to Stotfold Road which then link into the new Toucan crossing on Stotfold Road and new dedicated off-road route east cross the field to join up with the Letchworth Greenway provides Hitchin residents with a safe, attractive and more direct link between the two towns as an alternative to the existing road network. Within Phase 2a itself pedestrians and

cyclists can safely use the edge lanes, informal streets and tertiary streets that then link into custom paths within Hitchin Meadows, Icknield Linear Park and Dane Walk.

- 7.11 In this context, the Phase 2a Residential RM Application demonstrates that the Proposed Development is accessible by sustainable transport modes, including walking, cycling and public transport.
- 7.12 The Proposed Development is appropriately designed and encourages active travel and as such, accords with both the NPPF and local policies and highway design standards.
- 7.13 A variety of secondary road, lanes and tertiary road using different surface treatment to slow speeds and create legibility throughout the residential parcels have been incorporated into the highway network design alongside the aforementioned pedestrian cycle links/routes.

FLOOD RISK AND DRAINAGE

- 7.14 The Proposed Development is not expected to increase flood risk elsewhere within the wider site or Hitchin generally, and surface water runoff can be suitably managed in accordance with the NPPF and adopted policies SP11, D1 and NE7.
- 7.15 The original Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy was submitted as part of the now approved outline application. The principles of this surface water drainage strategy identify that SUDs drainage techniques are achievable on the Site, which is in accordance with adopted Policies SP11, NE7 and D1.
- 7.16 Foul drainage is catered for through connection to the Anglian Water sewer network.
- 7.17 The surface and foul drainage provision for this Phase 2a Residential RM Application reflects the longstanding principles for this site and which form the detail that was submitted and subsequently approved to discharge condition 15 (25/01378/DOC) of the outline permission on 15th December 2025. Underground pipework is the key conveyance within the Phase.

GROUND CONDITIONS AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- 7.18 The Proposed Development is not anticipated to create or increase the risk of contamination. The Phase 2 Assessment Report has been accepted as appropriate and condition 20 (ref: 25/00916/DOC) of the outline permission has consequently been discharged. The report identifies that contamination linkages are absent and that consequently the Site is suitable for the proposed use, that the soils confirm no asbestos and that piled foundations or ground improvement is no necessary – a Remediation Strategy is therefore not necessary.
- 7.19 The wider Site, including that part subject of this Phase 2a Residential RM Application, has been the subject of a desk-based archaeological assessment, geophysical analysis and trial trenching evaluation.
- 7.20 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been agreed with the County Archaeologist, albeit it the condition on the outline permission has still to be formally discharged. The WSI identifies two types of further archaeological work to be undertaken in three areas prior to any development (see Plan Figure 2 in **Appendix 1**) –
- Area 1: An open area of excavation measuring circa 1.22ha, located around the school and Highover Park, and
 - Areas 2 & 3: Areas of strip, map and record/sample of circa 6.43ha extending from the very northern part of the wider development site to the south-eastern boundary with the existing adjacent estate development.
- 7.21 Areas 1 & 3 are outside of this Phase 2a RM Application Site area.
- 7.22 Area 2 is encompassed within this Phase 2a RM Application Site area. The WSI required archaeological mitigation works were completed in circa September 2025.
- 7.23 Notable archaeological remains identified within parts of Areas 2 and include a number of burials part of a cemetery, as well as settlement and industrial activity, including possible evidence of copper smelting, predominantly of late Iron Age and Roman date.
- 7.24 It is understood that sign off by the Hertfordshire Senior Historic Environment Advisor for the mitigation works in Area 2 has been secured. It is further understood that no further work is required to those parts of Area 2 that fall within this Phase 2a RM Application; potential further works are only required within Area 1. As such, this Phase of the development will not impact further on any potential buried archaeology.
- 7.25 Reporting on this will take place as per the WSI and in accordance with condition 16 of the outline permission.

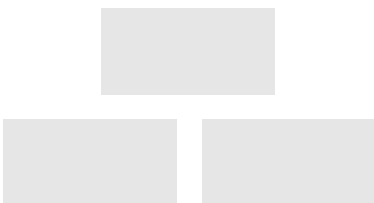
ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN (BNG)

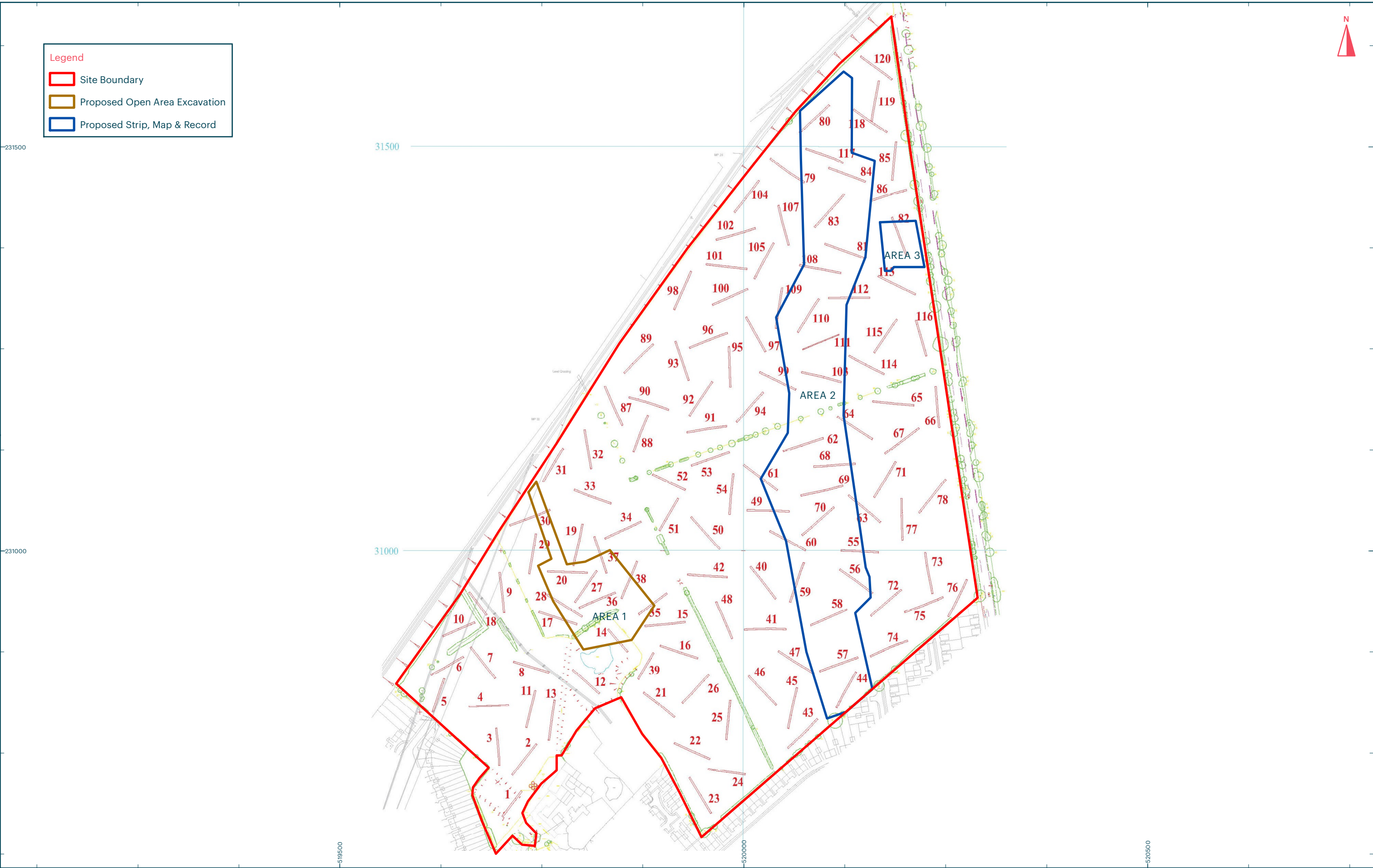
- 7.26 The outline application was submitted prior to the Environment Act and Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations coming into effect, notwithstanding (i) that the actual planning permission was granted post the legislation, and (ii) that the outline permission proposals have actually been designed to provide net gain in excess of 10%.
- 7.27 BNG is provided across the wider development site as a whole and provision is not specifically related to an individual reserved matters phase or application. BNG is governed through the production of an Outline Landscape Environmental Management Plan (OLEMP) that has been submitted to partially discharge Condition 21 (21/00576/DOC). The specific LEMP for Phase 2 (both this Phase 2a and Phase 2b Icknield Linear Park) is being prepared and will be submitted separately as part of the discharge of condition 21 – this will identify the specific percentage of BNG being provided as part of Phase 2 overall. General enhancements like bird and bat boxes, hibernacula, etc are detailed as part of the Design Code and are also identified within the respective Phase 2 LEMP.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 This Planning Statement forms part of a suite of documents and plans which have been prepared in support of this Phase 2a Residential RM Application and the discharge/partial discharge of associated conditions. This Application is for the construction of 157 dwellings, of which 55 are affordable, as approved under 18/01154/OP.
- 8.2 The following conclusions are drawn:
- The principle of the Proposed Development is established through the outline planning permission,
 - That the Proposed Development of this Phase 2a Residential RM Application and associated conditions is sustainable as it (i) links into and integrates with the existing surrounding highway network via Stotfold Road providing not only vehicle access but also safe inclusive access for cyclists and pedestrians, and (ii) provides much needed market and affordable housing,
 - The Proposed Development provides construction employment opportunities for the local community,
 - The Proposed Development accords with the approved Site Design Code and other relevant Building Regulations, standards and principles, and
 - The Proposed Development accords with both national and local planning policies and principles and would help achieve economic and housing planning policy aims and objectives.
- 8.3 Consequently, when considered against the Development Plan and the Framework, the benefits of the Proposed Development clearly outweigh any residual negative impact, and there are no specific policies that would either preclude the construction of the Proposed Development or would indicate that it should be resisted on development management or technical grounds.
- 8.4 To that effect, the Phase 2a Residential RM Application and the associated conditions should be approved/discharged without delay.

Plan Figure 2 – Archaeological Mitigation Areas





Title:
Figure 2: Archaeological Mitigation Areas

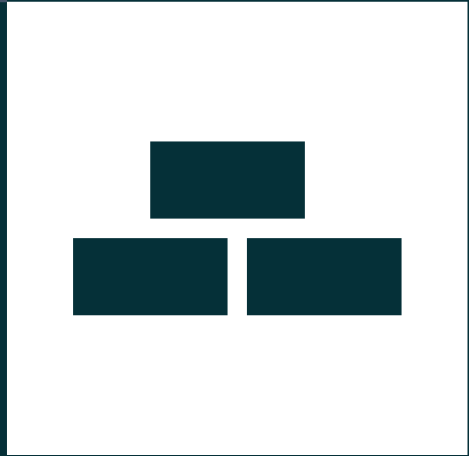
Address:
Highover Farm, Hitchin

AREA 1	12,205m2 (1.22ha)
AREA 2	61,630m2 (6.16ha)
AREA 3	2,680m2 (0.27ha)

Scale at A3: 1:4,250

0 125m





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