



**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990 (AS AMENDED)
PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE
ACT 2004**

PLANNING STATEMENT

**RE: OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR THE ERECTION OF A
SINGLE SELF-BUILD DWELLING AND ASSOCIATED
ANCILLARY DEVELOPMENT**

Crows Nest Farm, Cleverton, SN15 5BS

**On behalf of:
Mr & Mrs Aaron**

Date: November 2025
Ref: AP/P/A-026

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Appendix 1 – Report for Northern Area Planning Committee – PL/2024/11637

1. INTRODUCTION

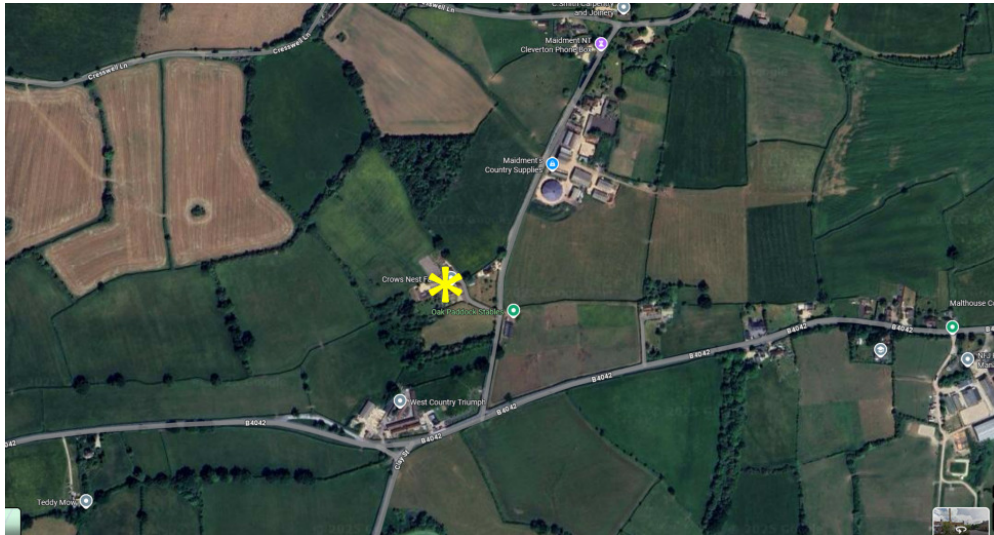
1.1. This statement has been prepared by **Plan-A Planning and Development Ltd** in support of an outline application for the erection of a single self-build dwelling and associated ancillary development at Crows Nest Farm, Cleverton. It assesses and evaluates the context and character of the site and surrounding area and considers the proposals against the national and local policy framework, referring as appropriate to the following drawings and documents which accompany the application:-

- Vision and Access Statement (Rixon Architects)
- Drawing No. 2516 002 Rev A – Existing Block Plan
- Drawing No. 2516 003 Rev A – Proposed Block Plan

1.2. Based on our assessment and having taken all relevant material planning considerations into account, the statement concludes our case that the application proposals will cause no material harm to interests of acknowledged importance and that outline planning permission should therefore be granted.

2. SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site forms part of a cluster of existing development to the north-east of Little Somerford comprising Crows Nest farmhouse, The Lodge and 'The Birches' together with a large outbuilding and defunct manege, adjoining which lies a domestic allotment, garden and apiary. 'Crows Nest Cottage' also lies immediately to the east.



Google Earth extract of site location (accessed October 2025)

- 2.2 The site is relatively flat and does not fall within any protected landscape or conservation area and lies within Flood Zone 1 (the lowest level of flood risk). It fronts onto the existing private driveway that serves the adjoining properties, and this also forms part of a Public Right of Way (LECL 14) which then leaves the driveway to run along the field boundary immediately to the east of the site.
- 2.3 Further details are set out within the Vision and Access Statement (VAS) which accompanies the application submission, and which should be referred to accordingly.

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposals comprise an outline application for the erection of a single self-build dwelling together with associated ancillary development. Whilst all matters except access are reserved for future consideration, the VAS contains illustrative sketch layouts and design details to demonstrate how the proposed dwelling would complement the existing pattern and grain of development. The VAS also contains a full supporting narrative, so the following details should be regarded as only a brief summary of the more notable aspects of the scheme proposals.
- 3.2 The applicant's vision for the proposed dwelling is of a contemporary, low maintenance home which, unlike the neighbouring farmhouse, is capable of meeting their long-term needs as a lifetime home. Furthermore, in order to ensure the proposals deliver on their vision, the applicants will maintain the primary input into the final design and layout of the property, which is intended to follow the traditional vernacular, with an 'L' shaped planform overlapping with a detached 'citrus house' separated by a rear courtyard area. The built development is to be sited within the old equine sand school plot and designed to protect the residential amenity and privacy of all occupiers. Parking would be to the front of the property, with the existing outbuilding converted to use as additional garaging and for other ancillary domestic uses.
- 3.3 As a lifetime home, the proposed accommodation would make provision for a ground floor bedroom together with open plan living space, whilst the upper floor would provide 4 bedrooms, a family bathroom and an additional living area. The building's thermal performance would be designed to exceed Building Regulation requirements with heating provided by an air source heat pump coupled with a heat recovery system. A renewable energy solution would also be incorporated through use of solar panels and battery storage.

4. PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 confirms that where a determination is to be made under the Planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the Development Plan comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS) although the updated NPPF also represents a material consideration in its own right.

Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015)

Core Policy 1 – Settlement Strategy

- 4.2 The Council's Settlement Strategy seeks to define where development will be the most sustainable and will help to deliver a stronger economy. The settlement hierarchy identifies four tiers of settlement, defined according to their role and function and how they interact with their wider hinterland. However, the strategy does allow for carefully managed development outside of settlement boundaries in specific cases.

Core Policy 2 – Delivery Strategy

- 4.3 Policy CP2 sets out a Delivery Strategy to support CP1, including indicative housing figures for each Housing Market Area and confirms that, other than in circumstances permitted by other policies within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (referred to as 'exceptions policies' listed in paragraph 4.25 of the Strategy), new residential development will not be permitted outside the limits of development.

Core Policy 13 – Spatial Strategy: Malmesbury Community Area

- 4.4 This policy sets out the settlement strategy and hierarchy for the Malmesbury Community Area together with the breakdown of the overall quantum of housing and employment development.

Core Policy 45 – Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Needs

- 4.5 This policy stipulates that new housing must be well designed to address local housing need, and incorporate a range of different types, tenures and sizes of homes. In particular, housing size and type will be expected to reflect that of the demonstrable need for the community within which it is sited.

Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 4.6 CP50 requires development proposals to demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale, with the expectation that such features be retained, buffered and managed favourably to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where retention is not feasible, removal or damage will only be acceptable where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated and appropriate compensatory measures secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource.
- 4.7 The policy also confirms that all development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

Core Policy 51 – Landscape

- 4.8 This policy highlights that developments should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character. Proposals are expected to demonstrate that landscape character will be conserved and where possible, enhanced through sensitive design, landscape mitigation and enhancement measures, including:
- Locally distinctive pattern and composition of natural features;
 - Locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings;
 - Maintaining separate identity of settlements and the transition between man-made and natural landscapes at the urban fringe;
 - Visually sensitive skylines;
 - Important views and visual amenity
 - The need to protect against intrusion from light pollution;
 - Protecting the special qualities of AONBs.

Core Policy 57 – Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping

- 4.9 This policy confirms that a high standard of design is required in all new development which draws on local context in order to maintain or create a strong sense of place. Proposals are expected to enhance local distinctiveness, retain existing landscape/natural features and be sympathetic to their surroundings, whilst making efficient use of land. The needs of future occupants should be taken into account through making use of high standards of building materials and maximising opportunities for sustainable construction techniques.

Core Policy 60 – Sustainable Transport

- 4.10 This policy sets out those measures to be used by the Council in reducing the need to travel such as by promoting sustainable transport alternatives to use of the private car and planning developments in accessible locations.

Core Policy 61 – Transport and New Development

- 4.11 This policy confirms that new development should be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.

Other Material Policy Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 4.12 The NPPF sets out the Government’s planning policies for England, together with guidance on how they are expected to be applied. It is a material consideration in its own right in the determination of planning applications (para 2 refers).
- 4.13 The NPPF reconfirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, which encompasses the three overarching and interdependent economic, social and environmental objectives. It confirms that planning policies and decisions should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions. In doing so, Local Planning Authorities are instructed to take local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area (para 9 refers).
- 4.14 At the heart of the NPPF is a clear presumption in favour of sustainable development (see paras 10 and 11). For decision-making, this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay, or where there are no relevant development plan policies or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date (such as is in cases where there is no five year housing land supply), granting permission unless; policies in the Framework provide a strong reason for refusing the proposals; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole (NPPF para. 11 refers).
- 4.15 The Framework instructs LPAs to approach decision-making in a positive and creative way, and to “work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the

economic, social and environmental conditions of the area”. The Framework stipulates that decision makers at every level should “seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible” (para 39 refers).

- 4.16 Para 61 emphasises the Government’s objective of *“significantly boosting the supply of homes”* whilst para 61 confirms that the housing needs of different groups in the community should be reflected in planning policies, cross-referring to the duty on local planning authorities under the Self Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand for those wishing to commission or build their own homes. Para 73 also advises that small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area.
- 4.17 Paragraph 115 outlines that planning decisions should take account of whether safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users. However, paragraph 116 goes on to confirm that development should only be prevented or refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or where the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.
- 4.18 Para 125 states that planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, whilst para 127 encourages planning policies and decisions to reflect changes in the demand for land and that applications for alternative uses on the land should be supported, where the proposed use would contribute to meeting an unmet need for development in the area. LPAs are also encouraged to take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs (para 128 refers).
- 4.19 Para 131 highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and helps create better places to live and work. Accordingly, para 135 confirms that planning decisions should aim to ensure that developments:-
- a) *“will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
 - b) *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*

- c) *are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) *establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) *optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development (including green and other public spaces) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) *create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users, and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion and resilience."*

5. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 There are a number of historic applications relating to the use and development of Crows Nest Farm and its former outbuildings and stables (Application Ref. No.s N/03/02028/COU, N/04/00822/CLE and N/10/03892/FUL refer). However, of most relevance to the current application are proposals for other self-build dwellings on sites elsewhere within the local area, as summarised below.

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- 5.2 This relates to an outline application for the erection of a single self-build dwelling on land to the south of the B4042 at Long Goss, approximately 0.25km north of Little Somerford. The application was considered at the meeting of the Northern Area Planning Committee held on 2nd July 2025 where it was resolved that planning permission should be granted subject to the satisfactory completion of a legal agreement necessary to deliver the proposed self-build dwelling.
- 5.3 In terms of the principle of development, the planning officer's report to committee (**Appendix 1** refers) serves to establish a number of key factors that are of direct relevance to consideration of the proposals at Crows Nest Farm, as outlined below.
- 5.4 Since the proposed location was considered to fall within the open countryside as defined by the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS), the proposals were identified as being contrary to WCS Policies 1, 2 and 13. Nevertheless, it was confirmed that as a consequence of the fact that the Council are only able to demonstrate a housing land supply of 2.42 years (substantially short of the 5-year housing land requirement), paragraphs 78 and 11(d) of the NPPF dictate that the most important Development Plan (ie. WCS) policies for determining the application should be considered out of date. Accordingly, they confirmed that the weight attached to them should be altered as part of the overall planning balance whilst also identifying that the proposals must be assessed against the need to boost housing supply, as expressed at paragraph 61 of the NPPF.
- 5.5 The fact that the proposals were for construction of a self-build dwelling was also considered materially significant, in that the Council have a significant undersupply. Although the applicant was not on the Council's self-build register, the proposed dwelling would still add

to the supply of self-build units and the officers report states that this provides a significant justification for the development within an 'out-of-settlement' location.

5.6 In drawing these issues together within their concluding 'planning balance' the officer confirmed that, under the terms of NPPF para 11(d), it is necessary to determine whether the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits inherent in providing an additional dwelling to help address the undersupply of housing. Furthermore, the officer confirmed that in light of the scale of the undersupply, relevant appeal decisions confirm that the Council is required to justify any refusal with a strong reason as opposed to relying solely on a reason based upon a simple conflict with Development Plan policies.

5.7 In this context, the officer gave only limited negative weight to policy conflicts associated with the site's out-of-settlement location. Furthermore, they acknowledged that access can be made to public transport links and, with reference to a corresponding conclusion reached by an appeal inspector that this means it is not necessarily unsustainable in a rural context, attributed significant positive weight to this within the planning balance. Moderate positive weight was also given to the contribution made by the proposals to the housing land supply shortfall and to meeting the demand for self-build housing. Moderate positive weight was also given to the short-term economic benefits associated with construction of the dwelling and to the biodiversity enhancements that would arise from provision of an ecology buffer zone. Balanced against the fact that no unacceptable harms were identified that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, the officer confirmed that the planning balance therefore weighed in favour of the proposals such that planning permission should be granted.

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5.8 This application also relates to an outline application for the erection of a single self-build dwelling on land at Crab Mill Lane, Lea. Whilst this application has yet to be determined, consultations received to date have established that there are no consultee or third-party objections, including those received from the highways, ecology, tree and environmental health officers.

5.9 In terms of the principle of development, the applicant's agent cites the severe housing land supply shortfall which limits the weight that can be applied to Core Policy 2 (CP2) of the

WCS. They also cite clear appeal evidence confirming the Council's failure to meet demonstrated demand for self-build development in its area, such that the benefits arising from the proposal clearly outweighs any harm resulting from the conflict with CP2.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 Taking into account the content of all preceding sections, the planning considerations of most relevance to the assessment of this application are:-

- Principle of Development;
- Contribution to Self-Build Supply
- Landscape, Character and Layout;
- Residential Amenity
- Ecology and Biodiversity; and
- Highway Safety and Sustainability.

Principle of Development

6.2 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 dictates that the Development Plan must be taken as the starting point in considering all development proposals. Furthermore, development proposals must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

6.3 In this case, it is acknowledged that the site of the proposed development conflicts with Core Policies 1, 2 and 13 of the WCS in that it lies in what is deemed to be 'open countryside' in policy terms. As to other Development Plan policies concerning the principle of development, whilst Core Policy 45 requires new housing to address local housing needs, the WCS does not incorporate any policies relating specifically to self-build or custom-build housing developments.

6.4 As to other material considerations relevant to consideration of the proposals, that which is most relevant to the principle of development is the fact that the Council have a severe shortfall in their housing land supply, as this stands at just 2.42 years (see para 9.2 of the officer's report to the Northern Area Planning Committee at **Appendix 1**). Whilst in such instances, NPPF paragraph 11(d) and the so called 'tilted balance' is engaged, the absence of any Development Plan policies relating to self-build and custom-built homes also has the same consequences.

6.5 Therefore, as far as the application proposals are concerned, those Development Plan policies which are most important for determining the application are deemed out-of-date, and permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly

and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF policies taken as a whole.

- 6.6 Notwithstanding the fact that this outline application seeks only consideration of the principle of development and access only, the local planning authority must be satisfied that all aspects of the proposed development would be acceptable and achievable if planning permission were to be granted. Therefore, the following aspects will also need to be considered as part of the overall planning balance (Section 7 below).

Contribution to Self-Build Supply

- 6.7 It is a matter of fact that the Council are failing in their duty under the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 to provide an adequate supply of self-build units sufficient to meet demand. In fact, as confirmed in the officer's report to the Northern Area Planning Committee at **Appendix 1**, the Council has a significant undersupply.
- 6.8 Although the applicants are not on the Council's self-build housing register, their proposed self-build dwelling would qualify as part of the overall contribution to self-build supply, as they have had and will maintain a primary input into the final design and layout of the scheme proposals, and are willing to enter into a Unilateral Undertaking (legal agreement) confirming that the proposals will be built-out and occupied as a self-build unit.

Landscape Character and Layout

- 6.9 As referred to in Section 4 above, Core Policy 51 highlights that developments should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character, whilst Core Policy 57 states that a high standard of design is required in all new development, drawing on local context in order to maintain or create a strong sense of place. As evidenced by the details set out within the Vision and Access Statement, the proposed dwelling occupies previously developed land which is set within the context of an existing cluster of residential properties and other built development. It will be in keeping with the existing pattern of development and, in accordance with the policy requirements, will make efficient use of available land whilst not encroaching on any existing landscape or natural feature. In fact, through additional planting and sensitive landscape design, the proposed development should serve to enhance the existing character and appearance of the immediate area, particularly when viewed from the public right of way which runs immediately to the east of the site.

- 6.10 The site does not fall within any protected landscape and, set within a relatively flat landscape contained within a framework of mature field boundaries and/or small blocks of woodland, will have no adverse impact on wider landscape character.

Residential Amenity

- 6.11 Core Policy 57 also requires that new development has regard to its compatibility with adjoining buildings and uses, as well as the amenity of existing occupiers. As explained within the accompanying Vision and Access Statement, the amenities associated with the three adjoining dwellings have been fully considered as part of the design process undertaken to date. In particular, it is proposed to angle the proposed dwelling away from the other dwellings whilst also limiting fenestration to the south so as to minimise overlooking and privacy concerns.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 6.12 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken in support of the application proposals, and the associated report is submitted in support of the application. No ecological constraints have been identified that would serve to prejudice the proposed development.
- 6.13 Whilst, as a self-build proposal with a site area of less than 0.5ha, the development is exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, various ecological enhancements will be incorporated as part of the proposed development that will ensure a meaningful biodiversity net gain is still achieved.

Highway Safety and Sustainability

- 6.14 The proposed self-build dwelling is to be accessed off the existing private driveway which serves the adjoining dwellings. This has the capacity to accommodate the additional vehicle movements and has a satisfactory access onto the local highway network, that is wide enough to accommodate conflicting vehicle movements without vehicles blocking the highway. Therefore, the proposals would have no adverse impact upon highway safety.
- 6.15 Whilst key services and facilities do not lie within walking distance of the application site, the site entrance lies just 160 metres from the nearest bus stops, which are both served by the '99' bus service. This runs between Swindon and Chippenham (via Royal Wootton Bassett and Malmesbury) and provides at least 10 daily services on every day except Sunday. It

therefore represents a viable and sustainable alternative to the private car for use by the applicants, in accordance with the requirements of both Core Policies 60 and 61. As these same factors were attributed limited positive weight in terms of the sustainability of the location by the case officer that dealt with the self-build dwelling considered under application ref. PL/2024/11637 (see paras 5.2-5.7 above), it follows that these same conclusions must now be applied in the case of this current application.

7. CONCLUSION/OVERALL PLANNING BALANCE

7.1 It is an accepted fact that Wiltshire Council are unable to demonstrate a five year housing land supply. Accordingly, under the terms of Paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework, the policies which are most important for determining the application should be considered out-of-date and, unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, planning permission should be granted. Furthermore, in view of the severity of the shortfall (based on an identified supply of just 2.42 years), other relevant appeal decisions confirm that any refusal would need to be justified on the basis of a strong reason for refusal, and not simply due to a conflict with Development Plan policies per se.

7.2 In terms of the necessary balancing exercise required in this case, that which was undertaken in respect of application reference PL/2024/11637 (see paras 5.2-5.7 above) provides clear precedent since it also related to a single self-build dwelling located beyond an existing settlement framework. The corresponding 'planning balance' is set out in Section 10 of the officer's report to the Northern Area Planning Committee (**Appendix 1**) and should be referred to accordingly, although is as summarised below:-

- Due to the scale of the Council's housing land supply shortfall, the conflict with the strategic, housing delivery and rural exception Development Plan policies was given only **limited weight**. Furthermore, due to the limited scale of the proposals (ie. a single dwelling), the harm associated with site's out-of-settlement location was also only given **limited weight**.
- In the absence of any details to demonstrate that the proposed dwelling would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area, and since a safe access could be provided, **neutral weight** was given to matters relating to visual impacts and other technical matters that would be addressed as part of the reserved matters stage. This same weighting can legitimately be applied to this current application as, although it will involve additional built form, the proposed dwelling is consistent with the form and character of the adjoining cluster of built development and will utilise an otherwise redundant area of previously developed land.
- In the context of an appeal inspector's conclusions with regard to rural sustainability, the site's accessibility to public transport links was given **significant positive weight** and, when taking account of the fact that this current application also benefits from similar accessibility to the same bus service, an identical weighting should be applied accordingly. Furthermore, and in addition to the contribution towards the severe shortfall in housing land supply, the contribution made towards the Council's significant shortfall in the supply of self-build dwellings was also given **moderate positive weight**.
- **Moderate positive weight** was also given to the short-term economic benefits associated with the construction phase and to the provision of biodiversity

enhancements associated with an 'ecology buffer zone' despite the proposal's exemption from mandatory BNG requirements. As various biodiversity enhancements will also be delivered as part of the detailed site proposals associated with this new self-build proposal, these same benefits will arise and can therefore also be afforded **moderate positive weight**.

- 7.3 Based upon the above assessment, the planning balance clearly weighs in favour of the application proposals and it is clear that there are no unacceptable harms that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Therefore, in accordance with the provisions of s38(6) of the Act, outline planning permission can safely be granted for the proposed self-build dwelling.