

Planning and Affordable Housing Statement

Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster
Prepared on behalf of Rubix Land Limited

December 2025

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“Outline planning application for the erection of up to 77 dwellings, public open space, landscaping and sustainable urban drainage system, with vehicular access off Ashley Coombe. All matters reserved except for means of access.”

Prepared

On behalf of Rubix Land Limited

OG Group

Email: info@oggrp.co.uk

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1 Council’s Pre-Application Advice dated 11 December 2024

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning and Affordable Housing Statement has been prepared by OG Group on behalf of Rubix Land Limited (“the Applicant”) and accompanies an outline planning application for the development of up to 77 new homes with all matters reserved (except for access) on Land off Ashley Coombe, Warminster (“the Site”).
- 1.2. The description of development is as follows:
- “Outline planning application for the erection of up to 77 dwellings, public open space, landscaping, sustainable urban drainage system and engineering works, with vehicular access off Ashley Coombe. All matters reserved except for means of access.”*
- 1.3. This document assesses the planning considerations associated with the proposal and considers the development in the context of national and local planning policy and guidance. This Statement should be read in conjunction with the other documents that form part of the planning application:
1. Site Location Plan
 2. Constraints & Opportunities Plan
 3. Framework Plan
 4. Illustrative Layout Plan
 5. Access Plan
 6. Design and Access Statement, including parameter plans
 7. Statement of Community Involvement
 8. Ecological Impact Assessment
 9. BNG Statement
 10. Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment
 11. Green Infrastructure Strategy Plan
 12. Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy
 13. Transport Statement
 14. Framework Travel Plan
 15. Heritage and Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
 16. Odour Impact Assessment

- 17. Tree Survey and Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- 18. Sustainable Energy Strategy
- 19. Phosphorous nutrient calculation and strategy
- 20. CIL Form

- 1.4. We conclude that the proposal is in accordance with the Development Plan when read as a whole, and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), in combination with other material considerations. Having regard to the planning balance, it is considered that these material considerations weigh significantly in favour of approval.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 1.5. Consideration has been given to the requirement or otherwise for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to be undertaken for the proposed development.
- 1.6. The proposed development falls within Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 – Column 1, Part 10 (Infrastructure Projects), but does not meet the thresholds set out in Column 2; nor does it fall within a ‘sensitive area’ as defined in the Regulations.
- 1.7. Accordingly, whilst the Local Planning Authority will be required to screen the proposals as part of its legal requirements, the applicant does not consider that an Environmental Statement is required.

2.0 Site Description and Planning History

- 2.1. The application site (which measures 5.54ha in area) consists of an undeveloped greenfield site situated towards the southern edge of Warminster. It is relatively flat, sloping slightly down from west to east. A combination of mature trees/hedgerows bound the site to the west and south, with open countryside to the north and east.
- 2.2. Existing housing (Ashley Coombe/Ashley Place) adjoins the site along its western boundaries. Ashley Coombe leads onto Ashley Place further to the west and then onto Deverill Road. An existing public right of way runs S-N through the site, leading to Lower Marsh Road. Further to the east of the site lies the Warminster Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW).
- 2.3. With regard to environmental and heritage designations, the site is relatively unconstrained. The site lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at low risk from surface water flooding. There are no Listed Buildings or Scheduled Ancient Monuments in or adjoining the Site and it does not lie within a designated SSSI or local wildlife area. It is not within a National Landscape or protected local landscape feature (e.g. Special Landscape Area).
- 2.4. The Site is well connected to existing facilities and amenities. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 within the submitted Transport Assessment indicates that there are a number of amenities within 1200m of the site, including primary school and public houses. Warminster town centre is generally within a 2000m (i.e. 25-minute) walking distance, which contains various convenience and comparison shops, along with the train station.

- 2.5. Access to public transport is also available, with the nearest bus stop located on Ashley Place.

2.6. **Planning History**

The Site is not the subject of any relevant planning history in terms of planning applications. A pre-application advice request was submitted to Wiltshire Council in September 2024 for a similar scheme of up to 80 dwellings. This was for a slightly different layout based on two separate housing areas with vehicular access taken from both Ashley Coombe and Fanshaw Way respectively; see Figure 1 below. The Council's response dated 11 December 2024 is attached at **Appendix 1**.



Figure 1 – previous scheme subject to pre-application

- 2.7. In addition to the pre-application submission referred to above, Rubix has been promoting the Site through both the draft Wiltshire Local Plan Review (LPR) and the emerging Warminster Neighbourhood Plan Review (WNPR). The scheme shown in Figure 1 above has previously been consulted on by the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG). In a specific housing site allocations consultation exercise that took place in March – April 2025, the Figure 1 development site was put forward as one of three that were shortlisted for inclusion as an allocation within the emerging WNPR, for c.79 dwellings.
- 2.8. Since then, the applicant has commissioned additional survey work, including a detailed odour assessment undertaken by Entran involving a series of "sniff" tests. This has concluded that the proposed development adjoining Fanshaw Way would not be practicable due to the challenging topography and presence of underground services. The Entran odour assessment has concluded that there is no barrier to the provision of additional residential development adjoining Ashley Coombe; therefore, additional land is included for development in this location, in order to maintain an overall quantum of around 80 dwellings, in line with the outstanding settlement requirement as set out in the emerging WNPR.
- 2.9. Rubix advised the NPSG of these changes in an online meeting on 9 July 2025. The Steering Group expressed concerns over this revised layout, primarily in relation to odour and additional encroachment into the countryside. Following this, RL were advised that the Site had been removed for consideration as an allocation.

2.10. Notwithstanding this, the Applicant considers that this revised scheme remains suitable, deliverable and acceptable in planning policy terms. This will be explained in Chapter 6 below.

2.11. **Public Consultation**

This application is accompanied with a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This confirms that the applicant has undertaken a process of community engagement in advance of the submission of the application. This included a dedicated website outlining the proposal and a questionnaire.

2.12. The SCI sets out the responses received as part of the consultation and how the scheme responds to the comments raised.

3.0 Proposed Development

3.1. This section of the Planning Statement presents the various elements of the development proposal, comprising: Land Use, Access, Parking, Green Infrastructure, Scale and Design.

3.2. The proposed description of development is as follows:

“Outline planning application for the erection of up to 77 dwellings, public open space, Landscaping and sustainable urban drainage system, with vehicular access off Ashley Coombe. All matters reserved except for means of access.”

3.3. Whilst scale, layout, appearance and landscaping are reserved matters, parameter plans to demonstrate access, building heights, open space and extent of development are included within the Design & Access Statement.

3.4. The Illustrative Layout Plan shows indicatively how the site could be developed for:

- Up to 77 dwellings with vehicular/pedestrian access from Ashley Coombe
- Landscaped public open space and children’s play space
- Clear permeability and connections through the site, including public footpath routes through the site, including retention of the public right of way leading to Lower Marsh Road
- Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS), and
- Biodiversity enhancements.

3.5. **Land Use**

The proposal is for the development of up to 77 homes comprising a range of dwelling types developed on approximately 5.54 hectares / 13.3 acres. The net developable area of the site is 2.27 Ha (5.6 acres) and thus a density of 34 dwellings per hectare is provided. The proposed development also includes ancillary public open space, children’s play space, landscaping and SuDS.

3.6. The Illustrative Layout Plan demonstrates that the development can accommodate a variety of house types and sizes ranging from 2 to 4-bedroom homes. The definitive mix of the proposed dwellings will be determined at Reserved Matters stage.

3.7. At least 30% of the proposed dwellings will be provided as Affordable Housing, equating to c.23 homes in total. In line with the Council pre-application response (**Appendix 1**), the tenure split proposes a mix of Affordable Rent (60%), First Homes (25%) and Shared Ownership (15%). All affordable dwellings will be compliant with NDSS and M4(2) standards.

3.8. **Access and Movement**

As shown on the Illustrative Layout Plan, the proposed development layout has been designed around a clear street hierarchy through the site. Children's play spaces, in the form of a LEAP and LAP, will be provided in secure locations within the Site, along with a SuDS attenuation basin towards the NE edge of the site. Public open space will be provided on the NE and SW edges of the site, to provide a buffer between the built development and countryside beyond, as well as providing the opportunity to create new/enhanced biodiversity habitats.

3.9. The proposed scheme is to be served by a single vehicular and pedestrian access onto Ashley Coombe. The proposed access arrangements are shown on drawing no: 1973/04, contained within the Transport Assessment prepared by Ashley Helme. The existing public right of way running S-N through the site will be maintained and re-routed through the development, with an additional footpath provided through the public open space areas.

3.10. **Parking**

Whilst parking is a matter to be agreed at Reserved Matters stage, the Illustrative Layout Plan demonstrates that a range of different parking typologies can be provided, including on plot parking and on-street parking. The appropriate electricity supply to facilitate the future installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) will be provided to support sustainable living.

3.11. Public Open Space (POS)

The developable area is 2.27 Ha (6.36 acres). The area for POS is 3.21 Ha (7.93 acres). Existing trees and hedges forming many of the site boundaries will be retained and enhanced where possible and will form a valuable component of the site's green infrastructure. Additional tree planting and landscaping design using native species would be proposed to enhance biodiversity. The proposed drainage strategy includes SuDS features.

3.12. The required 10% biodiversity net gain will be achieved through the establishment of Neutral Grassland in good condition throughout all areas of Public Open Space within the red line planning application boundary.

3.13. Scale

Building heights of up to 2.5 storeys are proposed at this stage, with greater detail relating to the scale of the buildings to be dealt with at reserved matters stage. This is informed by the findings of the local character assessment set out in the Design and Access Statement and is presented in the parameter plans submitted.

3.14. Design

The detailed appearance of the development will be dealt with at Reserved Matters stage however the design will seek to incorporate a number of key features that have been set out within the Framework Plan.

Some of these include:

1. Providing connections for pedestrians to the local street network and public rights of way beyond;
2. Creating public open space, comprising tree planting and species rich amenity grassland;
3. Retaining key ecological features along the site boundaries such as hedgerows and hedgerow trees to support a network of green habitat corridors;
4. Providing sustainable features such as facilitating the use of EVCP, energy efficient 'fabric first' construction methods; and

5. Creating sustainable drainage attenuation features, which will also provide biodiversity qualities via the wetland habitat.

4.0 Affordable and Accessible Housing Statement

- 4.1. We can confirm the following details in respect of Affordable and Accessible Housing which will be provided by the proposed development:

Question	Answer
The total number of dwellings proposed:	The application seeks outline planning permission for up to 77 new homes.
The number of affordable dwellings proposed:	The proposal seeks to deliver 30% on-site affordable housing (up to 23 dwellings).
The tenure split for affordable housing:	The proposed development will look to achieve an acceptable tenure split through discussion with the local planning authority. The Council's pre-application response dated 11 December 2024 (Appendix 1) indicated a required split of 60% Affordable Rent, 25% First Homes and 15% Shared Ownership.
The type of homes and number of bedrooms:	This application is in outline. The proposals assumed a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes. However, the type and number of bedrooms will be determined at Reserved Matters stage.
A layout plan showing the location of each affordable home:	This application is in outline. The detailed layout showing the location of each Affordable home will be fixed at Reserved Matters Stage.
An affordable housing schedule detailing the plot number, type of affordable home, number of bedrooms, size per metre squared and occupancy:	This application is in outline. The detailed affordable housing schedule will be fixed at Reserved Matters Stage. The illustrative masterplan (RL102/120C) indicates potential locations for the AH provision.
Build standards to be used:	This information will be provided at Reserved Matters stage. If a certain percentage of affordable homes are required to be of a

	particular build standard, this can be secured by planning condition or s.106.
Delivery method:	The information will be provided at Reserved Matters stage.
Information on the affordability of any intermediate affordable housing including type of product, level of equity share sold, level of interest charged on remaining share and open market value:	The key parameters are to be identified within the s.106.
Any service charges:	It is likely that service charges will be capped and key parameters in this regard can be specified within the s.106.
Amount of commuted sum to be paid (if the affordable housing provision is to be provided by an off-site financial contribution rather than on-site units):	This is not applicable as the proposal will provide policy compliant Affordable Housing on site.

4.2. Accessible Housing Statement

The proposal will provide policy compliant accessible units in accordance with the Council's policy. This can be secured within the S.106 Agreement, with further detail about the location and specification of these units to be provided at Reserved Matters stage.

5.0 Planning Policy Context

- 5.1. This section of the planning statement provides a summary of the relevant planning policy context, including Wiltshire Council's adopted Core Strategy and the made Warminster Neighbourhood Plan, as well as other material considerations including supplementary planning documents and guidance.

The Development Plan

- 5.2. In accordance with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the determination of a planning application must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 5.3. The statutory development plan for the site comprises:

- Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015); and
- Warminster Neighbourhood Plan (made November 2016)

- 5.4. It is accepted that the proposed development is in conflict with certain policies of the adopted Development Plan. However it can be demonstrated that material considerations exist, including the Council's longstanding inability to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply and a lack of identified harm, to justify a departure from the plan.

- 5.5. A summary of the planning policies relevant to the determination of the planning application is provided below.

- 5.6. **Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)**

The following WCS policies are considered relevant to this site:

- 5.7. **Core Policy 1 Settlement Strategy (CP1)** identifies Warminster as a Market Town, based on an assessment of its role and function. Market towns are defined as settlements that can support sustainable patterns of development through their current levels of facilities, services and

employment opportunities, and have the potential for significant development that can improve self-containment.

- 5.8. **Core Policy 2 Delivery Strategy (CP2)** sets out the delivery strategy for growth for the period to 2026 and aims to distribute development in a sustainable manner. Within the defined limits of development for settlements there is a presumption in favour of permitting sustainable development. Development proposals outside these defined limits are not supported in principle unless the proposal satisfies the exceptions set out within paragraph 4.25 of the WCS. The policy goes on to emphasise that the limits of development may only be altered through the identification of sites for development through subsequent Site Allocations DPDs and the Neighbourhood Plan making process.
- 5.9. **Core Policy 3 Infrastructure Requirements (CP3)** states that all new developments will be required to provide for necessary on-site and, where appropriate, off-site infrastructure requirements arising from the proposal. These will be delivered directly by the developer and/or through an appropriate financial contribution prior to, or in conjunction with, new development.
- 5.10. **Core Policy 31 Spatial Strategy - Warminster's Community Area (CP31)** states that development should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy set out in Core Policy 1.
- 5.11. **Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low Carbon Energy (CP41)** – outlines how sustainable construction and low-carbon energy will be integral to all new development.
- 5.12. **Core Policy 43 Providing affordable homes (CP43)** is concerned with the provision of affordable housing in certain situations. Warminster lies within a zone requiring provision of at least 30% Affordable Housing on sites of five or more dwellings.
- 5.13. **Core Policy 45 Meeting Wiltshire's Housing Need (CP45)** states that new housing (including both market and affordable), must be well designed to address local housing need incorporating a range of different types, tenures and sizes of homes to create mixed and balanced communities.
- 5.14. **Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity (CP50)** highlights that proposals should demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geodiversity value in their design rationale. The policy advises that there is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and

managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term.

- 5.15. **Core Policy 51 Landscape (CP51)** – States that development must protect, conserve and wherever possible enhance the landscape character of an area. Any negative impacts should be mitigated through sensitive design, whilst being informed by and sympathetic to distinctive character.
- 5.16. **Core Policy 52 Green Infrastructure (CP52)** states that development should make provision for the retention and enhancement of the existing green infrastructure network, ensuring suitable links are provided and maintained.
- 5.17. **Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping (CP57)** outlines that a high standard of design is required in all new developments, creating a strong sense of place by taking reference from the local context.
- 5.18. **Core Policy 58 Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment (CP58)** states that development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. It advises that distinctive elements of Wiltshire’s historic environment, including non-designated heritage assets, which contribute to a sense of local character and identity will be conserved, and where possible enhanced.
- 5.19. **Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport (CP60)** states that sustainable, safe and efficient movement will be encouraged and supported by the Council.
- 5.20. **Core Policy 61 Transport and New Development (CP61)** emphasises 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.
- 5.21. **Core Policy 62 Developments Impact on the Transport Network (CP62)** – states that developments should provide the appropriate mitigating measures to offset any adverse impacts on the transport network.
- 5.22. **Core Policy 64 Demand Management (CP64)** states that demand management measures (such as traffic management and smarter choice measures and residential and private non-residential

parking standards), will be promoted where appropriate to reduce reliance on the car and to encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.

- 5.23. **Core Policy 67 Flood Risk (CP67)** – states that all new development will include measures to reduce the rate of rainwater run-off and include sustainable urban drainage features wherever possible.

5.24. **Warminster Neighbourhood Plan (WNP)**

The Neighbourhood Plan for Warminster was formally made in November 2016 and a Review of the Neighbourhood Plan is currently underway. With regard to the weight to be attached to it in the determination of planning applications, when assessed against paragraph 14 of the NPPF, the WNP is more than five years old and so is of limited weight in the determination of planning applications such as this.

- 5.25. Of relevance to this application are WNP policies E2, E5 and GA4.

- 5.26. As referred to above at paragraph 2.7 Warminster Town Council, through the NPSG, is currently in the process of bringing forward a Neighbourhood Plan Review (NPR). It is understood that a Reg.14 Draft is due to be published for consultation early in 2026. The scheme shown in **Figure 1** above has previously been consulted on by the Steering Group, in a specific housing site allocations consultation exercise that took place between March – April 2025. The development shown at **Figure 1** above was put forward for c.79 dwellings, as one of three sites shortlisted for inclusion as allocations within the emerging NPR.

- 5.27. The supporting text accompanying the above consultation exercise refers specifically to the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan Review (LPR) and mentioning an identified need for more affordable homes. Affordable Housing will be set at 40% within the LPR, therefore the Town Council is looking to allocate sufficient land to provide 90 affordable homes in the emerging NPR, which would require 225 houses to be built in total.

- 5.28. Whilst the scheme the subject of this application does not currently have support from the NPSG, it can at least be stated that this general location and part of the site have been considered acceptable for development, in principle, by the NPSG.

5.29. **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – December 2024**

The following NPPF chapters are of relevance to this proposal:

- Chapter 2 (Achieving sustainable development)
- Chapter 4 (Decision-making)
- Chapter 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes)
- Chapter 8 (Promoting healthy and safe communities)
- Chapter 9 (Promoting sustainable transport)
- Chapter 11 (Making effective use of land)
- Chapter 12 (Achieving well-designed places)
- Chapter 14 (Meeting the challenge of climate change)
- Chapter 15 (Conserving and enhancing the natural environment)

- 5.30. The revised Standard Method for calculating housing requirements, which accompanied the revised December 2024 NPPF, calculates that the proposed housing requirement for Wiltshire will be 3,525 new homes annually.

Wiltshire Housing Land Supply Position

- 5.31. The latest Wiltshire Council Statement on Housing Land Supply (June 2025) confirms that the District only has a **2.42 year** housing land supply, a very significant shortfall of 9,561 dwellings when calculated against the identified Local Housing Need (LHN) of 3,525 new homes per year.
- 5.32. There is therefore a significant shortfall in housing supply and it is concluded that Wiltshire Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply for the purposes of assessing this application against NPPF Para. 11d (footnote 8). The relevant strategic policies within both CP1 and CP2 are out of date for the purposes of determining applications. Accordingly, a presumption in favour of sustainable development applies to this proposal and the “tilted balance” should be applied.

Wiltshire Local Plan Review

- 5.33. The Council is currently in the process of producing a Local Plan Review (LPR), to cover the period 2020 2038. The Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State and is currently undergoing

Examination. At the time of writing, the Examination Inspectors have paused all Hearing sessions and asked the Council to provide further evidence on a number of factors including the Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessment, housing need and the housing requirement, and employment land, together with the plan period.

- 5.34. Whilst this emerging plan can only be accorded limited weight, given it has not yet been found sound by the Examination Inspectors, it is worth referring to LPR Policy 58 (Warminster Market Town). This policy recognises Warminster's importance as a key location for further housing and economic growth within the Trowbridge HMA. The policy advises that, over the plan period, approximately 1,780 homes and 5.6ha of employment land will be provided at Warminster, including dwellings and employment on existing allocations at West Warminster Urban Extension, Bore Hill Farm and Boreham Road. In addition, the neighbourhood area designation requirement is 90 dwellings.
- 5.35. The emerging LPR (Policy 76) also includes a revised Affordable Housing policy, seeking a requirement for 40% on all housing sites of 10 dwellings or more. As the LPR has yet to be adopted, this application assumes provision of 30% affordable housing in line with Core Strategy policy CP43.

6.0 Planning Policy Analysis

- 6.1. This section of the Planning Statement considers the principle of development and the sustainable development benefits of the proposal, taking into account the Council's pre-application advice response of December 2024 (see **Appendix 1**) and the promotion history of the site with regard to the emerging Neighbourhood Plan Review (NPR).
- 6.2. The principle of residential development for the site is considered to be acceptable having regard to the Development Plan, the current NPPF (December 2024) and the proposed scheme benefits.

Principle of Development

- 6.3. The development proposals seek to deliver up to 77 no. new homes in what is considered by the WCS to be a sustainable location, appropriate for growth. Whilst the development site lies outside, but immediately adjoining, the defined Settlement Framework Boundary of Warminster as defined within the WCS, the Site is well-related to the settlement and is within easy walking distance of existing facilities within the town.
- 6.4. Whilst the development is not allocated within the spatial strategy set out in the WCS, this document is now over 10 years old and is considered to be out of date for the purposes of assessing planning applications of this nature. The weight to be attached to it is therefore significantly reduced.
- 6.5. Notwithstanding this, a number of material considerations exist that lend considerable weight to the acceptability of development on this site and that, on balance, the development is acceptable when judged against the Development Plan as a whole. These considerations are as follows.

Contribution to Housing Supply

- 6.6. First and foremost, this development will make a material contribution towards Wiltshire District's housing land supply and supporting National Government policy for significantly boosting the supply of housing, as advised at paragraph 61 of the NPPF. As the NPPF also

recognises, at paragraph 73, medium-sized sites such as this can be built-out quickly, adding weight to their ability to assist with a five-year housing land supply

- 6.7. As advised above, the latest Wiltshire Council Statement on Housing Land Supply (June 2025) confirms that the district only has a **2.42 year** housing land supply (a very significant shortfall of 9,561 dwellings against identified Local Housing Need).
- 6.8. On this basis, Wiltshire District cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply for the purposes of NPPF Para. 11d (footnote 8), and therefore these relevant strategic policies within both CP1 and CP2 of the WCS are out of date for the purposes of determining applications. Accordingly, a presumption in favour of sustainable development applies in this instance.
- 6.9. With specific regard to NPPF para. 11d(ii), this states:
- “Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.
For decision-taking this means:*
- d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:*
- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed; or*
- ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.”*
- 6.10. It is considered that any adverse impacts associated with the development will not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole. This is particularly so when considering the Site’s sustainable location adjoining the key settlement of Warminster; the effective use of the land deemed to be developable; the ability to secure a well-designed place that works with the Site’s existing characteristics; and the provision of affordable housing.

Lack of policy constraints

- 6.11. The site is unconstrained in terms of existing environmental and heritage designations. It does not lie within the Cranborne Chase National Landscape (formerly AONB) or any protected local landscape areas. It is not within or close to any sensitive ecological sites or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). It lies within Flood Zone 1 and is at low-risk from surface water flooding. Finally, the site is not within a Conservation Area and there are no Listed Buildings on the site.
- 6.12. The key constraint is the Sites' position relative to the Warminster Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW), and potential landscape impact associated with its proximity to the National Landscape and a Special Landscape Feature, both situated to the S/SE of the Site. Both issues are considered below.

Sustainable location

- 6.13. The site lies directly adjoining the existing built-up area of Warminster, which is a defined Market Town and the key settlement within the Warminster Community Area, as defined in WCS policy CP1. The Site is well connected to existing facilities and amenities within the town. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 within the submitted Transport Assessment indicates that there are a number of amenities within 1200m of the site, including primary school and public houses. Warminster town centre is generally within a 2000m (i.e. 25-minute) walking distance, which contains various convenience and comparison shops, along with the train station.
- 6.14. Local bus service 50 stops on Ashley Place, within easy walking distance of the site, which provides an hourly service into central Warminster during daytime hours on Monday - Friday.
- 6.15. The proposal will have vehicular and pedestrian access via Ashley Coombe, incorporating links into the existing pedestrian footway network that provides access to the key community facilities within the town, including the local bus route referred to above. The existing public right of way across the site will be incorporated within the scheme, which provides an alternative pedestrian access to the town centre via Lower Marsh Road.

Sustainable Development

- 6.16. As demonstrated above, Wiltshire Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of housing land. In addition, the Core Strategy is over 10 years old and is considered to be out-of-date. The application should therefore be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development (NPPF paragraph 11d), and the 'tilted balance' should be engaged.
- 6.17. The proposed development does not fall within either of the two exceptions to the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in NPPF paragraph 11d (i and ii). The proposal is therefore not excluded from the presumption on this basis.
- 6.18. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is at the heart of the NPPF. Paragraph 7 states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, this objective is summarised as '*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*'.
- 6.19. Three overarching objectives to achieve sustainable development are identified as economic, social and environmental in Paragraph 8.
- 6.20. The proposed development's benefits and their alignment to these respective objectives is considered below:
- 6.21. The **Economic** objective is achieved through the following:
1. The new residents will increase demand for local services and businesses.
 2. Increased investment in the local community, supporting the vitality of Warminster.
 3. Construction and related industry job creation.
 4. Increased local resident expenditure
 5. Increased Council Tax payments
- 6.22. The **Social** objective is achieved by the following:
- Delivery of much needed new, high-quality homes in a desirable community and a sustainable location within walking distance of existing local facilities and amenities. A mix of housing

typologies will be provided to facilitate inclusive and balanced communities and assist the Council with its housing land supply. The final housing mix would be secured at Reserved Matters stage.

6.23. *Affordable and Accessible Homes:*

This application includes 30% affordable and accessible homes, in line with WCS policy CP43, allowing many families who cannot access market housing to benefit from a home. The provision of these affordable homes should therefore be given very significant weight.

6.24. *Transport, Connectivity and Access:*

Warminster is a defined Market Town and the key settlement within the Warminster Community Area, which benefits from a wide range of existing services and facilities.

6.25. A Framework Travel Plan (FTP) has been prepared in support of the redevelopment of the Site. The FTP identifies measures and initiatives to encourage travel to and from the Site by sustainable modes of travel and is submitted as a separate document, in line with WCS policy CP61.

6.26. The development proposal can mitigate impact upon the local highway network in line with WCS policy CP62 and there are no material highway or transportation matters that could preclude the local authority from approving this planning application.

6.27. The site therefore resonates the NPPF sustainable development principles and the social dimension.

6.28. The **Environmental** objective is achieved through the following:

6.29. *Ecology:*

Stark Ecology Ltd has undertaken a series of ecological surveys at the Site and has prepared an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). The EclA has concluded the following:

6.30. The site boundaries are used by a range of bat species, including high numbers of lesser and greater horseshoe bats at the southwest end of the site late in the summer, which may indicate that these species use this area of the site when breeding. It will be necessary to demonstrate that this boundary of the site can remain unaffected by disturbance from light spill but these

details can be addressed through Reserved Matters and when further landscaping details are available later in the planning process. Undeveloped buffer zones and existing boundary hedgerows will be maintained and enhanced as necessary.

- 6.31. Surveys for great crested newt and hazel dormouse confirmed that these species will not be impacted by the development proposals for this site. The site is suitable for reptile species and details are set out in the EclA of appropriate methods for initial site clearance, to protect reptiles from accidental harm. Further details would be agreed as part of a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP), which is likely to be required at the Reserved Matters stage.
- 6.32. The site supports limited nesting habitat for bird species but it is an important resource for foraging by a range of species. The grassland in the Public Open Space will continue to provide good foraging habitat and planting up of scrub boundaries would benefit bird species (both for foraging and nesting). Again, the details of this would be dealt with at Reserved Matters, as part of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).
- 6.33. The site is able to exceed the 10% BNG uplift required through the establishment of Other Neutral Grassland in Good condition throughout all areas of Public Open Space that are within the red line planning boundary. There is no need to utilise Off-Site areas to achieve this. The proposal therefore complies with WCS policy CP50.
- 6.34. *Landscape and Visual Impact:*
David Jarvis Associates (DJA) has prepared a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). In summary the LVIA has concluded as follows:
- 6.35. The Site lies within the “Wooded Greensand Hills” Landscape Character Type (LCT) and within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 7A “Longleat-Stourhead Greensand Hills” in the Wiltshire Landscape Character Assessment published in 2019.
- 6.36. The greatest landscape effects would inevitably be on the landscape character of the Site itself and the pastoral farmland which would inevitably undergo major adverse effects. There would be minor beneficial effects on the hedgerows and hedgerow trees which bound the Site as these would be enhanced as part of the Proposed Development.

- 6.37. In terms of visual amenity, this LVIA concludes that the greatest effects resulting from the Proposed Development would be from receptors within the Site, namely PRoW footpaths WARM58 and WARM59. From these PRoW, some existing rural views to the east would be replaced by residential development which would present moderate-major/substantial visual effects. Major adverse effects would also be experienced from the southern boundary of Ashley Coombe.
- 6.38. Minor adverse effects would be experienced from the higher ground to the north-east where the Proposed Development would be visible distantly from Middle Hill and Battlesbury Hill. Such views would, however, present only minor adverse effects owing to the Proposed Development forming a very small part of the wider panoramic view already containing the extensive settlement of Warminster.
- 6.39. Importantly, there would be no visibility of the Proposed Development from the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs National Landscape, including from Cley Hill, owing to the screening effect of intervening hedgerows, hedgerow trees and/or built form.
- 6.40. In conclusion, the LVIA advises that it has been demonstrated that the relevant LCA can be reinforced and that, except for the PRoW located within or very close to the Site, visual receptors in the surrounding area will not be harmed. Therefore, the proposals are compliant with WCS policy CP51 in landscape and visual terms, and appropriate for the edge of settlement location.
- 6.41. *Archaeology and Heritage:*
A Heritage and Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been completed by Landgage, following a site walkover and geophysical survey of the site. This has concluded as follows:
- 6.42. The site assessment found that only the following built heritage assets required detailed assessment:
- Butlers' Coombe Farmhouse (grade II listed building, NHLE 136443)
 - Christ Church (grade II listed building, NHLE 1036199)

This assessment concluded that the proposed development would cause no impact in the case of Butler's Coombe Farmhouse, and a negligible impact to Christ Church. The impacts and effects of the proposed development are therefore considered to be an acceptable outcome for

the heritage assets surrounding the study site and conforms with the requirements of paragraphs 213 to 215 of the NPPF.

- 6.43. With regard to below-ground archaeology, the assessment has found that the study site has a known potential for Prehistoric, Post Medieval and Modern archaeological buried remains to be present in the study site based on the available HER data, historic mapping analysis and the recent geophysical survey.
- 6.44. Based on the distance from the known Roman and Saxon findspots in the search area, it is considered that there is a low potential for below ground remains to be present in the study site associated with the Roman period and the Saxon settlement at Warminster. The assessment has found that there is a general potential for below ground remains likely dating to the Medieval based on the HER data from the search area, attributed to agricultural activities.
- 6.45. The significance of the potential archaeological remains has been assessed, and it has been found that any buried archaeological remains which may be present within the study site would be of no more than local significance. Given the local significance of the potential archaeological remains within the study site, it is considered that the impacts could be adequately mitigated by the implementation of a programme of archaeological works, secured via the planning process. The archaeological works would comprise a staged programme of works which could be secured via a suitably worded planning condition and be targeted on the known remains highlighted in the geophysical survey.
- 6.46. On this basis, it is considered that the proposal complies with the NPPF as well as WCS policy CP58.
- 6.47. *Sustainable Design and Construction:*
Accompanying this application is an illustrative Layout Plan (Ref: RL102/120D) which demonstrates that a development of up to 77 dwellings, incorporating a mix of 2, 3 and 4-bed dwellings including associated landscaping, drainage, public open space and children's play space, can be accommodated on the Site. It is considered the proposals will deliver a high-quality development that responds well to the character and appearance of this part of the town.

- 6.48. The overall density of the development takes into account the prevailing residential character of the surrounding area, which consists primarily of detached/semi-detached family dwellings with garden plots. The applicant will design the scheme to make effective use and protection of natural resources where possible (e.g. hedgerows) and promote sustainable design through the use of materials, and the orientation and design of the dwellings themselves.
- 6.49. The dwellings will be designed with energy efficiency in mind, with highly insulated walls and roof and heating systems that meet or exceed the current Building Regulations. Sustainable heating and hot-water generation will be incorporated within the scheme, through the use of Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP) and solar panels. Electric Vehicle Charge Points (EVCP) will be installed for each property. Therefore, this overall design approach is considered to be in line with paragraph 128 of the NPPF and policies CP41 and CP57 of the WCS.
- 6.50. *Flood Risk and Drainage:*
It has been established that the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1, which is land assessed to be at the lowest probability of fluvial flooding. The site has also been established to be at a very low risk of flooding surface water flooding; there is some minor localised ponding near to Ashley Coombe, which will be addressed by providing adequate surface water drainage as part of this proposed scheme.
- 6.51. With regard to groundwater flooding, Wiltshire Council's Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), November 2024 identifies the area to sit within a zone where there is a risk of groundwater flooding to surface and subsurface assets and a possibility of groundwater emerging at the surface locally. However, given the site is located at the top of a slope this risk of flooding is considered low. Finally, with regard to sewer flooding, the SFRA shows there have been no reports of sewer flooding in the vicinity of the site, therefore the risk of sewer flooding is considered low.
- 6.52. To prevent the increased risk of flooding both on and off site, the following drainage strategy is proposed:
- Roof water runoff from dwellings would be captured by rainwater gutters, downpipes that would discharge to domestic water butts where feasible for the purposes of irrigating domestic gardens.

- Surface water runoff from the proposed roof areas, drives and highways will connect via gravity into the proposed surface water sewer network within the development's road network and conveyed to an attenuation pond situated towards the northern edge of the site.
- The attenuation pond will store and attenuate all surface water flows for all storm events up to and including a 1 in 100 year event, with a 45% allowance for climate change. The pond will also provide the necessary water quality, biodiversity and amenity improvements.
- Surface water will discharge from the site at 3.6/s for all storm events up to and including a 1 in 100 year event, with a 45% allowance for climate change. This is equivalent to the existing sites greenfield runoff rate.

6.53. In terms of flood risk and drainage strategy, it is concluded that the development can be occupied and operated safely and that there will be no increase in the level of flood risk to the site or neighbouring areas. Therefore, the proposal complies with the NPPF and WCS policy CP67.

6.54. *Access:*

The planning application seeks outline permission with all matters reserved, except for means of access. The access proposals are presented on Drawing No: 1973/04 and comprise:

- Extension of Ashley Coombe into the Site to provide 5.5m access road (Drg No 1973/04);
- Provide 2m footway on west side of the access road between properties 12 and 14 Ashley Coombe and then 2m footway on both sides of the road within the Site

6.55. Swept path tracking has been undertaken of the access proposals and this demonstrates that an 11.2m refuse vehicle can enter and exit the proposed Site access in forward gear. This is presented on Drawing No: 1973/SP/02, which is included in the Transport Assessment.

6.56. The access proposals provide a suitable means of accessing the proposed residential development and therefore complies with WCS Policies CP61 and CP62.

6.57. *Odour:*

As a result of the presence of odour sources within the vicinity of the site, primarily the Warminster Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) and Warminster Biodigester plant, the applicant instructed specialist odour consultants (Entran) to prepare a full Odour Impact Assessment.

- 6.58. This assessment involved undertaking a series of odour survey “sniff tests” at various points along the boundary of the application site. 20 visits were undertaken on various dates throughout the year, and at various times of day, in order to provide a robust assessment. Entran also contacted Wessex Water (the WwTW operator) directly to find out if any odour complaints have been received in the last three years.
- 6.59. The Odour Assessment has advised that the "sniff tests" detected no odour at the site. In addition, Wessex Water has advised that no complaints have been received. Based on this expert evidence, it seems odour from sources in the vicinity of the site are not a concern in relation to the extent/layout of development proposed within this application.

7.0 Planning Obligations – Draft S106 Heads of Terms

7.1 It is expected that the following matters will need to be covered as planning obligations as part of the scheme. The applicant would welcome discussion and confirmation of these matters as part of the determination process so that an appropriate agreement can be concluded at the earliest opportunity.

- The provision of 30% on-site affordable housing and policy compliant tenure split.
- On-site open space provision.
- Education contributions to be confirmed during the course of the application.
- Healthcare Contribution
- Bus Service Contribution
- NNAMS Credits

8.0 Planning Balance and Conclusion

- 8.1. This application is made in the context of the Government's requirement to significantly boost housing land supply and the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as outlined in the NPPF (December 2024).
- 8.2. The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply. This proposal will assist the overall housing land supply and the identified needs for market and affordable housing in Wiltshire as a whole. As the WCS is now over 10 years old, the policies most important for determining the application are considered to be out of date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies via paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF (December 2024).
- 8.3. If permitted, construction of the Site is likely to begin within the next two years and will increase the supply and choice of housing at this sustainable location at the Market Town of Warminster. It would contribute towards economic growth and have wider social benefits to the local community, meeting a requirement for both market and affordable housing. The design and layout of the development, as described within the Design and Access Statement, will ensure that a high-quality scheme is delivered.
- 8.4. The supporting material, assessments and reports submitted with the application demonstrate that there are no technical or environmental constraints that would preclude the development of the Site, subject to planning conditions and/or obligations where relevant/necessary.
- 8.5. The relevant material considerations in this case are:
- The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land;
 - The Site is suitable and accessible for residential development in terms of location and characteristics;
 - The Site is not of high environmental or heritage value; and
 - There are no significant and demonstrable adverse impacts arising from the development
- 8.6. The proposal is in general conformity with policies contained within the adopted WCS, when assessed as a whole.

- 8.7. As a result, the NPPF policies on the delivery of sustainable housing development carry significant weight, and the delivery of the proposed development would support housing and economic development objectives, in compliance with all three strands of sustainable development contained within the NPPF (social, economic and environmental).
- 8.8. There are no technical or environmental impacts that would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal outlined above, and it is considered that material considerations exist which mean that, on balance, planning permission should be granted.

Appendix 1

Council pre-application advice response dated 11 December 2024