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19th March 2025

Submission of an outline planning application (all matters reserved) for 7 self-build and custom housebuilding dwellings on land between 84 and 108 Ragged Hall Lane, Chiswell Green

For whom it may concern,

This cover letter is submitted in support of an outline planning application (all matters reserved) for 7 self-build and custom housebuilding dwellings on land between 84 and 108 Ragged Hall Lane, Chiswell Green, and is to be read in conjunction with the supporting material.

St Albans City and District Council is designated under Section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of applications for planning permission for non-major development. This designation has had effect from 09.00 on 6 March 2024 and shall remain in force until revoked. This application for planning permission is made directly to the Secretary of State for determination.

This application is submitted subsequent to the dismissal of planning appeal assigned reference APP/B1930/W/24/3345004 dated 20th January 2025. It involves relatively minor but material changes, as explained more fully within the Design and Access Statement incorporating Planning Statement, and comprises the following documentation submitted in support of the previous scheme of development assigned planning reference 5/2024/0144:

- Completed Planning Application Forms together with Certificate B
- Design and Access Statement incorporating Planning Statement
- Location Plan for the site
- Flood Risk Assessment for the site sourced from the Environment Agency's online mapping facility
- Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy prepared by Bright Plan
- Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Statement relating to a scheme at Colney Heath
- Technical Details specification for the site

- Transport Statement prepared by Bright Plan
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by RPS
- St Albans Stage 2 Green Belt Review report and Annex report

The scheme under promotion is submitted in outline with all matters reserved and is very similar in substance to the scheme that was dismissed on appeal under reference APP/B1930/W/24/3345004 was limited to a single issue, that being whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). This application is supported by newly prepared material to robustly and satisfactorily address the single main issue relating to the dismissed appeal case. New supporting material comprises:

- A legal opinion prepared by Leanne Buckley-Thomson of No.5 Chambers dated 17 February 2025 to advise as to whether, in her view, the Site constitutes Grey Belt within the meaning set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 ('the NPPF 2024')
- An Indicative Landscape Masterplan prepared by The Landscape Workshop dated February 2025 to demonstrate how an extensive landscape planting area could be provided to the northern boundary of the site, to include land under the ownership of the applicant that falls outside the planning application boundary.
- A revised indicative site layout plan prepared by DHA Planning dated February 2025
- An indicative access arrangement and internal footway plan prepared by DHA Planning dated February 2025 to evidence that the site could accommodate a satisfactory highway access arrangement and internal footway provision
- A number of recent appeal decisions, to include a number of appeal decisions involving grey belt in St Albans administrative area
- The Planning Committee report relating to Land At Cooters End Lane And Ambrose Lane Harpenden, Hertfordshire that was approved by St Albans City and District Planning Committee on 17th February 2025
- The Planning Committee report and supporting material relating to Land Adjacent 38 House Lane, Sandridge (planning reference 5/2024/2093/PIP) that sought permission for the erection of two dwellings that was approved by St Albans City and District Planning Committee on 24th February 2025

A summary of relevant issues is set out under suitably-worded headings.

National Planning Policy Guidance update on Green Belt – 27 February 2025

The National Planning Policy Guidance update on Green Belt was published on 27 February 2025, the previous update being 22 July 2019. Key excerpts drawn from the PPG are presented as follows:

How can Green Belt assessments be used in the development management process?

An assessment of Green Belt will (alongside other considerations) inform the determination of applications which involve reaching a judgement as to whether

proposals utilise grey belt land and whether development of the site would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area.

Where grey belt sites are not identified in existing plans or Green Belt assessments, it is expected that authorities should consider evidence, in light of this guidance, on:

- whether the site strongly contributes to the Green Belt purposes a, b or d; and
- whether the application of policies to areas and assets of particular importance identified in footnote 7 to the NPPF (other than Green Belt) provide a strong reason to restrict development; and
- whether development of the site would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt across the plan area, as set out in national policy and this guidance.

Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 64-009-20250225

How should the contribution land makes to the relevant Green Belt purposes be assessed?

When making judgements as to whether land is grey belt, authorities should consider the contribution that assessment areas make to Green Belt purposes a, b, and d. Considerations for informing these judgements are set out below:

Purpose A – to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas: this purpose relates to the sprawl of large built up areas. Villages should not be considered large built up areas.

Purpose B – to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another: this purpose relates to the merging of towns, not villages.

Chiswell Green is identified as a Tier 5 Medium Sized Village in Table 1.3 - Settlement Hierarchy within the Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 19 Publication dated September 2024. The village of Chiswell Green is modest in size and is much smaller than a number of Tier 1, 2, 3 and 4 settlements in the district, to include Harpenden which is a tier 1 settlement.

<p>Tier 5 Medium Sized Village</p>	<p>Smaller population size compared to the Large Villages Provision of key services Functional relationship with St Albans and Watford for high order services Availability of bus routes and rail branch line to provide transport offer</p>	<p>Bricket Wood Chiswell Green How Wood Park Street</p>
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Chiswell Green which is identified as a Tier 5 Medium Sized Village in Table 1.3 - Settlement Hierarchy within the Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 19 Publication dated September 2024. The St Albans District Local Plan was submitted to the Government for examination on Friday 29 November 2024.

Paragraphs 10, 13 and 15 of the appeal decision relating to the site dated 20 January 2025 (appeal Ref: APP/B1930/W/24/3345004) confirm that Chiswell Green is a Village. In accordance with the National Planning Policy Guidance update on Green Belt was published on 27 February 2025 it cannot be found, therefore, that there would be any conflict with Green Belt purposes a and b. As the site does not fall within a Conservation Area there is no conflict with Green Belt purpose d.

The Court of Appeal decision in the case of Mead Realisations Limited v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government handed down that the legal status of the Government's planning policies in the NPPF and its guidance in the PPG is basically the same. No legal distinction exists between them. They are not legislation. Their status is equivalent in the sense that both of them are statements of national policy issued by the Secretary of State when exercising his general power to do so as the minister with overall responsibility for the operation of the planning system.

Key points concerning the appeal decision issued on 20th January 2025 (ref: APP/B1930/W/24/3345004)

It is important to summarise a number of key points concerning the decision-making process that ultimately resulted in the dismissal of the appeal relating to the site assigned reference APP/B1930/W/24/3345004 dated 20st January 2025. Pertinent points are bulleted out below:

- The appellant's submission, to include the S78 Statement of Case, final comments and the further response following publication of the NPPF 2024, all contained reference to key conclusions of the Stage 2 Green Belt Review report dated June 2023 that was prepared by Arup on behalf of St Albans City and District Council to inform their emerging Local Plan. Despite this, the appeal decision contains no corresponding commentary on reference to the submitted evidence drawn from the Stage 2 Green Belt Review report, which is considered to represent a serious oversight, and a material consideration in its own right
- The appellant's submission, to include the S78 Statement of Case, final comments and the further response following publication of the NPPF 2024, all contained extensive reference to a recent appeal decision dated May 2024 on a neighbouring site that permitted 53 dwellings at 52 and land rear of 28-74 Ragged Hall Lane (appeal reference APP/B1930/W/23/3331451). In determining the appeal case assigned reference APP/B1930/W/23/3331451, the Inspector concluded that given the location of the site and the particular nature of its surroundings and the physical features of the Green Belt and settlements around it, the proposal for 53 dwellings would result in limited harm to the purpose of checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (purpose a) and would bring about limited harm to the purpose of preventing neighbouring towns merging into one another (purpose b). Had the neighbouring site at 52 and land rear of 28-74 Ragged Hall Lane been the subject of promotion following adoption of the NPPF 2024, it would plainly meet the definition of grey belt providing the 'golden rules' were satisfied.

- The appeal decision relating to the site (APP/B1930/W/24/3345004) issued on 20th January 2025 refers to no fewer than five appeal decisions that formed part of the appellant's submitted evidence, to include footnote references of the five appeal decisions in question. The appeal decision itself expands out by providing commentary on those appeal decisions in the context of the decision that has been issued. Yet, crucially, the appeal decision issued in relation to the application site dated 20th January 2025 lacks any consideration of the appeal decision on the neighbouring site on land at 52 and land rear of 28-74 Ragged Hall Lane.

Misinterpretation of the definition of grey belt in appeal decision APP/B1930/W/24/3345004

The previous Inspector considered whether the Site constitutes Grey Belt land at paragraph 15 to that decision (ref APP/B1930/W/24/3345004 dated 20th January 2025) stating that:

15. No exceptions to the general presumption against development in the Green Belt under paragraph 154 have been put to me. I have considered arguments that the development is not inappropriate under paragraph 155. **However, the land cannot fall within the definition of Grey Belt as it is not previously developed and the development of it would not check the unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up area, to which its openness makes a strong contribution, having regard to the definition given at Annex 2 of the Framework.** The form of development proposed also does not fall within one of the limited exceptions given at policy 1 of the StADP. Accordingly, I conclude that the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt and would be harmful to its openness both spatially and visually by introducing built form and removing views into the countryside at this sensitive edge-of-village location. In spatial terms, the development would comprise seven new dwellings. The proposal therefore conflicts with policies 1 and 143A of the StADP and provisions of the Framework.

The opinion of Leanne Buckley-Thomson of No. 5 Chambers dated 19th February 2025 is that:

“In my view, it would appear from paragraph 15 of the DL (Decision Letter) that the Inspector has interpreted and applied Annex 2 of the NPPF as though the land cannot meet the definition of Grey Belt unless it is previously developed. That is incorrect given the presence of the words “and/or” within the definition. It is assumed that the Inspector has considered the Site to fall at the first hurdle – i.e. it does not meet the definition of Grey Belt therefore the first part of criterion a) to paragraph 155 is not met meaning the entire paragraph cannot be – but it is not clear if the Inspector has grasped the site-specific focus of the definition in Annex 2 compared with the broader focus of paragraph 155. The Inspector has concluded that the development of the land “would not check the unrestricted sprawl of a large built-up area, to which its openness makes a strong contribution” but has not explained why and how beyond the reference to openness. The concept of unrestricted sprawl does

not mean that there can be no development at all, and thus no impact on openness, hence why this is an important lack of sufficient reasoning.”

On the matter regarding the lack of consideration by the Inspector concerning submitted evidence drawn from the Stage 2 Green Belt Review in support of the appellant’s case, with specific reference to evidence submitted on 3rd January 2025 to consider the relevance of the Framework 2024 to the appeal case that was under consideration at that time, the opinion of Leanne Buckley-Thomson of No. 5 Chambers dated 19th February 2025 presents the following commentary:

“It is also significant that the Inspector has not reconciled the view of both parties that the land meets the Annex 2 definition of Grey Belt and explained why their view differs. It is unclear if the Inspector has repeated the same error as the Council in considering openness even though the land would otherwise meet the definition of Grey Belt in Annex 2 and then has gone one step further in determining that the land cannot then meet the definition. Paragraph 155 does not operate so as to exclude land from the definition of Grey Belt if its criteria are not met; it is technically possible for land to meet the Annex 2 definition of Grey Belt but not meet the criteria in paragraph 155 albeit perhaps unlikely. I also cannot see where the Inspector has explicitly considered the Council’s Green Belt Review.”

Picking up on the points raised in the above extract drawn from the legal opinion of Leanne Buckley-Thomson of No. 5 Chambers, it is important to assert that within the LPA’s submitted a response to the Planning Inspectorate dated 3rd January 2025 in response to a request made by the Inspector invited comments on the relevance of the Framework 2024 to the (then) appeal case the LPA concluded that:

For the purposes of plan-making and decision-making, ‘grey belt’ is defined as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.

“Given its location, the Appeal site does not a) check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; b) prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; or d) preserve the setting and special character of historic towns as outlined in para. 143.

When considering a planning application in the Green Belt, substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt, including harm to its openness. However, footnote 55 of the NPPF states that this is not in the case of development on grey belt land, where development is not inappropriate. Accordingly, an assessment on the effect of the proposed development on the openness is not required. Likewise, very special circumstances do not need to be demonstrated for such a proposal to be considered acceptable.

Crucially, the Lee Valley v Epping Forest District Council Judgment¹ outlines where the development is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, applying the exceptions identified

¹ Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, R (on the application of) v Epping Forest District Council & Anor (Rev 1) [2016] EWCA Civ 404

in the Framework, it should not be regarded harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. **As the proposed development is not inappropriate development, as per paragraph 155 of the Framework, an assessment on the effect of the proposed development on the openness is not required. Likewise, very special circumstances do not need to be demonstrated for the proposal to be considered acceptable.**

Having established that the site falls under the definition of grey belt, it is not understood why the LPA's response dated 3rd January 2025 then strayed into considering Green Belt openness? The below extract is drawn from the LPA's response dated 3rd January 2025:

*Whilst **accepting that the land now falls under the definition of 'grey belt' development** here would be at odds with the Green Belt's essential characteristics of openness and permanence evidenced by the Inspectorate's previous decision on LPA ref 5/2022/1517 where it was stated "that the appeal site provides a visual break and appears as open countryside and the site is not therefore part of the village; seven dwellings would have a significant impact on openness and this is afforded substantial weight. Moderate weight is attached to the provision of 7 houses but that this does not outweigh the harm identified consequently, no very special circumstances are identified to justify permission".*

Land At Cooters End Lane And Ambrose Lane Harpenden, Hertfordshire

St Albans City and District Planning Committee planning committee approved outline planning on 17th February 2025 for 550 homes on 24 hectares of green belt on land At Cooters End Lane And Ambrose Lane Harpenden after the officer's recommendation was to advise that the site met both the new definition of "grey belt" set out in updated national planning policy and the "golden rules" for releasing such plots for development. The planning application was assigned reference 5/2023/0327 and the description of development is as follows:

"Outline application (access sought) - Construction of up to 550 dwellings including circa. 130 Class C2 integrated retirement homes, affordable housing, early years setting, public open space, allotments and publicly accessible recreation space (including junior sport pitches)"

The Committee Report presents extensive evidence concerning the performance of the site against the purposes of the Green Belt, with a particular focus on purposes a, b and d.

Against purpose a, which is concerned with 'unrestricted' sprawl, the Committee Report concludes in paragraph 8.1.22 that the topographical features and the strategic green infrastructure would help to contain the development and provide a defined new edge to the town, thereby, in the view of officers, reducing the contribution of the land to checking the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up area of Harpenden. The report clarifies that purpose a is concerned with 'unrestricted' sprawl, which implies that there would be nothing to stop further development resulting in the continued outward incremental spread of the urban area.

8.1.22. *It is important to recognise that this purpose is concerned with 'unrestricted' sprawl, which implies that there would be nothing to stop further development resulting in the continued outward incremental spread of the urban area. In this regard, the topographical features and the strategic green infrastructure would help to contain the development and provide a defined new edge to the town, thereby, in the view of officers, reducing the contribution of the land to checking the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up area of Harpenden.*

Paragraph 8.1.23 of the Committee Report, as presented below, goes on to conclude that as a matter of planning judgement, it is considered that **the land comprising the application site does not 'strongly' contribute to this purpose. Further, it is considered that the level of harm to this purpose is moderate.**

8.1.23. *In summary, there is no disputing that the proposed development would extend the existing built settlement edge. While it is acknowledged that the land does make a contribution to the purpose of checking the sprawl of a large built-up area, as a matter of planning judgement, it is considered that **the land comprising the application site does not 'strongly' contribute to this purpose. Further, it is considered that the level of harm to this purpose is moderate.***

In respect of Green Belt purpose b (to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another) paragraphs 8.1.24 to 8.1.26 of the Committee Report sets out the associated considerations and planning judgement made by the local authority.

8.1.24. *The SKM Stage 1 GBR assessed the extent to which strategic land parcels serve as gaps or spaces between settlements, focussing on gaps between the 'tier 1' settlements of St Albans, Harpenden, Hemel Hempstead, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Watford, Luton and Dunstable and Radlett. The SKM Stage 1 GBR report noted that the larger strategic parcel (GB40) contributes towards the strategic gap between Harpenden and Luton and Dunstable, but that any small to medium- reduction in the gap would be unlikely to compromise the separation of 1st tier settlement in physical and visual terms, and overall openness. The larger strategic parcel GB40 was therefore considered to make a partial contribution to this Green Belt purpose.*

8.1.25. *In addition to the tier 1 settlements detailed above, the Stage 2 Arup Green Belt Review also considers the 'tier 2' settlements of Bricket Wood, Chiswell Green, How Wood, London Colney, Park Street / Frogmore Redbourn and Wheathampstead within St Albans District, and Slip End, Kings Langley, Markyate, Abbots Langley and Welham Green (within neighbouring local authorities).*

8.1.26. *The Arup GBR details that sub-area SA-19 makes no discernible contribution to the separation between the neighbouring built-up areas in physical or perceptual terms. However, in relation SA-20 and SA-21, the Arup GBR notes that these sub-areas form a less essential part of the gap between Harpenden and Luton and it is judged that the gap is of sufficient scale that the removal of the sub-area would not result in physical or perceptual merging between the neighbouring built up areas. **As a planning judgement therefore, it is considered that the land comprising the application site does not***

'strongly' contribute to this purpose. In addition, no harm is identified in relation to this purpose.

The Committee Report provides an overview of the Green Belt studies, and places a particular emphasis on the Arup Green Belt Review dated June 2023. The LPA has drawn out information from the Arup Stage 2 GBR report to asserts that in relation sub-parcels SA-20 and SA-21, the Arup GBR notes that these sub-areas form a less essential part of the gap between Harpenden and Luton and it is judged that the gap is of sufficient scale that the removal of the sub-area would not result in physical or perceptual merging between the neighbouring built up areas. As a planning judgement therefore, the LPA has found that the land comprising **the application site does not 'strongly' contribute to this purpose. In addition, no harm is identified in relation to this purpose.**

The sub-parcel areas SA-19, SA-20 and SA-21 are presented in Figure 2 of the Planning Committee report prepared for the scheme approved under reference 5/2023/0327. The Committee Report confirms in paragraph 8.1.14 that the application site comprises 22.6% of the land contained within Parcels SA-19, SA-20 and S-A21, taken together. The application site in question extends to 24 hectares.

Paragraph 8.1.14 of the Committee Report goes onto explain that a site-specific assessment and planning judgement on the harm to Green Belt purposes of the proposed development at the application site on its own has been generated, drawing on the relevant evidence base as a material consideration.

8.1.14. It is noted that the application site comprises only 22.6% of the land contained within Parcels SA-19, SA-20 and S-A21, taken together. Therefore, in order to reach an informed view on the contribution of the land and impact of the development within the application site itself to the purposes of the Greenbelt, as part of an assessment of the planning application, a site-specific assessment is necessary. A site-specific assessment and planning judgement on the harm to Green Belt purposes of the proposed development at the application site on its own is provided below, drawing on the relevant evidence base as a material consideration:

Applying the learned outcomes from the outline scheme on Land At Cooters End Lane And Ambrose Lane Harpenden, Hertfordshire (reference 5/2023/0327) granted approval by committee to the application site generates very clear and robust analysis that is directly applicable to the scheme under promotion of land between 84 to 108 Ragged Hall Lane (the site), as bulleted out below:

- the application site is located on the edge of Chiswell Green which is identified as a Tier 5 Medium Sized Village in Table 1.3 - Settlement Hierarchy within the Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 19 Publication dated September 2024.
- the village of Chiswell Green is modest in size and is much smaller than a number of Tier 1, 2, 3 and 4 settlements in the district, to include Harpenden which is a tier 1 settlement
- the village of Chiswell Green is not recognised as a large built-up area in the Stage 2 Green Belt Review report

- the approved outline scheme at Land At Cooters End Lane extends to 24 hectares in size, which is 49 times larger (i.e. 4900%) than the application site (0.49 hectares)
- the approved outline scheme at Land At Cooters End Lane was found to not perform strongly against green belt purposes a, b and d. This judgement was informed by the Stage 2 GBR which was supplemented by a site level appraisal. To generate a site level appraisal for the scheme under consideration the same methodology as was applied in the case of the Land At Cooters End Lane has been utilised. This site level appraisal has confirmed the site does not perform strongly against green belt purposes a, b and d. A consistency of approach has to be applied by the decision maker
- the scheme under promotion includes the submission of a Landscape Masterplan prepared by a Chartered Landscape Architect. The topographical features of the site, which is flat, and the extent of the landscaping area in combination would serve to contain the development and provide a defined new edge to the northern boundary of the site, thereby significantly reducing (or indeed entirely eliminating) the contribution of the land to checking the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up area of Chiswell Green

Land Adjacent 38 House Lane, Sandridge (planning reference 5/2024/2093/PIP)

St Albans City and District Planning Committee planning committee approved outline planning on 24th February 2025 for Permission in Principle - Development of up to two dwellings on Land Adjacent 38 House Lane, Sandridge. The planning committee report sets out that the site meets the new definition of “grey belt” set out in updated national planning policy. The Location Plan and aerial image of the site are presented below. A streetview image of the site from House Lane is provided as an enclosure.

Land Adjacent 38 House Lane, Sandridge – Site Location Plan	Land Adjacent 38 House Lane, Sandridge – aerial image of site

- 8.5.14. The proposal does not comprise previously developed land and, as such, does not meet this part of the definition of grey belt land in this regard.
- 8.5.15. However, consideration of parts a) – d) of Para 155 are as follows:
- 8.5.16. Part a) considers whether the development constitutes Grey Belt land. The definition of Grey Belt land includes considering whether a development strongly contributes to any of purposes (a), (b) or (d) in Paragraph 143. These are as set out in para 8.5.3 above.
- 8.5.17. Given the size and location of the site, it does not strongly contribute to checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas (a).
- 8.5.18. Given the location of this specific site, it would not result in neighbouring towns (in this case Sandridge and St Albans) merging into one another (b).
- 8.5.19. The proposal would not harm the setting and special character of Sandridge. It is also noted that the proposal would not be adjacent to any designated heritage assets (d).
- 8.5.20. The site is therefore considered to fall under the definition of Grey Belt land as set out in the NPPF 2024, it does not strongly contribute to any of the purposes (a), (b) or (d) in Paragraph 143. The proposal for up to two dwellings would therefore be in accordance with Paragraph 155 a) in that the proposal would utilise grey belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.
- 8.5.21. In regard to Paragraph 155 b), the Council does not have a five year housing land supply, therefore there is a demonstrable unmet need for the residential development proposed.
- 8.5.22. Paragraph 155 c) requires that a development would be in a sustainable location, with particular reference to paragraphs 110 and 115 of the NPPF.
- 8.5.23. Paragraph 110 of the NPPF states:
The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.
- 8.5.24. Paragraph 115 of the NPPF states:
In assessing sites that may be allocated for development in plans, or specific applications for development, it should be ensured that:
- a) *sustainable transport modes are prioritised taking account of the vision for the site, the type of development and its location;*
 - b) *safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;*
 - c) *the design of streets, parking areas, other transport elements and the content of associated standards reflects current national guidance, including the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code; and*
 - d) *any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion) or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree through a vision-led approach.*
- 8.5.25. The application site is on the outskirts of the village and within approximately 350m walking distance from both bus stops (providing access to the south to St Albans and North to Wheathampstead). The site is approximately 170m from the village High Street, which includes a small shop and public houses and approximately 385m from a play area and recreation ground. Given the location and nearby amenities and opportunities for bus travel, the application site is considered to be in a sustainable location and would therefore be in accordance with Paragraph 155 c).
- 8.5.26. Paragraph 155 d) requires that where applicable development proposed meets the "Golden Rules" requirements set out in Paragraphs 156-157. The "Golden Rules" relate to major development sites, as the site is not a major development paragraph 156 does not apply.
- 8.5.27. On this basis, the site is considered to be Grey Belt and meets the exception to inappropriate development under paragraph 155 of the NPPF 2024.

Applying the learned outcomes from the outline scheme on Land Adjacent 38 House Lane, Sandridge under planning reference 5/2024/2093/PIP generates very clear and robust analysis that is directly applicable to the scheme under promotion of land between 84 to 108 Ragged Hall Lane (the site), as bulleted out below:

- the application site is located on the edge of Chiswell Green which is identified as a Tier 5 Medium Sized Village in Table 1.3 - Settlement Hierarchy within the Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 19 Publication dated September 2024.
- The site on land adjacent to 38 House Lane, Sandridge is located on the edge (adjacent to but outside) of Sandridge, which is identified as a Tier 6 Green Belt Village in Table 1.3 - Settlement Hierarchy within the Draft Local Plan 2041 Regulation 19 Publication dated September 2024.

Tier 5 Medium Sized Village	Smaller population size compared to the Large Villages Provision of key services Functional relationship with St Albans and Watford for high order services Availability of bus routes and rail branch line to provide transport offer	Bricket Wood Chiswell Green How Wood Park Street
Tier 6 Green Belt Village	Washed over by the Green Belt Smaller population size compared to Medium Sized Villages Some or few key services Generally functional relationship to settlements in higher tiers within the hierarchy which provide key services and higher order services Generally some or limited availability of bus routes to provide public transport offer	Sandridge Colney Heath (three parts) Lea Valley Estate Radlett Road Smallford Napsbury Park Sleepshyde Gustard Wood

- the village of Chiswell Green is modest in size and is much smaller than a number of Tier 1, 2, 3 and 4 settlements in the district, to include Harpenden which is a tier 1 settlement
- the villages of Chiswell Green and Sandridge are not recognised as a large built-up area in the Stage 2 Green Belt Review report
- The Village of Chiswell Green is more sustainable than Sandridge based on access to everyday services and facilities
- The site on land adjacent to 38 House Lane, Sandridge is effectively an open field, with no form of enclosure to the south and east of the site.
- The application site is enclosed on three sides by existing residential development, and will benefit from significant enclosure from landscape planting as shown indicatively in the submitted Landscape Masterplan (indicative)
- It must be found that the application site is grey belt land and meets the exception to inappropriate development under paragraph 155 of the NPPF 2024.

The requisite planning application fee will be paid in due course. A Unilateral Undertaking to secure the provision of self-build and custom housebuilding plots (7) will be submitted under a separate cover following validation.

Thank you for your anticipated attention of this matter. Please do not hesitate to make communication if you have any queries and/or if there is anything else that I can assist with in terms of achieving a speedy validation.

Yours sincerely,

James Hammond



Enclosures

Photograph 1. Frontage of the site at land adjacent 38 House Lane, Sandridge

