

MEETING:	PLANNING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE
DATE:	14TH OCTOBER 2026
TITLE OF REPORT:	260943 - DEVELOPMENT OF NINE DWELLINGS AND ASSOCIATED WORKS AT LAND SOUTHEAST OF WOONTON FARM, WOONTON, ALMELEY For: Mr Mills per Mr Russell Pryce, Unit 5, Westwood Industrial Estate, Ewyas Harold, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 0EL
WEBSITE LINK:	Planning Application Details - Herefordshire Council
Reason Application submitted to Committee – Public Interest	

Date Received: 27 March 2026

Ward: Castle

Grid Ref: 335150,252085

Expiry Date: 21 October 2026

Local Member: Cllr Robert Highfield

1. Site Description and Proposal

- 1.1 The application site is part of the agricultural field located immediately southeast of the C1071/U90410 junction opposite Woonton Farm, Pool House and Pool Cottage and is roughly the shape of a distorted parallelogram. The site is outside of but immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary of Woonton, measures approximately 64m x 150M and has an area of approximately 0.99 hectares as shown on the location plan inserted below. The application site is relatively level with a mature hedgerow running along it's boundary with the public highway. There is no existing boundary with the wider field, the PROW is however located immediately beyond the nearest field hedge.
- 1.2 Location Plan (amended) - is inserted below for ease.



- 1.3 This application seeks full planning consent for the development of 9 dwellings. The houses are generally simple in form with modern architectural detailing and offer a variety of sizes and types. Amended plans were submitted on 28/09/26 which show plots 8 and 9 amended to include lean-to roofs over the single storey sections rather than the previous flat roofs.
- 1.4 The submitted Planning Statement describes the houses as being: arranged in a relatively linear manner but with the siting and orientation varied to reflect the mixed pattern of development in the village. The southwestern cluster of houses is a modern interpretation of a small farmstead. The dwellings have a traditional pitched roof form and are primarily two storey but the scheme also includes a bungalow. The proportions and appearance generally adopt an agrarian design theme with materials to match. The development will be set within a strong landscape and Biodiversity Net Gain framework particularly along the rear garden boundaries comprising of native hedges, trees and new orchard.
- 1.5 The proposal also includes a foul and surface water drainage strategy comprising SuDS infiltration crates to manage surface water and package treatment plant and drainage field soakaways to manage foul.
- 1.6 BNG is proposed on land outside of the residential properties but within the red edge where the drainage fields are also proposed – see plan WF-5627-06A
- 1.7 The plans under consideration in this report are:
 - WF-5627-01A
 - WF-5627-02
 - WF-5627-03A
 - WF-5627-04A,
 - WF-5627-05A,
 - WF-5627-06A

The proposed site plan and street scenes are inserted overleaf for ease.



Site plan- Proposed
1 : 500

Revision A- 28.9.26
"Flat" roof elements of plots 8 and 9, each replaced with a lean-to roof.
Windows above each amended roof adjusted to fit.



Street view- Plots 3-8
1 : 200

2. Policies

- 2.1 On the 17th August 2026 the Ministry of House, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published a revised NPPF which is effective immediately. The Current National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) can be viewed by using the following the link:-

[National Planning Policy Framework.pdf](#)

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

Chapter 3 - Decision-making policies

- DM1 Preparing development proposals
- DM2 Information requirements
- DM3 Determining development proposals
- DM6 Use of planning conditions and obligations

Chapter 4 - Achieving sustainable development

- S3 Presumption in favour of sustainable development
- S5 Principle of development outside settlements
- S6 Neighbourhood plans and the presumption

Chapter 5 - Meeting the challenge of climate change

- CC2 Mitigation of climate change
- CC3 Adaptation to climate change

Chapter 6 – Delivering a sufficient supply of homes

- HO7 Meeting the need for homes

Chapter 12 – Making effective use of land

- L3 Achieving appropriate densities

Chapter 14 – Achieving well-designed places

- DP3 Key principles for well-designed places
- DP4 The design process

Chapter 15 – Promoting sustainable transport

- TR3 Locating development in sustainable locations
- TR4 Street design, access and parking
- TR8 Public rights of way

Chapter 17 – Pollution, public protection and security

- P3 Living conditions and pollution

Chapter 18 – Managing flood risk and coastal change

- F7 Ensuring development is safe from flooding
- F8 Sustainable drainage systems and watercourses

Chapter 19 - Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

- N2 Improving the natural environment
- N3 Trees in new development

Chapter 20 – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

- HE4 Securing the conservation of heritage assets
- HE5 Assessing effects on heritage assets

- 2.2 The Core Strategy policies together with any relevant supplementary planning documentation can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-
https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200185/local_plan/137/adopted_core_strategy

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

SS1	-	Presumption in favour of sustainable development
SS2	-	Delivering new homes
SS3	-	Releasing land for residential development
SS4	-	Movement and transportation
SS6	-	Environmental quality and local distinctiveness
SS7	-	Addressing climate change
RA1	-	Rural housing distribution
RA2	-	Housing in settlements outside Hereford and the market towns
OS1	-	Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities
MT1	-	Traffic Management, highway safety and promoting active travel
LD1	-	Landscape and townscape
LD2	-	Biodiversity and geodiversity
LD3	-	Green Infrastructure
LD4	-	Historic environment and heritage assets
SD1	-	Sustainable Design and energy efficiency
SD2	-	Renewable and low carbon energy
SD3	-	Sustainable water management and water resources
SD4	-	Waste water treatment and river water quality

- 2.3 The site is included within the Almeley Neighbourhood Development Plan area. The NDP was made on 28 June 2019. It now forms part of the Development Plan for Herefordshire.

The adopted NDP can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-
[Almeley Neighbourhood Development Plan - Herefordshire Council](#)

The following policies are considered relevant to this application:

ALM1	–	Promoting sustainable development
ALM2	–	Maintaining and protecting the landscape and its features
ALM3	–	Protecting Heritage Assets
ALM4	–	Protection of local green space
ALM5	–	Design
ALM6	–	Sustainable Design
ALM11	–	Housing development in Woonton
ALM15	–	Highway requirements
ALM16	–	Sewage and Sewerage Infrastructure
ALM17	–	Protection from Flood Risk

- 2.4 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) (the 2012 Regulations) and paragraph 33 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires a review of local plans be undertaken at least every five years in order to determine whether the plan policies and spatial development strategy are in need of updating, and should then be updated as necessary. The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted on 15 October 2015 and a review was required to be completed before 15 October 2020. The decision to review the Core Strategy was made on 9th November 2020 and the review process is currently underway. The level of consistency of the policies in the local plan with the NPPF will be taken into account by the Council in deciding any application. In this case, the most relevant policies of the CS – which are considered to be those relating to meeting housing needs, guiding rural housing provision, highways safety and safeguarding features of environmental value (amongst others) – have been reviewed and are considered to be consistent with the NPPF. As such, it is considered that they can still be attributed significant weight.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 Pre-planning advice has been provided for this site on two occasions. Application P171294/CE provided advice regarding a development of 4 residential dwellings. Application P252100/CE provided advice regarding a development of 8 residential dwellings. The application site is now slightly deeper than the area covered by this advice but is fundamentally the same.
- 3.2 Planning permission was sought via P173699/F for 5 residential dwellings, the application was refused in September 2019 and an appeal against that decision was dismissed in March 2020. Details of the application and appeal can be found using the following link:
[Planning Application Details - Herefordshire Council](#)

4. Consultation Summary

	Consulted	No Response	No objection	Qualified Comment	Object
Welsh Water	x		x		
Area Engineer (Highways)	x		x		
Ecology	x		x		
Prow Officer	x		x		
The Ramblers	x	x			
Drainage	x		x		
Waste	x		x		

- 4.1 The consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-
[Planning Application Details - Herefordshire Council](#)
However representations received are as follows:

4.2 Welsh Water Comments:

We refer to your planning consultation relating to the above site, and we can provide the following comments in respect to the proposed development.

This application is located in an unsewered area and since the proposal intends on utilising an alternative to mains drainage, we would advise that the applicant seek advice from the Environment Agency and the Building Regulations Authority as both are responsible to regulate alternative methods of drainage.

Our response is based on the information provided by your application. Should the proposal alter during the course of the application process we kindly request that we are re-consulted and reserve the right to make new representation.

4.3 Local Highway Authority Comments:

The proposed application seeks the development of nine dwellings and associated works. Planning permission was approved for the site for five dwellings (ref 173699), however, following judicial review, this application was refused due to the site being outside of the NDP settlement boundary. The application was not refused on highways grounds.

Within the previous planning application (ref 173699), the highway authority did not object to the scheme but did outline a number of conditions relating to visibility splays, vehicular access construction, parking, footpath provision, site operative parking and the provision of secure cycle parking.

During the appeal, the Inspector did not consider transport and accessibility issues.

The proposals include the use of an existing access point. It is proposed that the existing access will be widened to allow for two-way vehicle movements. A drawing included in the Planning Statement shows that suitable visibility of 75m southwest and 37.5m northeast can be provided from the access. This is a betterment to the visibility included in the previous application which indicated 33m visibility in each direction, 2.4m back from the nearside edge of the adjoining carriageway.

Pre-application advice was sought for this scheme, specialist advice was not sought from the local highway authority. In the pre-application response, it was recommended that the scheme demonstrate how the site can offer the choice of active travel options and that secure cycle parking should be provided for each dwelling.

It is noted that the proposed development is located in a rural location with no footways in the surrounding village.

Subject to the conditions outlined below, the local highway authority raise no objection to the proposals.

Conditions:

1. Development shall not begin until details and location of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and which shall be operated and maintained during construction of the development hereby approved:
 - a. A method for ensuring mud is not deposited onto the Public Highway
 - b. Construction traffic access location
 - c. Parking for site operatives
 - d. Construction Traffic Management Plan

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details for the duration of the construction of the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted full details of a scheme for the provision of covered and secure cycle parking facilities within the curtilage of each dwelling shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for their written approval. The covered and secure cycle parking facilities shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details and available for use prior to the occupation of any the dwelling houses hereby permitted. Thereafter these facilities shall be maintained;

Reason: To ensure that there is adequate provision for secure cycle accommodation within the application site, encouraging alternative modes of transport in accordance with both local and national planning policy and to conform to the requirements of Policies SD1 and MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby approved an area shall be laid out within the curtilage of the property for the parking and turning of vehicles which shall be properly consolidated, surfaced and drained in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and that area shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose than the parking of vehicles.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining highway and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Visibility at the site access should be provided in line with details provided in the Planning Statement. Nothing shall be planted, erected and/or allowed to grow on the triangular area of land so formed which would obstruct the visibility described above.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

5. The construction of the vehicular access shall be carried out in accordance with a specification to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, at a gradient not steeper than 1 in 12.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

All applicants are reminded that attaining planning consent does not constitute permission to work in the highway. Any applicant wishing to carry out works in the highway should see the various guidance on Herefordshire Council's website:

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/directory_record/1992/street_works_licence
<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/707/highways>

4.4 Ecology Comments 1 – Further Information Required: 07/07/26

Habitat Regulations Assessment

The site is within the River Wye SAC catchment and this proposed development triggers the legal requirement for a Habitat Regulations Assessment process to be carried out by the LPA. A final HRA 'Appropriate Assessment' completed by the LPA must be formally approved by Natural England PRIOR to any future planning consent being granted.

This HRA process needs to be completed based on all current requirements and considerations and on information supplied in support of this specific application and that is sufficiently detailed to allow any relevant conditions to be secured. The HRA process must be completed with legal and scientific certainty and using a precautionary approach.

From the start of August 2023, there have been changes in the conservation status of the River Wye SSSI - downgraded to "unfavourable declining" by Natural England; and these comments have been completed based on this recent change and updated SSSI Impact Risk Zone information available from Natural England (River Wye SAC – bespoke buffer – Any discharge of water or liquid waste including to mains sewer). The applicant must demonstrate with scientific and legal certainty that the proposed development will create no significant nutrient pathways into the River Wye that may make the current situation worse or hinder any recovery.

Comments on HRA

The application creates new foul water and surface water flows. No mains sewer connection is available. Infiltration and percolation testing has been undertaken, and the proposal is to utilise SuDS for surface water and a best available technology Haba Bio Easy Flow PTP for each property. These proposals are acceptable however the strategy needs to be approved by the Council's land drainage team from a design perspective, therefore this should be resolved before an HRA is processed to ensure legal and scientific certainty.

Ecology

The application will not impact any designated sites for nature. The site is described as arable (Pure Ecology, 2026) and therefore represents low ecological value. However native species rich hedgerows are present along the site boundary – the biodiversity metric (below) states that no hedgerow loss will take place. No adverse impacts to protected or priority species and habitats are expected providing appropriate planning conditions are in place.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The application is subject to delivering the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% post-development in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. I have reviewed the completed Statutory BNG Metric. This proposal collectively delivers a net gain exceeding 10% in habitat and hedgerow units. These BNG proposals are satisfactory.

Recommended Conditions

Protected Species and Dark Skies (Residential)

No external lighting shall be provided other than the maximum of one external LED down-lighter above or beside each external door (and below eaves height) with a Corrected Colour Temperature not exceeding 2700K and brightness under 500 lumens. Every such light shall be directed downwards with a 0-degree tilt angle and 0% upward light ratio and shall be controlled by means of a PIR sensor with a maximum over-run time of 1 minute. The Lighting shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with these details.

Reason: To ensure that all species and local intrinsically dark landscape are protected having regard to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' (the 'Habitats Regulations'), Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

Species Net Gain

Prior to first use of any part of the development works approved under this planning decision notice, photographic evidence of the suitably placed installation on the approved buildings, of a minimum total of three integrated bird nesting boxes and three integrated bat roosting boxes should be supplied to and acknowledged by the Local Planning Authority; and shall be maintained hereafter as approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Wildlife boxes should be installed under guidance of a qualified ecologist.

Reason: National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

Pre-Construction Check

No works (including site clearance, demolition, or groundworks) shall commence until a suitably qualified ecologist has undertaken a pre-construction check of the site for protected species and other ecological constraints. Any measures identified by the appointed ecologist as necessary to safeguard protected species shall be implemented in full. Within one month of completion of the approved works, a letter of confirmation shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority from the ecologist confirming pre-construction supervision.

Reason: Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

Hedgerow Protection During Construction

Prior to any works commencing, the existing hedgerows shall be protected by secure fencing in accordance with *BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*. The fencing shall remain in place and be maintained in effective condition for the duration of construction. No soil levels shall be altered, and no vehicles, plant, materials, waste, or equipment shall be stored or operated within the protected area at any time.

Reason: Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

4.5 Ecology Comments 2: 03/08/26 – No Objection

The site is within catchment of the River Wye SAC and this proposed development triggers the legal requirement for a Habitat Regulations Assessment process to be carried out by the LPA, any final HRA 'appropriate assessment' completed by the LPA must be formally approved by Natural England PRIOR to any future planning consent being granted.

This HRA process needs to be completed based on all current requirements and considerations and on information supplied in support of this specific application and that is sufficiently detailed to allow any relevant conditions to be secured.

The HRA process must be completed with legal and scientific certainty and using a precautionary approach.

From the start of August 2023, there have been changes in the conservation status of the River Wye SSSI - downgraded to "unfavourable declining" by Natural England; and these comments have been completed based on this recent change and updated SSSI Impact Risk Zone information available from Natural England (River Wye SAC – bespoke buffer – Any discharge of water or liquid waste including to mains sewer). The applicant must demonstrate with scientific and legal certainty that the proposed development will create no significant nutrient pathways into the River Wye that may make the current situation worse or hinder any recovery.

HRA Notes

The proposal creates NINE new residential dwellings with associated new-additional foul and surface water flows (nutrient pathways) created.

No mains sewer system is available for connection at this location.

- The supplied drainage strategy proposes plot specific Package Treatment Plants discharging to individual drainage field on land that the dwelling owners will have legal control over.
- Percolation testing has confirmed that drainage fields can be achieved at this location.
- The proposal is to use a HABA Bio EasyFlow package treatment plant for each dwelling.
- The HABA Bio EasyFlow is considered as current 'best available technology' for the natural management of phosphates (nutrients) using natural processes within the main PTP plant. Achieving a certified phosphate at outfall of 0.8mg/litre.
- The use of BAT PTP and drainage fields to manage remaining phosphates in the outfall within natural soil processes

- There is an additional buffer of 500+ metres between drainage fields and any receiving watercourse that is then a minimum of 15km hydrologically from confluence with the Middle Wye. This allows significant natural management of any phosphates in outfall through soil based processes, instream nutrient uptake and additional significant dilution prior to the final discharge into the River Wye SAC.
- No significant additional nutrients from this proposed development are identified as entering the River Wye SAC.
- All surface water can be managed by Sustainable Drainage Schemes and no new or additional nutrient pathways are identified as a result.

With no nutrient pathways identified and all 'mitigation' secured as fully embedded within the project the required HRA can be screened out at stage 1 of the assessment process.

A relevant condition to secure the dwelling specific foul and surface water management arrangements is suggested for complete certainty.

River Wye SAC - Foul Water & Surface Water Management (nutrient mitigation)

Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority; all foul water flows created by each dwelling hereby approved shall discharge to a dwelling specific HABA Bio EasFlow package treatment plant (or similar unit achieving a certificated, naturally achieved, phosphate at outfall of $\leq 0.8\text{mg/litre}$) with a final outfall to a drainage field on land under the legal control of each homeowner.

All surface water will be managed through use of permeable surfaces and Sustainable Drainage Systems.

The approved arrangements for foul and surface water management shall thereafter be maintained for the lifetime of the development, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the scheme would achieve nutrient neutrality and avoid detriment to the integrity of the River Wye SAC, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), policy LD2, SD3 and SD4 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework

Other previous ecology comments remain relevant and applicable.

4.6 **Public Right of Way Comments:**

No objection

4.7 **Lead Local Flood Authority / Land Drainage Comments – Holding Objection 07/05/26**

SITE: Land southeast of Woonton Farm, Woonton, Almeley, Hereford

TYPE: Planning Permission

DESCRIPTION: Development of nine dwellings and associated works.

APPLICATION NO: 260943

GRID REFERENCE: OS 335150 - 252085

APPLICANT: Mr Mills

AGENT: CDB Planning and Architecture

Our knowledge of the development proposals has been obtained from the following sources:

- Application for Planning Permission;

- Location and Site Plans (18/06/2026);
- Site Plan – Proposed Drainage (18/06/2026);
- Drainage Strategy Note.

Site Location

Figure 1: Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea), May 2026

Overview of the Proposal

The Applicant proposes the construction of 1 x 3 bed bungalow, 2 x 3 bed 2 storey dwellings, 2 x 2 bed 2 storey dwellings and 4 x 4 bed dwellings, comprising 2 sets semi detached dwellings. The greenfield site is relatively level and covers an area of approx. 0.99ha.

Flood Risk

Fluvial Flood Risk

Review of the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning (Figure 1) indicates that the site is located within the low probability Flood Zone 1.

As the proposed development is located within Flood Zone 1, in accordance with Environment Agency standing advice, the planning application does not need to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). This is summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: Scenarios requiring a FRA

Within Flood Zone 3	Within Flood Zone 2	Within Flood Zone 1	
Site area less than 1ha	FRA required	FRA required	FRA not required*
Site area greater than 1ha	FRA required	FRA required	FRA required

**except for changes of use to a more vulnerable class, or where they could be affected by other sources of flooding*

Surface Water Flood Risk

Review of the EA's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicates that the site is not located within an area at risk of surface water flooding.

Other Considerations and Sources of Flood Risk

Local residents may have identified other local sources of flood risk within the vicinity of the site commonly associated with culvert blockages, sewer blockages or unmapped drainage ditches. Review of the EA's Groundwater map indicates that the site is not located within a designated Source Protection Zone or Principal Aquifer.

Surface Water Drainage

The Proposed Drainage Site Plan demonstrates that individual crate soakaways will be used to discharge surface water runoff from each dwelling, within the private plot curtilages.

Whilst soakaway design calculations have not been provided to support this, infiltration testing (two tests were completed) undertaken in 2017, as part of a previous site application (173699), produced an acceptable infiltration rate of 1.19x10⁻⁵m/s.

At the time, the soakaway(s) were designed to manage water from an impermeable area of 80m² and designed for the 1 in 100 + 30% climate change (please note that the guidance has since been updated for climate change allowances).

A crate soakaway is proposed to discharge surface water runoff from the access road, however, we would suggest green SuDS would be preferable from a future management and maintenance aspect. It is unclear how the private driveways will be proposed.

Foul Water Drainage

As there is no public foul water sewer available to serve the site, based on an acceptable Vp rate of 18secs/mm (achieved from percolation testing undertaken in 2017), it is demonstrated on the Proposed Drainage Site Plan that each property will be served by its own package treatment plant and drainage field, to discharge foul water flows to ground.

Three test pits were excavated comprising a 300mm cube hole at the base of a larger hole, total depth of 800mm. Across 3 tests within each hole, this revealed an average Vp of 18.

The Applicant has provided calculations (using a Vp value of 20) to demonstrate that the foul drainage fields have been correctly sized. Based on the housing mix on the indicative proposed layout and applying the ratios in British Water Flows and Loads 4, this requires 22m² for a 4 bed property and 18 m² for the 2 and 3 bed dwellings.

Whilst the package treatment plants are located within the private plot curtilages, the drainage fields appear to be located outside of the curtilage of each residential garden, including pipe networks crossing other plot curtilages.

The land on which the package treatment plants and drainage fields are located should be owned by the respective homeowner. This was made explicitly clear in Land Drainage comments submitted under 173699 and based on the proposed site layout, it is clear that there is sufficient space within the site to ensure that both surface water and foul water drainage are considered properly.

We also note that the proposed layout of the drainage fields is incorrect and the inlet should be made at the end of the drainage field as per the below:

Overall Comment

HOLDING OBJECTION (pending the receipt of additional information/amended plans) / Whilst Land Drainage accepts in principle the proposal to discharge surface water and foul water to ground, the current site layout proposals do not support a sustainable arrangement. We are satisfied that up to date site investigations and subsequent infiltration and percolation test results, which inform drainage infrastructure size calculations, can be conditioned as it currently unclear where the historic testing was undertaken in relation to the proposed location of the drainage infrastructure.

4.8 Land Drainage Comments 2 – 20/07/26 – Conditional No Objection

SITE: Land southeast of Woonton Farm, Woonton, Almeley, Hereford

TYPE: Planning Permission

DESCRIPTION: Development of nine dwellings and associated works.

APPLICATION NO: 260943

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Overview of the Proposal

The Applicant proposes the construction of 1 x 3 bed bungalow, 2 x 3 bed 2 storey dwellings, 2 x 2 bed 2 storey dwellings and 4 x 4 bed dwellings, comprising 2 sets semi detached dwellings. The greenfield site is relatively level and covers an area of approx. 0.99ha.

Flood Risk

Fluvial Flood Risk

Review of the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning (Figure 1) indicates that the site is located within the low probability Flood Zone 1.

As the proposed development is located within Flood Zone 1, in accordance with Environment Agency standing advice, the planning application does not need to be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA). This is summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: Scenarios requiring a FRA

Within Flood Zone 3	Within Flood Zone 2	Within Flood Zone 1	
Site area less than 1ha	FRA required	FRA required	FRA not required*
Site area greater than 1ha	FRA required	FRA required	FRA required

**except for changes of use to a more vulnerable class, or where they could be affected by other sources of flooding*

Surface Water Flood Risk

Review of the EA's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicates that the site is not located within an area at risk of surface water flooding.

Other Considerations and Sources of Flood Risk

Local residents may have identified other local sources of flood risk within the vicinity of the site commonly associated with culvert blockages, sewer blockages or unmapped drainage ditches. Review of the EA's Groundwater map indicates that the site is not located within a designated Source Protection Zone or Principal Aquifer.

Surface Water Drainage

The Proposed Drainage Site Plan demonstrates that individual crate soakaways will be used to discharge surface water runoff from each dwelling, within the private plot curtilages.

Whilst soakaway design calculations have not been provided to support this, infiltration testing (two tests were completed) undertaken in 2017, as part of a previous site application (173699), produced an acceptable infiltration rate of 1.19x10⁻⁵m/s.

At the time, the soakaway(s) were designed to manage water from an impermeable area of 80m² and designed for the 1 in 100 + 30% climate change (please note that the guidance has since been updated for climate change allowances).

A crate soakaway is proposed to discharge surface water runoff from the access road, however, we would suggest green SuDS would be preferable from a future management and maintenance aspect. It is unclear how the private driveways will be proposed.

Foul Water Drainage

As there is no public foul water sewer available to serve the site, based on an acceptable Vp rate of 18secs/mm (achieved from percolation testing undertaken in 2017), it is demonstrated on the Proposed Drainage Site Plan that each property will be served by its own package treatment plant and drainage field, to discharge foul water flows to ground.

Three test pits were excavated comprising a 300mm cube hole at the base of a larger hole, total depth of 800mm. Across 3 tests within each hole, this revealed an average Vp of 18.

The Applicant has provided calculations (using a Vp value of 20) to demonstrate that the foul drainage fields have been correctly sized. Based on the housing mix on the indicative proposed layout and applying the ratios in British Water Flows and Loads 4, this requires 22m² for a 4 bed property and 18 m² for the 2 and 3 bed dwellings.

Whilst the package treatment plants are located within the private plot curtilages, the drainage fields appear to be located outside of the curtilage of each residential garden, including pipe networks crossing other plot curtilages. The land on which the package treatment plants and drainage fields are located should be owned by the respective homeowner. This was made explicitly clear in Land Drainage comments submitted under 173699 and based on the proposed site layout, it is clear that there is sufficient space within the site to ensure that both surface water and foul water drainage are considered properly.

We also note that the proposed layout of the drainage fields is incorrect and the inlet should be made at the end of the drainage field as per the below:

Overall Comment

CONDITIONAL NO OBJECTION

Whilst Land Drainage accepts in principle the proposal to discharge surface water and foul water to ground, the current site layout proposals (drainage fields located outside of plot boundaries and drainage infrastructure going through private plots) do not support a sustainable arrangement. However, we are satisfied that these issues can be addressed at Discharge of Condition.

We are satisfied that up to date site investigations and subsequent infiltration and percolation test results, which inform drainage infrastructure size calculations, can be conditioned as it currently unclear where the historic testing was undertaken in relation to the proposed location of the drainage infrastructure.

We recommend that the following information is provided within suitably worded planning conditions:

- Submission of detailed surface water and foul water drainage design plans/constructions drawings and associated calculations. This should be supported by up-to-date infiltration and percolation test results.

5. Representations

5.1 Almeley Parish Council

Expressed concerns raised by residents regarding the cumulative impact of this and other recent development on the character of the settlement and landscape. Particular concerns were raised regarding Highways, Drainage and Historic Impact. Full comments received are provided below:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to Planning Consultation - 260943 - Land southeast of Woonton Farm, Woonton, Almeley, Hereford.

Almeley's Annual Parish Meeting met last night, a statutory event attended by six parish councillors and a total of 23 electors. Those present asked me to convey to you their considerable concerns about this application.

Woonton has experienced substantial recent housing development and the cumulative impact on the character of the settlement and landscape demands to be adequately assessed.

Those present drew particular attention to the following points:

Highways - residents were particularly concerned by the limited, and dated, 2017 analysis offered by the applicants. The data offered relates to an earlier application envisaging fewer houses. Since 2017 there has been substantial new housing development in Woonton - the settlement has almost doubled in size - and a more serious and substantial analysis is required which takes into account the present circumstances. Electors hoped that the Planning Authority would insist on a contemporary study by a qualified consultant. Without that study there is insufficient information to make a judgement.

Electors believed the narrow rural lanes were unsuitable for the additional traffic movements associated with nine new houses, and the lack of separate footways created additional safety risks. This conflicts with Core Strategy Policies MT1 and SS7.

Drainage - residents were concerned by the brief note on drainage, also dating from 2017 when a smaller development was envisaged, and current weather patterns unforeseen. They expressed a hope that that Planning Authority would insist on a more substantial contemporary surface water drainage analysis, and a foul water treatment solution suitable for a development of this scale. They were not persuaded that the current arrangement of soakaway and package treatment plans would be effective given current rainfall levels and feared consequences for local water quality. Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy LD4 is engaged.

Impact on heritage assets - residents were concerned by the evident harm to the setting and context of the Grade II listed Woonton Farmhouse and Grade II listed Pool House. They asked me to draw your attention to the cumulative impact of this proposal, and other recent development, in assessing harm to the character and rural setting. Herefordshire Core Strategy MT1 is relevant, and Almeley Neighbourhood Development Plan ASLM15.

5.2 In addition 20 public representations have been received comprising 18 objections and 1 other comment.

5.3 The consultation responses can be viewed on the Council's website by using the following link:-

[Planning Application Details - Herefordshire Council](#)

The following is a summary of the responses received:

18 Objections

- Previous refusal of fewer dwellings - more houses are proposed now = more harm, nothing substantially changed – cumulative development impact.
- Outside settlement boundary, 9 dwellings would be disproportionate and unsympathetic, undesirable precedent, NDP housing targets have been met, additional dwellings = overdevelopment.
- Damage to local character – Woonton = small hamlet that has already experienced substantial growth, further, an additional 9 dwellings would be significant and disproportionate and would erode the intrinsic character.

- Urbanising impact would detrimentally impact character or area and fails to respect heritage sites.
- Proposed dwellings not agrarian – they appear more suburban.
- Introducing development to village edge would erode transition between village and countryside and block views.
- Unsustainable = greater reliance on private car - provision of electric vehicle charging points does not overcome this.
- Recent Barn Yard and Pool Yard developments, are not comparable and do not set a direct precedence for this planning application. These are both within the settlement boundary and were developed on Brownfields sites.
- Drainage strategy weak and does not set out long-term maintenance arrangements = concern about River Wye SAC.
- Soakaway tests done 2017 and not updated – relate to 5 dwelling proposal
- Road near proposed development floods – 9 additional houses will increase the surface water burden.
- Disruption to springs. Local spring originates in the fields proposed. These springs travel down the hills feeding residents wells from the green all the way down the Almeley road.
- Concern that effluent could find its way into the lane.
- Lack of basic infrastructure inc. mains drainage & local services within 10 mile radius
- Damage to local Heritage sites - Replacing open countryside with a housing development would materially alter how these listed buildings are experienced within the landscape, diminishing their rural context.
- Proposed development will overlook and create noise and disturbance for heritage assets.
- The site lies on Herefordshire's Black and White Village Trail, where traditional built form and landscape setting are of particular visual and heritage importance.
- Safety of non-motorised road users has not been fully considered – surrounding lanes are unsuitable for development.
- The traffic survey dates back to 2017 - Traffic levels have increased due to new housing in the area and more frequent delivery vehicle movements.
- Site entrance is opposite entrance to Woonton House and both are very close to the C1079 'T' junction = may not be possible to create safe and efficient flow of traffic.
- Large agricultural vehicles regularly use the nearby access roads.
- Access to A480 considered dangerous.
- Of the 16 recently built or approved properties in the hamlet, several have struggled to sell = is there a genuine need for development.
- NDP is relevant and should not be overlooked – approval would undermine NDP and create precedent for further expansion.
- NPPF seeks to protect Green Belt.
- Nearby Brownfield site has been overlooked by this application.
- The proposed site is Grade 2 agricultural land = Best and Most Versatile.
- The proposals would irreversibly impact wildlife habitats open space.
- The proposed landscaping would take many years to mature and would not adequately mitigate the immediate visual impact or loss of openness.
- Concern ecology of site not properly assessed.
- No LVIA submitted.
- A map from 1886 showed a pond and orchards in the area for development. The application has no pond and a token area of orchard. Both the pond and some orchards were still on this site until relatively recent years.
- Herefordshire's Dark Skies initiative supported - lighting impact assessment required.
- Not clear whether street lights are proposed – street lights are not supported.
- Concern as to why application 221169 for a single unit, within the village, was turned down and the decision upheld at appeal (APP/W1850/W/22/3312322) yet a nine house development is being considered on a green field site.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Emma Jones on

- Site visit requested.
- Impact of development cannot be mitigated by planning condition.
- Concern that the updated survey does not provide a complete assessment of the potential highway impacts of the development.
- Concern that updated percolation tests are being undertaken during drought conditions and may overestimate the ground's ability to absorb water.

1 General Comment

- Shame housing being proposed on Grade 2 Agricultural land
- The 'small farmstead' design appears more like a standard cluster of buildings around a cul-de-sac.
- The housing facades look urban rather agrarian.
- The majority of the houses are aligned on a roughly south-west to north-east line, which is not the best for maximising passive solar gain.
- Concern that plots 4, 5, 6 and 7 will look like semi-detached square houses.
- The layout should therefore be tweaked to orientate more of the houses towards a more south-facing aspect so as to increase passive solar gain, which would also produce a more 'varied' layout, at the same time making the intended farmyard group of houses more like a farmyard rather than simply a cul-de-sac.
- Clarity should be sought in the type of windows and doors, the use of lintels or walling above upper storey windows and whether flat roof extensions should be part of the plan.
- The use of mixed brick colours, as the plans suggest, and slate on the roofs, is to be welcomed.
- A spring exists in the field near to the roadside where it bends more southward beyond the western boundary of the site.
- It should be ensured that permeable surfaces are insisted upon.
- Who will the management agreement concerning the orchard will be with? If you wanted to encourage a sustainable community, then the orchard could be given to a Woonton Community Land Trust for local people to look after.
- Could bus shelters be insisted upon as part of the planning gain?
- It would be interesting to update the 2017 traffic survey once all the present houses being built are occupied, this is likely to have a considerable effect on flow numbers.
- Impact upon skyline is well considered in the application.
- NDPs take a huge amount of volunteer time followed by referenda, and with them being considered out of date and inadmissible in planning terms after 5 years, how many parishes will go through the regular effort to update or should be some change to the law surrounding them?

Internet access is available at the Council's Customer Service Centres:-

<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/government-citizens-and-rights/customer-services-enquiries/contact-details?q=customer&type=suggestedpage>

6. Officer's Appraisal

Policy context and Principle of Development

6.1 Section 38 (6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states as follows:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

6.2 In this instance the adopted development plan is the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy (CS) and the Almeley Neighbourhood Area, which published a made Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) on 28th June 2019. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also now described as a material consideration of critical importance.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Emma Jones on

- 6.3 NPPF policy S3 directs that decisions on development proposals should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This means that NPPF Policy S4 should be applied when considering development proposals within settlements and NPPF policy S5 when determining proposals outside settlements.
- 6.4 As described above this proposal is located outside the settlement of Woonton because it is beyond the black settlement boundary line shown on the adopted the policy map for NDP dated January 2019. NPPF policy S5 1.(j) confirms that development which would address an evidenced unmet need (including, but not limited to, development proposals involving the provision of housing where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites or scores below 75% in the most recent Housing Delivery Test), and where the development would be physically well-related to an existing settlement (unless the nature of the development would make this inappropriate) and be of a scale which can be accommodated taking into account the existing or proposed availability of infrastructure; should be approved unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies of the NPPF.
- 6.5 The application site is located outside the defined settlement boundary of Woonton. It is however well related to Woonton which is defined in policy RA2 of the Herefordshire Core Strategy as a settlement. The Council's supply of deliverable housing sites is currently 2.81 years. The supply of housing would weigh significantly in the balance in favour of the proposed development. It is however acknowledged that substantial development has taken place within the village recently and officers note that a number of objectors question the need for development in this context. Officers must however make recommendations based on planning policy. In planning terms Herefordshire's lack of a 5 year housing land supply provides evidence of an unmet need for residential development in this area.
- 6.6 Policy RA2 of the Core Strategy puts Woonton within Figure 4.15 as an other settlement where proportionate housing is appropriate. NDP policy ALM11 recognises this in it's statement that: *New housing within Woonton will be restricted to sensitive infilling within a settlement boundary, sites already granted planning permission and the site allocated at Woonton Farm (ALM12).*
- 6.7 While the NPPF does not overwrite the local development plan NPPF policy S6 does state that: *For development proposals involving the provision of housing, the benefits of approving development are likely to be substantially outweighed by the adverse effects where a proposal would conflict with a neighbourhood plan, provided the following apply:*
- a. *The neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan five years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and*
 - b. *The neighbourhood plan contains allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see policy HO2).*
- In this instance the NDP became part of the development plan more than five years ago and the plan does not contain any allocations to meet the currently (post December 2024) identified housing requirement.
- 6.8 Officers must therefore take account of the planning balance in making a judgement regarding the suitability of development in this location. The location is considered sustainable in that it is located close to the A480 with bus links to Hereford and to Kington, therefore officers are satisfied that the principle of development is fundamentally acceptable in this instance.

Historic Impact, Landscape Impact and PROW

- 6.9 The application area is a relatively level site located to the south west of the existing village. It is generally well screened from the A480 and surrounding viewpoints with the exception of parts of the AM20 PROW. While it is understood that there is a dip and the land rises when approaching Woonton from the south west, substantial buffer planting and a new hedgerow is proposed which

will result in relatively green filtered views (as exist at present) of the site from this direction only. Approximately 1/3 of the application site is given over to new planting including an area of orchard, an area of scrub, wildflower and native tree planting and new hedgerow. The existing mature field boundary along the northwest edge of the site will also be retained. Officers are therefore satisfied that the proposed development will be in accordance with NPPF policies N2 and N3, CS policies LD1 and LD3 and NDP policy ALM2.

- 6.10 As mentioned above, the application site is located opposite the listed buildings of Woonton Farm and Pool House and Pool Common which is designated in NDP policy ALM4 as protected local green space. Far reaching panoramic views to the southeast and southwest are noted as existing from the Common in paragraph 6.5 of the NDP. It is noted that one of the principle objections refers to the setting of these listed buildings. However, on the several occasions that officers have visited the site views were not evident due to the height of the outgrown hedgerow along Logaston Road as well as agricultural buildings associated with Woonton farm located to the southwest. Officers note that the hedgerow is to be retained and the proposed dwellings will be set back from it. In appeal APP/W1850/W/20/3247411 the Inspector noted that *"There is also mature vegetation that screens views of the wider and more open, undeveloped landscape beyond."* And found *"that the proposal would preserve the setting of nearby listed buildings."*
- 6.11 Unlike the plan assessed at appeal, built development would in this case extend further to the south-west. Plot 3 would look directly towards side windows of Woonton Farm at a distance of approximately 50m and filtered by existing mature trees, Plot 1 would overlap slightly with this elevation of Woonton Farmhouse, but it is single storey screened by an existing hedgerow and Plot 2 would have a gable end with upper and ground floor windows facing the garden of Woonton Farm at a point where screening is also provided by mature hedgerow trees. With regard to Pool House and Pool Green dwellings are positioned similarly to the proposal previously assessed and in one case set back further. PROW AM20 and its views to the south not impacted by the proposal.

Design and Appearance

- 6.12 NPPF policy DP3 states that *Development proposals should respond to their context (the history, character and features of their site and its setting), so that they integrate with and enhance their surroundings; such as through the arrangement of development plots and buildings, the use of materials and architectural features, and the restoration, reuse and integration of heritage assets. This should not preclude innovation or change where appropriate, especially where an increased scale or density of development is justified in accordance with policies L2 and L3.* This is supported by CS policies RA2, LD1 and SD1.
- 6.13 From the NDP, policy ALM5 states that *development proposals in general terms should achieve good standards of design and architecture throughout the Parish but especially where there is a need to respect local distinctiveness and the traditional qualities of its rural settlements and buildings. This will be achieved by requiring development to:*
- a) Respect the traditional character, where appropriate, by adopting a design approach utilising a range of materials and architectural styles that are sympathetic to the development's surroundings, and incorporating appropriate locally distinctive features;*
 - b) New innovative design or features should be of high quality and fit sensitively within the street scene, village setting or rural location;*
 - c) Respect the scale, massing, density and character of existing properties in the vicinity;*
 - d) Be similar to established building heights, frontages, massing and plot sizes;*
 - e) Protect the amenity of adjacent existing residential properties and ensure new residential development avoids locations where residents may suffer significant adverse effects from adjacent operations;*
 - f) Preserve existing trees, boundary hedges, ponds, orchards and hedgerows and make provision for tree planting with native species.*

6.14 For housing in Woonton specifically, NDP policy ALM11 states that schemes should:

- a) Dwellings shall be of a scale, massing, density, building line and layout compatible with the character, size and form of the particular part of the settlement within which they are located and not adversely affect the amenity of adjacent properties.*
- b) Development shall not result in the loss of important features such as trees, hedgerows, or significant frontage gaps or green spaces that contribute to the unique character of the settlement.*
- c) Development shall not adversely affect heritage assets within the settlement, including their settings.*
- d) There should be safe access for vehicles, and parking arrangements should not detract from the street scene but be an integral part of the overall design.*
- e) Provision should be made for storm water drainage on site and should not lead to or increase flooding of other properties and the highway.*
- f) Special attention shall be given to ensuring foul/waste water drainage does not cause pollution, affect the amenity of other land or properties, or the integrity of any important wildlife habitats.*

6.15 ALM1 also sets out a range of requirements to promote sustainable design and resilience, including part a) which states that the highest priority will be given to retaining the rural character of the Parish and its settlement pattern through requiring development to:

- Fit sensitively into the landscape;*
- Maintain the dispersed settlement pattern of frequent roadside dwellings and farmsteads that avoid clusters of modern houses;*
- Protect views across the River Wye Flood Plain to the Brecon Beacons National Park and Black Mountains;*
- Protect and enhance landscape features such as broadleaved tree cover and mixed species hedgerows;*
- Conserve the organic pattern and character of the local lane network;*
- Strengthen the ecological network of wildlife corridors and patchwork of small wildlife habitats;*
- Maintain or restore the character of the Parish's historic farmsteads, through innovative approaches.*

6.16 Plots 1 – 5 have been arranged to echo an agrarian character of agricultural buildings arranged around a farmhouse. Agricultural style buildings are simple in form and materials have been used to re-inforce the barn style – principally through the use of timber which also helps to maintain the visual cohesion of semi-detached dwellings as a single building. A variety of building heights also help to achieve this. Plot one for example will be single story as is the long stone barn within the curtilage of Woonton Farm and plot 3 is to be of a more traditional domestic shape, built mainly in stone. Modern design detailing is however used throughout including often A-symmetric window detailing which is regularly used in barn conversions.

6.17 Plot 1 will be a single storey dwelling of brick with vertical timber inserts on the eastern elevation under a slate roof – simple in style and grouped to echo an agricultural courtyard with plots 2-5. Plot 2 will be a larger 2 storey dwelling with 2 brick sections and a central vertical timber clad 2 storey section. There will also be; a vertical timber clad attached garage, modern A-symmetric windows and an external chimney to rear which does not extend above the roof ridge to maintain simple agricultural lines. Plot 3 will be a more traditionally shaped dwelling with chimneys incorporated at each gable end. It will be stone under a slate roof with wider vertical timber cladding from 1st floor windows to eaves only. Plots 4 & 5 are semi-detached, brick under slate, with a central section horizontally timber clad on the front elevation and the upper floor horizontally timber clad on the rear elevation.

6.18 A field access is maintained opposite the main site access (which will be in the location of the existing field gate) and plots 6 – 9 to the northeast have a looser form along 2 sides of a cul-de-sac, the area along the northwest boundary being retained for the existing hedge and a wildflower mix margin.

Plots 6 & 7 are semi-detached brick under slate roofs, the upper floor will be horizontally timber clad on all elevations. Plot 8 is detached and will be brick under slate with vertical timber cladding to the upper floor. There will be an attached brick garage with pitched roof and two mono-pitched roofed protrusions one at the front and one at the rear extending ground floor living space. Plot 9 is the same as plot 8 but handed.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.19 The proposed development is not considered to cause any unacceptable overlooking, overshadowing or be overbearing to existing neighbouring properties. Within the site the dwelling on plot 2 is situated with 14m of the dwelling on plot 2, however only the gable of single storey plot one will face the northern elevation of plot 2, plots are to be separated by a hedge at ground level and only a small bathroom window and stairway windows face the gable of plot 1 from plot 2. Officers therefore do not anticipate any negative impact in this regard, in accordance with NPPF policies L2 and P3 and CS policy SD1.

Access and Highway Safety

- 6.20 NPPF policy TR3 is concerned with the location of sustainable development and sustainability and policy TR4 with street design, access and parking. Principally development proposals which could generate a significant amount of movement should be in locations that are sustainable or which can be made so and this means the location should limit the need to travel, particularly by private car, and offer a genuine choice of transport modes for residents and users, unless the nature of the development would make this impractical. And that transport considerations should be integral to the design of development of well-designed places.
- 6.21 Core Strategy Policy MT1 relates to the highways impacts of new development, and requires that proposals demonstrate that the strategic and local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the of the development without adversely affecting the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the network It also requires under criterion 4) that developments are designed and laid out to ensure that safe entrance and exit can be achieved and that adequate operational and manoeuvring space is available. From the NDP, policies T1, T2 and T3 require that all schemes should demonstrate that suitable and safe access is achievable within the capacity of the local highway network, promote active travel and ensure that adequate off-street parking is provided for residents and visitors.
- 6.22 In addition policy ALM1 states that development proposals should support local economic development appropriate to the capacity of the highway network, the local landscape and the existing settlement pattern.
- 6.23 The Highway Authority have been consulted on the proposed development. The Authority notes that the previous application was not contested on highway grounds and during the appeal the Inspector did not consider transport and accessibility issues. The Highway Authority note that the existing access point will be utilised and the visibility achievable is greater than that proposed by the previous application and that the proposed development is located in a rural location with no footways in the surrounding village. No objections are raised subject to the imposition of a number of conditions.
- 6.24 It is noted that many of the public objections received include comments that the speed survey data received dated to 2017 and that the situation is likely to have changed since that date due to the completion of additional dwellings. The applicant has therefore submitted 2026 survey data which shows that little has changed. It is not clear where this data was collected as two locations are shown in the 2017 study, however the Highway Authority have not referred to this data in their assessment and officers are satisfied that subject to the recommended conditions the proposed development is acceptable from a highways perspective.

Flood Risk and Drainage

- 6.25 NPPF policies F7 and F8 are concerned to ensure that development is safe from flooding and that Sustainable drainage systems are employed. In relation to foul water, CS policy SD4 sets out a hierarchical approach whereby a connection to the mains sewer is the preferred option of management. In relation to surface water, and CS policy SD3 requires that measures for sustainable water management form an integral element of all new development. It is also noted that there are a number of objections on drainage grounds and the technical advice of the Council's Land Drainage Engineer has therefore been sought.
- 6.26 A holding objection was initially raised regarding drainage fields located outside of plot boundaries and objections received noted the age of the drainage reports submitted and possible sources of surface water flooding. The holding objection was however lifted Land Drainage having concluded that up to date infiltration and percolation tests, which inform drainage infrastructure size calculations (guidelines for which have changed since 2017) can be conditioned and issues can be addressed at discharge of condition stage. Appropriately worded conditions are therefore included below.
- 6.27 Subject to inclusion of the recommended conditions it is not considered that the proposed development will be at risk of flooding, will not increase flood risk elsewhere and will include a sustainable surface water strategy.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

- 6.28 The site is within catchment of the River Wye SAC and this proposed development triggers the legal requirement for a Habitat Regulations Assessment process to be carried out by the Local Planning Authority (LPA). The supplied drainage strategy proposes plot specific Package Treatment Plants discharging to Individual drainage fields on land that the dwelling owners will have legal control over. Percolation testing has confirmed that drainage fields can be achieved at this location. No significant additional nutrients from this proposed development are identified as entering the River Wye SAC and all surface water can be managed by Sustainable Drainage Schemes. No new or additional nutrient pathways are identified as a result.
- 6.29 With no nutrient pathways identified and all 'mitigation' secured as fully embedded within the project the required HRA can be screened out at stage 1 of the assessment process. A relevant condition to secure the dwelling specific foul and surface water management arrangements is recommended below for complete certainty.

Ecology

- 6.30 Ecological issues are raised in a number of the public objections received. NPPF policy N2 confirms that proposals contribute positively to the natural environment and support nature's recovery. This is supported by local planning policy. The Council's planning ecologist has been consulted and confirms that the application will not impact any designated sites for nature. *The site is described as arable (Pure Ecology, 2026) and therefore represents low ecological value. However native species rich hedgerows are present along the site boundary – the biodiversity metric states that no hedgerow loss will take place. No adverse impacts to protected or priority species and habitats are expected providing appropriate planning conditions are in place.*
- 6.31 Appropriate conditions are recommended below and include protecting Herefordshire's dark skies, undertaking pre-construction checks for protected species and the protection of trees and hedgerow to be retained to ensure that the proposed development is in accordance with NPPF policy N2 and CS policy LD2 in this regard.

Biodiversity Enhancement

- 6.32 The application is subject to delivering the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% post-development in accordance with the Environment Act 2021. The Council's planning ecologist has reviewed the completed Statutory BNG Metric and has found that proposal collectively delivers a net gain exceeding 10% in habitat and hedgerow units. The BNG proposals submitted are satisfactory and the statutory condition will be included on any planning consent given.

Other Considerations

- 6.33 Objectors point to the fact that the proposed is green field development on Grade 2 agricultural land (best and most versatile). NPPF policy N2 states that decision makers should take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible. Officers consider that the proposed development is not significant with regard to this policy. Only a small part of a much larger field is to be utilised.

Conclusion and Planning Balance

- 6.34 NPPF policy S5 weighs very heavily in favour of this application – Herefordshire's lack of a 5 year housing land supply provides evidence of an unmet need for residential development and the site is adjacent to a settlement as defined by CS policy RA2. Consent must be granted without delay unless the benefits of doing so would be substantially outweighed by any adverse effects, when assessed against the national decision-making policies of the NPPF.
- 6.35 CS policy RA2's designation of Woonton further suggests that the settlement is a sustainable location. Indeed it is on the A480 with regular bus services to Kington and Hereford. Suggestions that future residents will be reliant on the motor car and nearby services may be unable to cope with demand do not therefore outweigh NPPF policy S5 1.(j)
- 6.36 With regard to heritage impact, the Inspector concluded that appeal APP/W1850/W/20/324741 would not negatively impact the setting of nearby listed buildings nor by implication the adjacent green space. While the current application is larger, the direct setting of Pool House and Pool common will be much the same as understood by the Inspector in 2020. Woonton Farmhouse will see development closer than previous, however this is carefully positioned to make best use of existing mature trees which will filter any views and plot 3 which looks directly towards side windows of the listed Woonton Farmhouse is situated approximately 50m away with a mature hedge and hedgerow trees intervening.
- 6.37 The hedge and existing mature trees are confirmed as being retained by the development. A condition has been recommended to ensure that the trees and hedgerow are protected in accordance with BS 5837:2012.
- 6.38 With regard to design the proposal seeks to echo nearby agricultural layouts without disturbing the mature hedgerow any more than necessary. Building lines are simple and materials traditional. Modern design style has however been utilised. It was felt that modern design elements had been taken too far on plots 8 and 9 with flat roofed protrusions front and back and these have subsequently been replaced with mono-pitched elements and the first floor windows above have been reduced slightly also. This results in a design that is considered appropriate and in accordance with NPPF policy DP3.
- 6.39 The Highway Authority have not objected to the proposals subject to conditions recommended below. Land Drainage have confirmed that although information submitted is out of date they are satisfied that conditions can be imposed to ensure that sustainable drainage is appropriate.
- 6.40 The application has been screened out at stage 1 of the Habitat Regulations Assessment process. It is not anticipated to impact any protected species and the BNG information submitted

is considered appropriate. Conditions have however been recommended to secure each of these objectives.

- 6.41 It is acknowledged that a previous application on this site was refused at appeal and a number of wide ranging objections to the current proposals have been received. Based on the above information however it is not considered that adverse effects of the current application are cumulatively sufficient to outweigh the benefits when assessed against the national decision-making policies of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions and any other further conditions considered necessary by officers named in the scheme of delegation to officers:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: Required to be imposed by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2. The development shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved plans (drawing nos. WF-5627-01A, WF-5627-02, WF-5627-03A, WF-5627-04A, WF-5627-05A, WF-5627-06A), except where otherwise stipulated by conditions attached to this permission.

Reason. To ensure adherence to the approved plans in the interests of a satisfactory form of development and to comply with Policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. Development shall not begin until details and location of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, and which shall be operated and maintained during construction of the development hereby approved:

- a. A method for ensuring mud is not deposited onto the Public Highway
- b. Construction traffic access location
- c. Parking for site operatives
- d. Construction Traffic Management Plan

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details for the duration of the construction of the development.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

4. Prior to any works commencing, the existing hedgerows shall be protected by secure fencing in accordance with *BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction – Recommendations*. The fencing shall remain in place and be maintained in effective condition for the duration of construction. No soil levels shall be altered, and no vehicles, plant, materials, waste, or equipment shall be stored or operated within the protected area at any time.

Reason: Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies

SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

- 5. No works (including site clearance, demolition, or groundworks) shall commence until a suitably qualified ecologist has undertaken a pre-construction check of the site for protected species and other ecological constraints. Any measures identified by the appointed ecologist as necessary to safeguard protected species shall be implemented in full. Within one month of completion of the approved works, a letter of confirmation shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority from the ecologist confirming pre-construction supervision.**

Reason: Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

- 6. Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby approved an area shall be laid out within the curtilage of the property for the parking and turning of vehicles which shall be properly consolidated, surfaced and drained in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and that area shall not thereafter be used for any other purpose than the parking of vehicles.**

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the free flow of traffic using the adjoining highway and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 7. The construction of the vehicular access shall be carried out in accordance with a specification to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, at a gradient not steeper than 1 in 12.**

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 8. Visibility at the site access should be provided in line with details provided in the Planning Statement. Nothing shall be planted, erected and/or allowed to grow on the triangular area of land so formed which would obstruct the visibility described above.**

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and to conform to the requirements of Policy MT1 of Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 9. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Planning Authority; all foul water flows created by each dwelling hereby approved shall discharge to a dwelling specific HABA Bio EasFlow package treatment plant (or similar unit achieving a certificated, naturally achieved, phosphate at outfall of $\leq 0.8\text{mg/litre}$) with a final outfall to a drainage field on land under the legal control of each homeowner.**

All surface water will be managed through use of permeable surfaces and Sustainable Drainage Systems.

The approved arrangements for foul and surface water management shall thereafter be maintained for the lifetime of the development, unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that the scheme would achieve nutrient neutrality and avoid detriment to the integrity of the River Wye SAC, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), policy LD2, SD3 and SD4 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework

10. No external lighting shall be provided other than the maximum of one external LED down-lighter above or beside each external door (and below eaves height) with a Corrected Colour Temperature not exceeding 2700K and brightness under 500 lumens. Every such light shall be directed downwards with a 0-degree tilt angle and 0% upward light ratio and shall be controlled by means of a PIR sensor with a maximum over-run time of 1 minute. The Lighting shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with these details.

Reason: To ensure that all species and local intrinsically dark landscape are protected having regard to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019' (the 'Habitats Regulations'), Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981 amended); National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

11. Prior to first use of any part of the development works approved under this planning decision notice, photographic evidence of the suitably placed installation on the approved buildings, of a minimum total of three integrated bird nesting boxes and three integrated bat roosting boxes should be supplied to and acknowledged by the Local Planning Authority; and shall be maintained hereafter as approved unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Wildlife boxes should be installed under guidance of a qualified ecologist.

Reason: National Planning Policy Framework, NERC Act (2006) and Herefordshire Local Plan - Core Strategy policies SS1, SS6, LD1-3; and the Council's declared Climate Change and Ecological Emergency.

12. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until a scheme for the provision of surface water and foul water drainage works including plans, construction drawings and associated calculations has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall be supported by up-to-date infiltration and percolation test results. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the first occupation of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure that a satisfactory solution can be achieved before the approved layout is fixed on the ground and to prevent the increased risk of flooding by ensuring the provision of a satisfactory means of surface water disposal and to comply with Policy SD3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

13. The standard refuse collection vehicle (RCV) used in Herefordshire is 26 tonnes. All roads and turning heads where it is proposed the RCV will travel must be constructed to adoptable standards. If the vehicle is unable to enter the development, a bin collection point area shall be constructed on the junction between the development and the access road.

Bin collection points (areas of hardstanding where residents can place their bins for collection) shall be provided for any plot located over a 25 metre walking distance from where the RCV can safely access. These should be an area of hardstanding that is large enough to position the required number of containers.

Reason: In the interests of amenity and to comply with Policy SD1 of the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

INFORMATIVES:

1. The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against planning policy and any other material considerations. Negotiations in respect of matters of concern with the application (as originally submitted) have resulted in amendments to the proposal. As a result, the Local Planning Authority has been able to grant planning permission for an acceptable proposal, in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. Herefordshire Council has plans to introduce both a fortnightly garden waste and a weekly food waste collection service, with the likelihood being two bins per property may need to be presented on the same day. All bin collection points should be sized to offer each property that has use of the collection point 1.16M of space to allow them to place two bins for collection.

Decision:

Notes:

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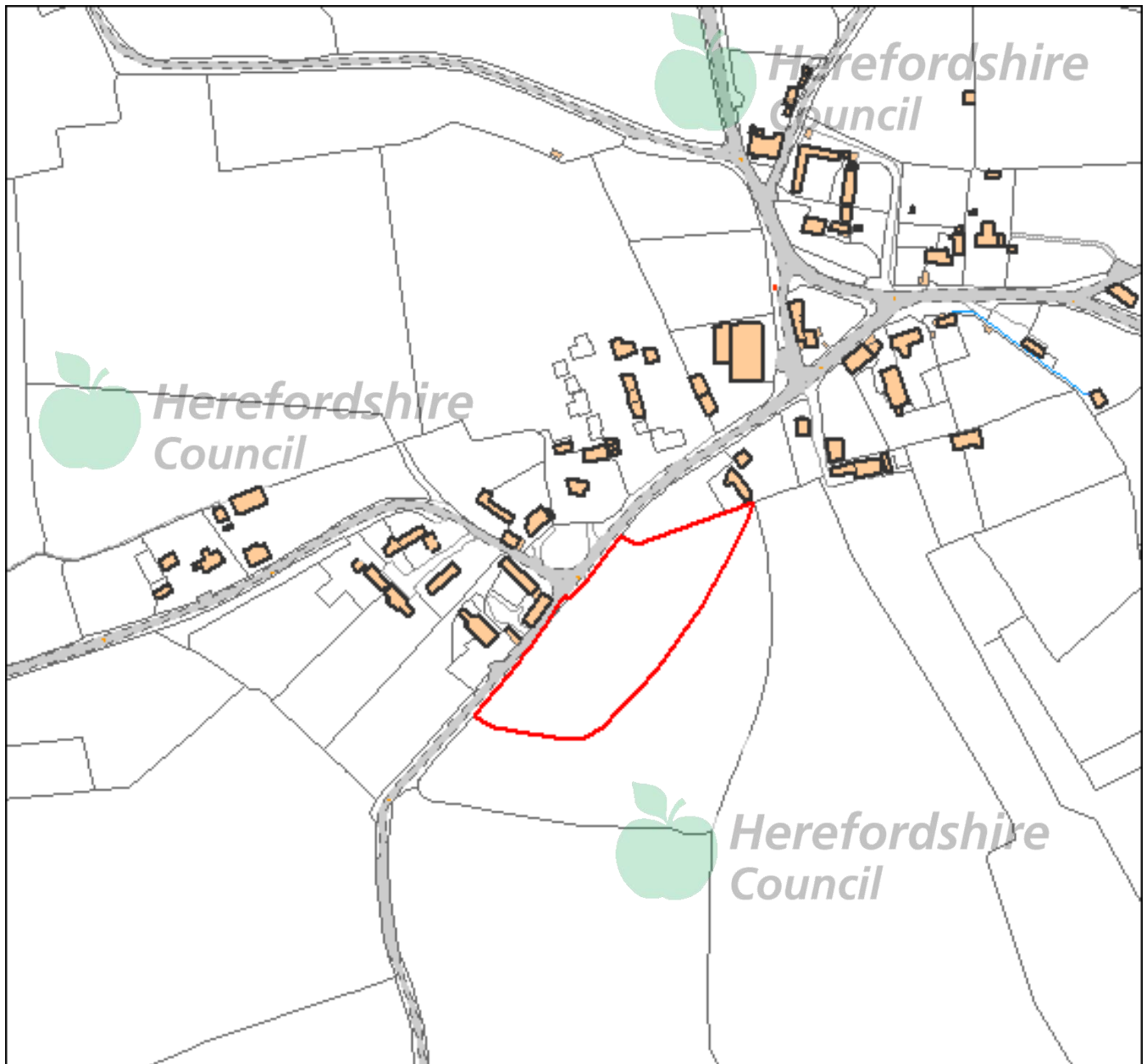
Background Papers

None identified

Useful information

Internal departmental consultation replies – available through the following link:

[Planning Application Details - Herefordshire Council](#)



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APPLICATION NO: 260943

SITE ADDRESS : LAND SOUTHEAST OF WOONTON FARM, WOONTON, ALMELEY, HEREFORD

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