

**ITEM NUMBER: 5a**

<b>23/02646/FUL</b>	<b>Residential Development including formation of 9 new houses, access, landscaping and all ancillary features. Diversion of public footpath.</b>	
<b>Site Address:</b>	<b>Land To West of Orchard House, Astrope Lane, Astrope, HP23 4PN</b>	
<b>Applicant/Agent:</b>	<b>Mr Ross Blumire</b>	
<b>Case Officer:</b>	<b>Andrew Parrish</b>	
<b>Parish/Ward:</b>	<b>Tring Rural Parish Council</b>	<b>Tring West &amp; Rural</b>
<b>Referral to Committee:</b>	<b>The Head of Development Management considered that the proposals are of significant public interest</b>	

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

1.1 That planning permission be REFUSED

**2. SUMMARY**

2.1 The site lies within the Rural Area wherein, under Policy CS7 of the Dacorum Core Strategy September 2013, only small-scale development for the uses listed in the policy will be acceptable. The list of uses does not include use for residential purposes. Whilst the site is close to the village of Long Marston where small-scale development for housing may be permitted as an exception, it does not fall within or even adjacent to the village. Furthermore, at 9 dwellings, the scheme is not small-scale in the context of Astrope. The site is in an isolated location, with poor and unattractive access by foot and bicycle, which would not encourage residents to use alternative more sustainable means of travel to the car. The site is inherently an unsustainable location and would not maintain or enhance the vitality of Long Marston. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS1, CS7 and CS8 of the Dacorum Core Strategy September 2013, and Paragraphs 82, 83, 114 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework Dec 2023. No exceptional circumstances are considered to exist under other policies or guidance and there is not considered to be a case for an exception under Paragraph 11 the NPPF.

2.2 The principle of residential development is therefore not acceptable, being contrary to Policy CS7 and falling outside any of the selected small villages where an exception could be made and failing also to comply with Policy CS20 exception of providing affordable housing.

2.3 Set against this, the proposal is not considered to be comparable to the Astrope House scheme where, under the tilted balance, the proposal was determined not to be isolated and where permission was granted. However, given the further distance from Long Marston, the more isolated open countryside location and the lack of convenient or attractive walking or cycling routes to Long Marston, the proposed scheme is not considered to be sustainably located, and would encourage more car travel contrary to policies of restraint and CS8 that seeks to encourage non car based travel.

2.4 Furthermore, the proposed development of large detached houses in a suburban layout would erode the open rural character of Astrope to its detriment. Harm would be caused to the character, appearance and amenities of the area due to the diversion of the PROW to the side and rear of the development, the failure to respond to the character of Astrope Lane in the layout and a dominance of hard surfacing and car parking.

2.5 The lack of supplementary and replacement planting to the frontage would further escalate concerns that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside and of Astrope.

2.6 Applying the tilted balance, the benefits of the scheme in terms of the modest provision of additional housing, temporary employment during construction and support for local services is not considered to outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, or the Council's Sustainable Development Strategy, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole. As a result sustainable development would not be achieved in accordance with Para 11 of the NPPF.

2.7 The proposals are therefore contrary to Policies CS1, CS7, CS8, CS11, CS12, CS13, CS25, CS26 and CS35 of the CS, saved Policy 100 of the Local Plan and LTP Policies 1 and 5.

### **3. SITE DESCRIPTION**

3.1 The site comprises an area of agricultural land, roughly square in shape and extending to 0.77 ha. It is located on the north side of Astrope Lane within an open countryside location, approximately 1 km to the South West of Long Marston. The site relates to a single field which is understood to have no recent history of cultivation. The site sits between Orchard House and Knoll Cottage within the hamlet of Astrope, a small and dispersed collection of dwellings. The boundaries of the site are defined by mature mixed deciduous hedges and trees, including a thick tree belt to its frontage with Astrope Lane. There is a gated field access from the lane at the site's South Eastern corner. A public right of way (Aylesbury Ring) runs diagonally from this access across the field to its North Western corner.

The site lies within the Rural Area and within Flood Zone 1.

### **4. PROPOSAL**

Full planning permission is sought for the erection of 9 dwellings with two accesses from Astrope Lane and diversion of a Public Right of Way (PROW).

### **5. PLANNING HISTORY**

Planning Applications

22/00610/PREC (pre-application advice) - Infill development in 4 - 5 dwellings in Paddock to west of Orchard House – *Raise Objection – 14th June 2022*

4/01058/18/FHA - Single and first floor front, side and rear extensions (amended scheme)  
*GRA - 22nd June 2018*

4/02869/17/FHA - Single and first floor front, side and rear extensions  
*GRA - 19th February 2018*

### **6. CONSTRAINTS**

Advert Control: Advert Spec Control

CIL Zone: CIL2

Parish: Tring Rural CP

Rural Area: Policy: CS7

Parking Standards: New Zone 3

### **7. REPRESENTATIONS**

## Consultation responses

7.1 These are reproduced in full at Appendix A.

## Neighbour notification/site notice responses

7.2 These are reproduced in full at Appendix B.

## **8. PLANNING POLICIES**

Main Documents:

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023)

Dacorum Borough Core Strategy 2006-2031 (adopted September 2013)

NP1 - Supporting Development  
CS1 - Distribution of Development  
CS2 - Selection of Development Sites  
CS7 – Rural Area  
CS8 - Sustainable Transport  
CS10 - Quality of Settlement Design  
CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design  
CS12 - Quality of Site Design  
CS13 – Quality of Public Realm  
CS17 - New Housing  
CS20 - Rural Sites for Affordable Homes  
CS25 - Landscape Character  
CS26 - Green Infrastructure  
CS28 - Renewable Energy  
CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction  
CS35 - Infrastructure and Developer Contributions

Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1999-2011 (adopted April 2004)

Policy 10 - Optimising the Use of Urban Land  
Policy 13 - Planning Conditions and Planning Obligations  
Policy 18 - Size of New Dwellings  
Policy 21 - Density of Residential Development  
Policy 51 – Development and Transport Impacts  
Policy 57 - Provision and Management of Parking  
Policy 79 – Footpath Network  
Policy 99 – Preservation of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands  
Policy 100 – Tree and Woodland Planting  
Policy 129 - Storage and Recycling of Waste on Development Sites  
Appendix 1 - Sustainability Checklist  
Appendix 3 - Layout and Design of Residential Areas

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents:

Strategic Design Guide (February 2021)  
Environmental Guidelines (May 2004)  
Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (September 2011)  
Sustainable Development Advice Note (March 2011)  
Refuse Storage Guidance Note (February 2015)

Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (November 2020)  
Roads in Hertfordshire, Highway Design Guide 3rd Edition (2011)  
Water Conservation (July 2005)  
Energy Efficiency and Conservation (July 2005)

## 9. CONSIDERATIONS

### Main Issues

9.1 The main issues to consider are:

Policy and Principle  
Design and Impact on Rural Area and Countryside  
Impact on trees and landscaping  
Impact on Residential Amenities  
Impact on Highway Safety  
Sustainable Design and Construction  
Other Material Planning Considerations  
The planning balance

### Policy and Principle

#### Policy CS7 'The Rural Area'

9.2 The site falls within the Rural Area where in accordance with Policy CS7 residential development is not identified as being acceptable. Whilst exceptions exist for certain types of development, such as redevelopment of previously developed land or reuse of buildings, the proposal does not fall into these exceptions. Therefore, the proposal for residential development is unacceptable in principle in this location. Policy CS7 reflects the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy which seeks to focus development towards the large towns and villages in the borough in accordance with Policy CS1 and the settlement hierarchy of table 1.

9.3 The supporting text to Policy CS7 acknowledges the importance of retaining the open character of the rural area and that whilst the role of the Rural Area is different to the Green Belt, the pressures it faces are comparable. Therefore to retain its open character, the policy controls development in a similar way. Policies CS1 and CS7 steer most new development to places that offer the best access to services and facilities, helping to reduce the need to travel consistent with Para 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and avoiding urban sprawl.

9.4 Policy CS7 states that:

*"Small-scale development for housing... will be permitted at Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone, provided that it complies with Policy CS1: Distribution of Development and Policy CS2 Selection of Sites."*

9.5 However, whilst the site is close to the village of Long Marston, at 1km distance it does not fall within or even adjacent to the village and would therefore not be considered to accord with Policy CS7. Whilst there is no village sign along Astrope Lane, this would not be a determinative factor. The site is clearly within the separate hamlet of Astrope and this is confirmed at Table 11, Page 186 of the Core Strategy. Furthermore, in visual terms the site does not appear nor feel part of the village of Long Marston but rather part of the wider countryside, noting the enclosing nature of the vegetation means that there is both a physical and visual barrier between Astrope and Long Marston. Therefore it is considered that the site is neither physically, nor visually, part of the village of Long Marston. Furthermore, at 9 dwellings, neither is the scheme considered to be small-scale when considered in the context of the size of the existing hamlet, resulting in approximately a 50% increase in the

number of dwellings (taking account of the recent permission for 5 dwellings at Astrope House (21/0215/15)).

### Astrope House Scheme

9.6 Reference is made in the DAS to a scheme of 5 dwellings permitted recently on a site nearby next to Astrope House (21/0215/15) as setting a precedent. It is noted that the tilted balance in favour of sustainable development was applied in that case to support the development. The applicant raises a similar argument in the DAS. This is considered later.

9.7 Under Para 84 of the NPPF, policies and decisions should avoid the creation of isolated dwellings in the countryside. However, the issue of what is a settlement and what is isolated is a matter of planning judgement. Here, it was acknowledged that Long Marston comprises a settlement. Para 73 states that to enhance sustainable development, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It was determined that the site would meet this objective given the proximity and footpath network. It was also stated that the lack of public transport options would not present a reason to refuse permission in this case as it would still be feasible for residents to walk or cycle to the village. Taking into account case law it was determined that the site was not isolated.

9.8 Looking at the current scheme, it is not considered that the proposed site for 9 more dwellings is in such close proximity to the village or that footpath options are so good that they would encourage residents not to use their cars to access village services. The site is approximately 150 metres further away from the village than the Astrope House scheme. It is also larger, and cumulatively so, so the overall impact would be greater. Furthermore, Astrope Lane is narrow with no footpath protection or street lighting which would not only present an inherent danger to pedestrians and would-be cyclists, but as a result would not encourage walking or cycling, especially of a dark evening.

9.9 It is noted that there is a network of footpaths crossing the fields and connecting with Long Marston. However, these also are unsurfaced and unlit so would also be likely to dissuade people from using these, especially in the winter and dark evenings. Therefore it is considered that the location would provide neither safe nor convenient non-vehicular trips for residents, especially children or those with mobility issues.

9.10 Moreover, given Long Marston has rather few facilities and services, and no shops or grocery stores, residents are likely to be heavily reliant upon private car transport to access these services in Tring or elsewhere. This goes against the Council's Settlement Hierarchy at Table 1 as an 'Area of Development Restraint' which is a 'least sustainable area' within the borough where significant environmental constraints are applicable. The provision of 9 additional dwellings would not be considered to create a sufficient increase in catchment population to support a shop or post office, noting that the existing post office closed some years ago due to ailing business.

9.11 A further consideration is that the Astrope House site has different characteristics in terms of the impacts of the development upon the rural area, notably being more bound by built form, having a smaller frontage and being more enclosed in nature given the hedged frontage and absence of disruption caused by a vehicular access and visibility splays.

9.12 In view of the above, it is considered that the site is not sustainably located, nor as sustainably located as the Astrope House scheme, is an isolated site in relation to Long Marston and would not therefore enhance or maintain the vitality of Long Marston. The proposal is therefore contrary to the NPPF in this respect.

### Policy CS1 Distribution of Development

9.13 Policy CS7 requires that development complies with Policy CS1 where it is within a defined settlement (i.e. Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone).

9.14 Policy CS1 (Distribution of Development) applies the settlement hierarchy approach in the assessment of new development. The policy expects that the rural character of the Borough will be conserved and that development which is compatible with policies protecting and enhancing the Rural Area will be supported. This approach to restraint is reinforced through the Core Strategy's Countryside Place Strategy Local Objectives. The Policy notes that:

*“The rural character of the borough will be conserved. Development that supports the vitality and viability of local communities, causes no damage to the existing character of a village and/or surrounding area and is compatible with policies protecting and enhancing the Green Belt, Rural Area and Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be supported.”*

9.15 As the site is not within a defined settlement, nor is it a local allocation, Policy CS1 is not considered relevant. This notwithstanding, the following considerations would be considered applicable:

9.16 In terms of supporting the vitality and viability of local communities, as noted above, the site is not considered to be within easy, safe or attractive walking distance given the unpaved, unlit routes and the significant distance. The site is inherently an unsustainable location in the Rural Area, and is contrary to Policy CS8 in that it would encourage private car use over walking, cycling and passenger transport. Residents are therefore more likely to use their cars to access services and facilities in nearby towns such as Tring or Aylesbury.

9.17 With regard to preventing damage to the existing character of the village and / or surrounding area, it is noted that the development would comprise 3 and 4 bedroom detached and semi-detached suburban type houses, albeit following a pseudo barn-like typology in a farmstead context. Whilst the design approach picking up on a local farmstead context is appreciated, this farmstead quality would be significantly disrupted by the three large detached homes along the frontage. The overall size and scale of the development and the number of dwellings being accommodated with insufficient breathing space is not considered sympathetic to the open rural character of the area. The sprawling nature of the development, infilling a gap between existing sporadic development, would erode the open character of the location and suburbanise the countryside to its detriment thereby harmful to the rural character of the area and the intrinsic beauty of the countryside, and contrary to NPPF Para 180(b). This harm would be seen to be visibly harmful from the road and public rights of way, and would be exacerbated when considered in conjunction with the nearby Astrope House development, resulting in an undesirable ribbon of urbanisation that would materially change the rural character of Astrope to its detriment. Furthermore, unlike the Astrope House scheme, given the proposed vehicular accesses, apparent doubling in width of Astrope Lane and visibility splays, the existing enclosed character of the lane formed by the treed and hedged frontage would be materially impacted to the further detriment of the rural character of the area.

9.18 The Astrope House scheme was noted as limited in nature which would promote the vitality of the village. The NPPF (Paras 82 and 83) also recognises that limited development in rural locations will not result in high levels of active modes by future residents. However, the incremental provision of housing, as here, which in itself, at 9 dwellings, is not considered small-scale, would cumulatively generate high levels of active transport, contrary to the NPPF (Para 116) and Policy CS8 that seek to promote and prioritise non-car based transport.

9.19 For the above reasons, the development of an open field in the form proposed is not considered to retain the open character of the Rural Area. Therefore the proposal is contrary to Policy CS1 as it would be incompatible with policies protecting and enhancing the Rural Area.

#### Policy CS2 Selection of Development Sites

9.20 Policy CS7 requires that development complies with Policy CS2 where it is within a defined settlement (i.e. Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone). Policy CS2 seeks a sequential approach to the development of sites, first within defined settlements in accordance with the sequence set down, and second, extensions to defined settlements (i.e. local allocations).

9.21 As the site is not within a defined settlement, nor is it a local allocation, this policy would not be relevant. This notwithstanding, if the policy was applicable, the site clearly does not follow the sequential approach of using previously developed land and buildings before areas of high accessibility and then other land.

#### Policy CS20 Rural Sites for Affordable Homes

9.22 Exceptionally, the Council can allow new housing in the Rural Area if it meets a local affordable housing need under Policy CS20:

9.23 Policy CS20 states that:

*“Small-scale schemes for local affordable homes will be promoted in and adjoining selected small villages in the countryside (see Policies CS6 and CS7), and exceptionally elsewhere with the support of the local Parish Council.”*

9.24 It goes on to caveat that schemes should have the support of the local Parish Council and if such an exception were to be considered, should be 100% affordable. Whilst the Council can consider allowing some market housing to help facilitate such schemes in accordance with the NPPF (Para 82), this should be the minimum necessary.

9.25 It is noted that no case has been put forward for allowing development here on the basis that it would provide much needed affordable housing. Accordingly, as the proposal is entirely for open market housing in the countryside, with no exception under Policy CS20, the scheme is contrary to Policies CS1 and CS7 and would fail to meet the strategic objectives of the plan.

#### Policy CS18 Mix of Housing

9.26 Policy CS18 states that new housing will provide a choice of homes comprising a range of housing types, sizes and tenures, housing for those in special needs and affordable housing in accordance with Policy CS19.

9.27 The NPPF (Para 73) additionally supports “...the development of exception sites for community-led development...” However, such sites should:

*a) comprise community-led development that includes one or more types of affordable housing as defined in Annex 2 of this Framework. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the local planning authority’s discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding; and*

*b) be adjacent to existing settlements, proportionate in size to them, not compromise the protection given to areas or assets of particular importance in this Framework, and comply with any local design policies and standards.”*

9.28 The proposals would comprise large detached general needs market housing. There would appear to be no smaller homes within the mix, nor any dwellings catering for special needs or affordable housing. The proposal is not for entry level housing, nor would it be sited adjacent to the existing settlement of Long Marston where this might be acceptable.

9.29 Accordingly, no exceptional circumstances are considered to exist that would enable this scheme to be supported in this location in the Rural Area.

### Summary

9.30 Para 83 of NPPF states: *“To promote sustainable development in Rural Areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services.”*

9.31 The Council has identified the villages of Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone as settlements within the Rural Area where small-scale development for housing, employment and other purposes will be permitted. Whilst the proposed development is in close proximity to the village of Long Marston, it is not within or even on the edge of the village, but is some distance away, nor is it considered to be small scale development in the context of the size of Astrope or the rural surroundings. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CS7 and in principle unacceptable as it would be harmful to the open character of the Rural Area.

9.32 Whilst noting the recently permitted scheme at Astrope House, the proposed development site would be further away from Long Marston, whilst the quality of the footpath options are poor and would not be considered to encourage walking or cycling. Furthermore, given the limited services and facilities in Long Marston, residents will be heavily reliant upon private transport to access services and facilities in Tring and elsewhere. The proposal is not considered comparable.

9.33 The proposed location of the development runs counter to the Council’s settlement hierarchy approach as expressed through Policy CS1. The site is in an inherently unsustainable location in the Rural Area, and is contrary to Policy CS8 that seeks to encourage and prioritise sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling over private cars. The proposals would not support the vitality and viability of local communities in accordance with Policy CS1. Furthermore, the inherent scale and nature of the development, comprising infilling between existing sporadic development, would urbanise the countryside to its detriment and would be visibly harmful to the open rural character of Astrope.

9.34 On balance, the proposal is not considered sustainable and the principle of development is unacceptable in this location. Sites that are within or adjacent to the main urban areas or large villages / selected small villages would be considered in preference to a rural site such as this. The proposal is contrary to Policy CS7 and the Core Strategy’s Sustainable Development Strategy and the distribution of development.

9.35 Furthermore, there is no case to allow an exception to policy on the basis of being a rural exception site that will provide affordable housing to meet identified local needs.

### **Design and impact on the countryside**

9.36 Policies CS10, 11, 12 and 13 of the Core Strategy are overarching policies applicable to all development which seek a high quality of design in all development proposals. In particular, Policy CS12 seeks to ensure that new development respects the character of the surrounding area and adjacent properties in terms of scale, mass, materials, layout, bulk and height.

9.37 Policy CS7 Rural Area caveats that for development that is acceptable, this is on the basis that:

*i. it has no significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside; and  
ii. it supports the rural economy and maintenance of the wider countryside.”*

9.38 Policy CS25 *Landscape Character* states that:

*“All development will help conserve and enhance Dacorum’s natural and historic landscape.*

*Proposals will be assessed for their impact on landscape features to ensure that they conserve or improve the prevailing landscape quality, character and condition and take full account of the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment, Historic Landscape Characterisation and advice contained within the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record.”*

9.39 The development falls within the *LCA 112 Boarscroft Vale* area which is identified as a predominantly low lying flat area distinctive by the relatively large number of open ditches, streams, moats and ponds, and the area having a remote feel with isolated settlement and few transport links. Under the *Strategy and Guidelines for Managing Change* the strategy seeks to conserve and restore, inter alia with a limit on built development within the area, conserving and enhancing the distinctive character of traditional settlements, encouragement to maintaining the local pattern of hedgerows, new hedgerows, the local pattern of open ditches and drainage features, traditional management by grazing, etc.

9.40 NPPF Para 180 states that:

*“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

*b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;”*

9.41 Astrope is a small isolated hamlet comprising only a few houses in a dispersed pattern. The site has an open character which is considered an inherent attribute of the rural character of Astrope. Given the dispersed pattern of development, the character of the hamlet would be considered vulnerable to extensive or unsympathetic infilling with built development.

9.42 Looking at the proposed layout, it is considered that the amount and scale of residential development would significantly erode the rural character of the hamlet, with the visual intrusion of the built form and the suburbanising effect of the houses visible across the frontage, linking Orchard House with Knoll Cottage, and creating an unsympathetic appearance of a commuter settlement. This would be exacerbated when considered in the context of the recent Astrope House development. Although this development is much better concealed in views from Astrope Lane given the screen planting and absence of vehicular access, nevertheless together they would create a continuous built up frontage of some 275 metres. Cumulatively, this ribbon of development would be very harmful to the established character of Astrope as a rural hamlet.

9.43 Turning to the details of the layout and design, the Council’s Urban Design Officer has acknowledged the concerns regarding the suitability of the development in this location. However, from a design perspective, she has commented that the proposal is suitable but that the current scheme and layout creates a number of complicated and impractical spaces which are concerning. In summary, she has advised that:

- The proposed realignment of PROW 53 would be confined to a narrow strip, resulting in a negative impact on the setting of the footpath with safety concerns for its users.

- The character of Astrope Lane needs greater consideration, with the need to respond to the neighbouring cottages, Knoll View and Green End.
- The Farmstead buildings to the rear are not considered an effective response to the site resulting in all the units having impractically shaped rear gardens.
- The number of vehicle accesses is excessive.
- The farmstead shared surface yard would dominate the scheme resulting in a car dominated central space, whilst parking for Plots 8 and 9 are not appropriate fronting the Lane.
- A 'flat-over-garage' typology would be more consistent with the agricultural buildings to help alleviate some of the parking pressures.

9.44 These concerns are in general supported, in particular relating to the diversion of the public footpath. This would not only create an enclosed and uninviting route for pedestrians, but would also significantly extend the length of walking route to the detriment of users' amenities. The concerns relating to the number of vehicle accesses perforating the site, the dominance of car parking within the farmstead courtyard and the benefits of introducing a flat-over-garage typology are also supported, along with the concerns relating to the layout and typologies.

9.45 The Urban Design Officer has suggested a possible alternative layout, which has been devised within the constraints of a 9 dwelling scheme. However, whilst within this constraint, these changes are supported, there would nevertheless remain a clear tension between the amount and distribution of development across the site and the character of Astrope as a rural hamlet. In particular it would still fail to provide an adequate and suitable break in built development.

9.46 In view of the in principle objection to development in this location, and the extent of design and layout changes being criticised, it is not considered expedient to negotiate changes as part of this application. The proposals are considered harmful to Astrope and the general character and appearance of the countryside in this location and thereby contrary to Policies CS7(i), 11(a, b, c, f), 12(f, g), 13(c) and 25 of the Core Strategy, and NPPF Para 180.

### **Impact on trees and landscaping**

9.47 The site is bordered by significant mature trees and hedges to all four sides.

9.48 Policies CS12 and 13, saved Policies 99 and 100 and section 3 of the Environmental Guidelines SPG are relevant in respect of retaining important trees and provision of appropriate landscaping on development sites. The preservation of existing trees and hedgerows is strongly encouraged as is the provision of a high quality landscaping scheme.

9.49 There are no significant trees within the site, except along the frontage. According to the tree report and plan, four Ash trees would be removed from the frontage at the two access points. The Tree Officer has referred only to two in his comments, noting that they are infected with Ash dieback and significant decline has been recorded. However, two others are also reported with Ash die back and are to be removed. Three are category U trees whilst one is a category C tree with 10 plus years life left. The latter (T01) is adjacent to the proposed secondary access and given comments above regarding the layout, T01 should be retained or at least replaced and supplemented to reinforce the enclosure of the site. The other three trees are at the main access point, although only two appear to need direct removal to enable the vehicular access. Nevertheless, no objection is raised to the removal of the category U Ash trees. The replacement of these trees nearby is welcomed.

9.50 It is noted that 21 replacement trees are proposed which would meet the Policy CS29 requirement for mitigating climate change, and provide a good level of supplementary landscaping. Unfortunately, they would not be in a good position to help reinforce the frontage tree belt. It is noted in this respect that 5 mixed native species vegetation groups would be cut back to enable the development to proceed. Whilst no objection is raised to the removal of G02, G03, G05 and G06, the

removal of G01 to the frontage would raise concerns in regard to the reduced screening potential of the remaining G01 group. Looking at plan AIA 01, G01 would be cut back by up to half its width within the site. Furthermore, it would appear that G01 will also need to be cut back along the road frontage to allow for the vehicle access and visibility splays, although this has not been identified. This is apparent from AIA 01 which shows the outer edge of G01 canopy set back by up to 4 m from the 'Edge of Road' (carriageway). Therefore G01 will be reduced in width along the frontage by approximately 12.5 m from its current width of some 18 m, significantly opening up the site to views. It is further noted that tree T04 (Ash) within the G01 group would need to be crown lifted to clear the garage for Plots 8 and 9 further opening up the site.

9.51 Whilst the Tree Officer raises no objection to the application on tree grounds, nevertheless on landscape grounds, the proposals fail to allow for satisfactory supplementary and replacement planting for screening purposes and would escalate concerns that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside and of Astrope as a dispersed pattern of buildings. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS12 and 13, and saved Policy 100. If permitted, a landscape scheme would be required by condition as noted by the Tree Officer.

### **Impact on residential amenity**

9.52 Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy requires that development proposals should avoid visual intrusion, loss of sunlight and daylight, loss of privacy and disturbance to the surrounding properties. The proposals would be in relatively close proximity to existing and proposed development. However, given the siting, distance, height, boundary planting and orientation of the dwellings, it is not considered that there would be any material harm to adjoining residential amenities.

9.53 In accordance with Appendix 3, all residential development should provide private amenity space in accordance with the guidance. Garden sizes are considered to be relatively generous and in keeping with nearby dwellings, and would meet the standards. This is notwithstanding the comments regarding the layout.

9.54 The proposals in the above respects accord with Policy CS12.

### **Impact on highway safety**

9.55 Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy states that on each site development should provide a safe and satisfactory means of access for all users.

9.56 Furthermore, Saved Policy 51 of the DBLP states that the acceptability of all development proposals will always be assessed specifically in highway and traffic terms and should have no significant impact upon the nature, capacity and use of the highway network and its ability to accommodate the traffic generated by the development and the environmental and safety implications of the traffic generated by the development.

9.57 Whilst noting the Parish Council's concerns, Herts Highways was consulted and does not raise any objections in regard to the impact of increased vehicle trips on the road network per se, but does identify that the residents will be reliant on private cars, and is of the view that the non-sustainable nature of the development is contrary to LTP4 (2018) and NPPF policies, and for this reason, raises an objection to the development as a whole, recommending refusal. Concerns are raised regarding the lack of attractive walking routes as an alternative to the car, the excess distance to bus stops, and rail services, and the distance to town centres, schools, etc. being above the recommended maximum and that the proposals will be contrary to LTP Policy 1 and 5 that seeks to ensure development is sustainably located such that it can enable opportunity of choice of travel mode to reduce the reliance on the use of the private car.

9.58 The applicant responded to this with a letter statement dated 5<sup>th</sup> December 2023, including additional information regarding the Hertslynx service. The Highway Officer has initially reviewed this but remains of the view that the application is not sustainable and should be refused. It is also nearly double the size of the Astrope House scheme, further from the centre of Long Marston and approved before the updated NPPF July 2021 (further updated December 2023), that places more emphasis on sustainable travel and sustainable housing locations. The proposals would be contrary to LTP4, Policy CS8 and NPPF (Paras 115 and 116). However, a response from Herts Highways regarding the weight to be applied to the Hertslynx service is awaited and an update will be provided at the meeting.

9.59 In terms of access, the development proposes to use the existing farm gate access off Astrope Lane to serve a single dwelling access for the remaining eight dwellings. Herts Highways has advised that the proposed visibility splays of 2.4 x 43 m are compliant with Manual for Streets standards for a 30 mph road. The Highway Officer notes that the proposals would require the removal of some foliage. As noted above this would appear to be up to some 4 m.

9.60 Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy states that on each site, development should provide sufficient parking. The site is situated within Zone 3 as defined by the Parking Standards SPD (Nov 2020). The proposal comprises 3 x 3 bed, 4 x 4 bed and 2 x 5 bed requiring 25 spaces in total. A total of 25 spaces is proposed, including garage spaces serving Plot Nos 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9. In addition 3 visitor spaces are proposed. The proposals would therefore comply with Policy CS12 and the SPD and the overall availability of parking on site would be likely to prevent on-street parking on Astrope Lane.

9.61 In accordance with Policy CS12, sufficient space for servicing would be required. Swept path diagrams have been provided which show suitable turning.

9.62 The Council's Refuse Storage Guidance Note requires bin storage to be sited inconspicuously. It is stated that an external location for bin storage to each dwelling has been provided. However, whilst a collection point is shown for each dwelling, no bin store location is shown. Therefore it has not been demonstrated that the proposals accord with guidance and the proposal is contrary to Policy CS12.

9.63 It is stated that all dwellings have been designed to have on plot electrical charging points and areas for cycle storage. Whilst EV charging is shown on plan, and its provisions should be secured by condition, the lack of details of cycle storage fails to demonstrate that the proposals accord with guidance which is therefore contrary to Policy CS12.

### **Sustainable design and construction**

9.64 Any new development should be consistent with the principles of sustainable design as set out in Policies CS29, CS30 and CS31 of the Core Strategy and saved Policy 129 of the Borough Plan, together with Supplementary Planning Documents for Energy Efficiency and Conservation, and Water Conservation.

9.65 The application should be accompanied by a Sustainability Statement as required by Para 18.22 of the Core Strategy and Policy CS29. In addition, the criteria within Policy CS29 should be met and should be demonstrated via a Sustainable Design and Construction Statement, a template checklist for which is available on the DBC website.

9.66 The DAS includes some details on sustainable design and construction. This is acceptable as far as it goes and the commitment to exceed the Building Regulations in terms of CO2 emissions and to focus on a fabric first approach is supported, as is the commitment to sustainable drainage but does not cover the entirety of the matters set down in the Council's Sustainable Design and Construction checklist. It is therefore unclear if the full principles of sustainable design and

construction have been incorporated. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CS29 and to pre-application advice. Should permission be granted full details of a completed checklist would be recommended to be provided for approval by condition. Solar panels are noted. However, full details would be recommended by condition to minimise their visual impact.

### **Flood risk and drainage**

9.67 Policies CS29 and 31 require consideration to minimising flood risk. There have been a number of objections received on grounds of flood risk.

9.68 A SUDS Technical Note and Development Drainage Strategy report has been submitted. The site falls within EA Flood Zone 1 which is land with the lowest risk of flooding and considered acceptable for 'more vulnerable' development such as residential in accordance with DGLC Flood risk and coastal change Table 3 and considered appropriate in the NPPF. The proposal meets the sequential test of NPPF as there are no sites better located from a flood perspective. From geological data, the site is deemed relatively impermeable such that infiltration SuDS are not feasible. The nearest source of fluvial flooding is from the Gudgeon Stream located 330 m to the west of the site which coincides with evidence of flooding in Astrope Lane to the west of the site. However, there has been no recorded fluvial flooding of the site. The lowest ground level on site would be in the NW corner which would be below the predicted 1% + climate change event of 85.7 m above ordnance datum. FFLs are proposed to be set at a minimum of 86 m AOD in accordance with EA recommendations. Safe and dry access and egress at the site is achievable to a publicly accessible location outside the 1:100 year (plus climate change) fluvial flood event extent.

9.69 In terms of site drainage, it is proposed that all surface water runoff from impermeable areas at the development is attenuated on-site via SuDS up to the 1:100 years +40% CC event and discharged into the existing watercourse at the northern site boundary, mimicking the existing natural greenfield runoff regime. Discharge will be restricted to a maximum of the existing greenfield runoff rate QBar (1.4 l/s). There will be a betterment over existing green field discharge from the site for the 1 in 30 and 1 in 100 flood event.

9.70 Surface water from roads and driveways will be drained via permeable paving into an aggregate surface base. Surface water from roofs will be discharged directly into the sub base and thence via the cellular attenuation tank where discharged to the watercourse on the northern side of the site at GF runoff rates.

9.71 The LLFA and EA were consulted. However, no comments have been received but any update will be reported at the meeting. The concerns of the Parish Council and residents are acknowledged. However, the proposals are considered to provide satisfactory sustainable drainage for the site which will not result in any increased risk of local flooding and is calculated to provide reduced flooding risk for the 30 and 100 year flood events. The proposals therefore accord with Policies CS29 and 31. However, given the local concern and the lack of comment from the expert bodies, it would be recommended that full details of the drainage proposals, including proposals to help mitigate existing flooding issues, be agreed prior to the commencement of development, were planning permission to be granted.

### ***Other material planning considerations***

#### *Ecology*

9.72 Policy CS26 seeks to protect the green infrastructure network and states inter alia that "*Development and management action will contribute towards: • the conservation and restoration of habitats and species;*"

9.73 An Ecological Impact Assessment has been submitted which finds that the site consists of semi-improved neutral grassland with mature trees, dense scrub, and tall ruderal vegetation. There are no protected species that would be impacted and that legally protected areas of ecological importance would not be affected by the development. There is negligible potential for bats and badgers and no further surveys are recommended for these species. There is low potential for reptiles to be present, but it is recommended that works be carried out under a method statement which will provide suitable precautions if any Great Crested Newts are unexpectedly found. There is high potential for breeding birds to be present within the tree and scrub habitats, and therefore it is recommended that works be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season. Details of an ecological method statement by condition would be recommended for submission should permission be granted.

9.74 A number of recommendations are put forward for biodiversity enhancement, including integrated bat boxes, swift bricks and bird boxes within the gardens, hedgehog highways. It would be recommended that details of these biodiversity features be secured by condition should permission be granted, alongside hard and soft landscaping details.

9.75 In accordance with NPPF Paras. 180 and 186, overall net gains for biodiversity should be demonstrated. It is noted that it is proposed to provide 21 new trees as well as bolster boundary planting. However, no calculation of any proposed net gain has been submitted in support of the application.

9.76 Herts Ecology was consulted. However, no comments have been received.

#### *Public Rights of Way*

9.77 The resurfacing of footpath 54 to the rear of the site is welcomed. However, as noted above, the proposals would require the diversion of PROW 53 Aylesbury Ring, resulting in a less convenient and more urbanised route for pedestrians which would not be beneficial for walkers. The Aylesbury Ring footpath passes directly through the centre of the site. This would be diverted around the edge of the site. At present, this part of the Aylesbury Ring passes through an attractive, open, rural field; the diversion of this path, and associated development, would be considered to cause significant harm to this circular route through the urbanisation of this segment, and would significantly inconvenience walkers by extending the length of the section. Its containment within fenced perimeters would also be less attractive and more oppressive than the current route through an open field. The concerns of the Parish Council and others are also noted. Whilst the linkage from the core of the site to footpath 54 / 53 is welcomed, this would benefit residents of the development, whilst the definitive line would remain less desirable for members of the public. It is also the case that this could increase security concerns and issues for the residents.

9.78 Saved Policy 79 of the Local Plan states that *“The public footpath network will be protected, improved, and promoted through joint action with the highway authority, the Countryside Management Service (see Policy 96), other organisations and private landowners.”*

9.79 It states that changes should not inconvenience walkers or adversely affect residential amenities and goes on to state that particular attention will be given to the creation and signing of circular walks including links with the Grand Union Canal towpath, town to country routes, permissive links, interpretative facilities, and to accessibility by passenger transport. It also states that the diversion of public footpaths as a result of development proposals will only be supported if the environmental character of the paths is maintained, walkers are not significantly inconvenienced and/or significant planning advantages accrue.

9.80 The proposal is considered contrary to saved Policy 79 of the Local Plan.

9.81 The Council's Rights of Way Officer has been consulted. However, no comments have been received but any update will be reported at the meeting. Should permission be granted, any diversion would need to be secured via an s106 planning obligation. In the absence of this the proposals are therefore contrary to Policy CS35 and saved Policy 13.

#### *Affordable Housing*

9.82 In accordance with Policy CS19 and the Affordable Housing Clarification Note, the threshold for affordable housing provision is 10 dwellings or more in the towns and large villages, and therefore the proposal does not need to provide affordable housing. However, as noted earlier, as the proposal does not provide affordable housing in accordance with Policy CS20, residential development for market homes is in principle not acceptable in the Rural Area.

#### *Crime Prevention*

9.83 Policy CS12 is relevant in respect of achieving secure, crime free development and Policy CS11 is relevant in respect of incorporating natural surveillance. It is stated that the proposal would create a place that is safe, inclusive and accessible, and which promotes health and well-being; with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users and where crime and disorder and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience. However, as noted above, it is considered that the proposed footpath diversion to the rear of dwellings would be likely increase security issues and concerns for residents. In this respect the proposals would be contrary to the above policies and NPPF Para 96.

#### *Contamination*

9.84 The Scientific Officer recommends a discovery condition.

#### *Noise, dust and air quality*

9.85 Environmental Health has recommended a Construction Management Plan by condition and informatives covering working hours, waste management, etc.

#### *Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation*

9.86 Due to this development resulting in a 9 dwelling net gain, mitigation in the form of SAMM and SANG payments under the Chilterns Beechwoods Recreational Pressure Mitigation Strategy will need to be secured by legal agreement.

9.87 NE has raised a standard objection on grounds that further information is required to determine the impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

9.88 There will be an impact on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC from all residential development within the zone of influence (12.6 km including the whole of Dacorum). This will be proportionate to the size of the development. The proposed creation of 9 additional dwellings will be likely to result in additional recreational pressure on the SAC, noting its location within the Zone of Influence. It is considered that locally available open space will not present a suitable substitute to the more natural and wild setting of the Chiltern Beechwoods experience. Also it is not possible to guarantee that future residents of the development (and their visitors) will not make visitor trips to Ashridge Estate or Tring Woodlands for recreational purposes. Therefore a mitigation strategy has been developed by Dacorum Borough Council and its partners in adjoining authorities alongside Natural England and the National Trust.

9.89 In accordance with the HRA regulations permission cannot legally be issued until mitigation is in place either through private provision of SANG or through a signed and completed UU making the

appropriate SANG and SAMM payments. The applicant has submitted a draft agreement that covers the above. However as the agreement has not been signed or completed, it follows that there is no mitigation in place to offset the recreational pressure from this development. This is a material planning consideration that weighs against the proposal.

9.90 Given the above, and the absence of SAMM or SANG in place, the Council considers that there would be harm to the SAC and that permission should therefore not be granted until such mitigation is in place.

9.91 The proposed development is contrary to Policy CS26, paragraph 181 of the NPPF, and the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 2017 and 2019.

#### *Community Infrastructure Levy and planning obligations*

9.92 Policy CS35 requires all developments to make appropriate contributions towards infrastructure required to support the development. The Charging Schedule clarifies that the site is in Zone 2 within which a current charge of £150 per square metre is applicable to this development.

9.93 An s106 agreement will be required to be completed in respect of the footpath diversion. In addition, as discussed above, contributions to SANG and SAMM will need to be secured by the Council's standard template s106 agreement. In the absence of a completed agreement, there does not exist a legal mechanism to secure the necessary footpath diversion or mitigation of recreational impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

#### **Response to Neighbour Comments**

9.94 Tring Rural Parish Council objects to the application on a number of grounds, and there have also been several neighbour objections. Key areas of concern relate to the following in summary:

- Unsustainable location
- Lack of services in the area
- Would not promote sustainable modes of travel
- No safe pedestrian access except across muddy fields
- Residents will be highly reliant on cars
- Insufficient car parking
- Will not contribute to the vitality of Astrope or Long Marston
- Excess number of houses
- Not small scale
- High density out of keeping
- Flooding issues would be increased
- Narrow twisty road
- Road inadequate
- Increased traffic detrimental to safety
- No public transport
- Hazard to bicycles
- Visibility splays outside of red line
- Out of character
- Pastiche development
- Would not integrate with existing development
- Would urbanise countryside
- Inward facing development
- Dominance of hard standing and parking
- Loss of hedgerows

- Damage to ecology
- Hedgerows and trees should be kept thick
- Light pollution
- Fencing in / urbanising footpath
- Harm to Aylesbury Ring
- Loss of privacy, outlook, daylight, noise and disturbance to Knoll Cottage
- Overdevelopment of a sensitive site

These concerns have been considered above.

### **The planning balance**

9.95 The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. Therefore, it should take the 'tilted balance' in favour of granting planning permission in accordance with Para 11 (d) of the Framework unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development; or, any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework when taken as a whole. The strategic elements of Policy CS7 are considered to be out of date in this regard. However, Para 109 of the NPPF is considered to provide the strategic basis for determining that the application site is not a sustainable location for residential development.

9.96 Para 12 goes on to state *"The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision-making."* General policies not related to housing supply will continue to have the full weight of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and planning decisions are to be made *"in accordance with the plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise."*

9.97 The application of the tilted balance does not imply that planning permission should be granted in all cases. The presumption in favour of sustainable development is not an unconstrained approach. For example, the NPPF gives full weight to the Green Belt, Chilterns AONB and other historic and environmental assets. Applications that do not constitute sustainable development in NPPF should normally be refused. Adverse impacts are to be assessed against the full scope of guidance in NPPF.

9.98 The benefits of the scheme should clearly be shown to outweigh the negatives for any scheme to be considered as sustainable development.

9.99 The benefits of the development are 9 additional new dwellings suitable as family homes with a good level of amenities for its occupants. This would represent a modest contribution towards the provision of housing within the Borough and should be given a modest amount of weight. However, it is noted that the proposals would not benefit the needs of small households or those in need of an affordable home, which is an acknowledged need, so the benefit is accordingly moderated.

9.100 In addition, the proposed development would generate some economic benefits arising from the construction process and ongoing support for local facilities, albeit these benefits would be temporary or of a limited amount, especially noting the non-sustainable location and the reliance upon private transport that would likely encourage residents to use facilities in nearby towns. Therefore, they can only be given a limited amount of weight.

9.101 Set against this benefit, the proposals would be contrary to Rural Area policy that seeks to retain the open character of the countryside. For the reasons outlined in this report, residential development of the site would conflict with the spatial strategy for the area, resulting in unsustainable travel patterns and a reliance on the use of the private car. This would also be

contrary to the Local Transport Plan and the sequential approach to transport modes that favours walking and cycling before public and private motorised forms of travel.

9.102 Furthermore, the amount of development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area encroaching upon the countryside and detracting from the open and rural character with a suburbanising form of development. There would also be harm to the character and appearance of the area by reason of the layout of the scheme, in particular the diversion of a PROW to the side and rear of the development, thereby creating an extended and more unattractive route for pedestrians, a failure to respond to the character of Astrope Lane and a dominance of hard surfacing and car parking which would be visible to the street scene and detract from the development.

9.103 The proposals also fail to allow for satisfactory supplementary and replacement planting to the frontage for screening purposes and would escalate concerns that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside and of Astrope as a dispersed pattern of buildings. In addition, the proposals fail to demonstrate that bin and cycle storage would be inconspicuously located and designed.

9.104 In addition to the above, whilst acknowledging the commitment to paying HRA contributions, must nevertheless be added the lack of a mechanism to secure the PROW diversion and Chilterns Beechwoods mitigation payments.

9.105 Applying the 'tilted balance', the above identified harm would be significant and as a result it is not considered that sustainable development would be achieved through this development. When assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, and the conflict with the development plan is not considered to be outweighed by other considerations including the Framework.

## **Conclusion**

9.106 The principle of residential development is not acceptable, being contrary to Policy CS7 and falling outside any of the selected small villages where an exception could be made and failing also to comply with Policy CS20 exception of providing affordable housing.

9.107 Set against this, the proposal is not considered to be comparable to the Astrope House scheme where, under the tilted balance, the proposal was determined not to be isolated and where permission was granted. However, given the further distance from Long Marston, the more isolated open countryside location and the lack of convenient or attractive walking or cycling routes to Long Marston, the proposed scheme is not considered to be sustainably located, and would encourage more car travel contrary to policies of restraint and CS8 that seeks to encourage non car based travel.

9.108 Furthermore, the proposed development of large detached houses in a suburban layout would erode the open rural character of Astrope to its detriment. Harm would be caused to the character, appearance and amenities of the area due to the diversion of the PROW to the side and rear of the development, the failure to respond to the character of Astrope Lane in the layout and a dominance of hard surfacing and car parking.

9.109 The lack of supplementary and replacement planting to the frontage would further escalate concerns that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside and of Astrope.

9.110 Applying the tilted balance, the benefits of the scheme in terms of the modest provision of additional housing, temporary employment during construction and support for local services is not considered to outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, or the Council's Sustainable Development Strategy, when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a

whole. As a result sustainable development would not be achieved in accordance with Para 11 of the NPPF.

9.111 The proposals are therefore contrary to Policies CS1, CS7, CS8, CS11, CS12, CS13, CS25, CS26 and CS35 of the CS, saved Policy 100 of the Local Plan and LTP Policies 1 and 5.

## 10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 That planning permission be **REFUSED**

### Reasons for Refusal:

1. The site lies within the Rural Area wherein, under Policy CS7 of the Dacorum Core Strategy September 2013, only small-scale development for the uses listed in the policy will be acceptable. The list of uses does not include use for residential purposes. Whilst the site is close to the village of Long Marston where small-scale development for housing may be permitted as an exception, it does not fall within or even adjacent to the village. Furthermore, at 9 dwellings, the scheme is not small-scale in the context of Astrope. The site is in an isolated location, with poor and unattractive access by foot and bicycle which would not encourage residents to use alternative more sustainable means of travel to the car. The site is inherently an unsustainable location and would not maintain or enhance the vitality of Long Marston. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS1, CS7 and CS8 of the Dacorum Core Strategy September 2013, and Paragraphs 82, 83, 114 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework Dec 2023. No exceptional circumstances are considered to exist under other policies or guidance and there is not considered to be a case for an exception under Paragraph 11 the NPPF.
2. The proposed development site, by reason of its remote location from local shops, services and employment, would not be sustainable in transport terms, with all residents heavily reliant on the use of private vehicles contrary to Paragraphs 114 and 116 of the National Planning Policy Framework Dec 2023 and contrary to Policies 1 and 5 of the Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan (2018).
3. The proposal, by reason of the amount, scale and layout of development, and the cumulative impact with adjoining development, would create a ribbon of development that would be significantly harmful to the established character of Astrope as a rural hamlet. In addition, the design and layout would, inter alia, result in a negative impact on the setting of the diverted public footpath 054, a less convenient route for pedestrians and crime and security issues, a poor response in its orientation to the site and surroundings, an excess of vehicular accesses that would open the site up to views, and a dominance of hard surfacing and car parking that would be harmful to the general character and appearance of the development and of the countryside setting. Furthermore, given the introduction of visibility splays, the loss of hedge and tree planting along the frontage, and the lack of space for replacement and supplementary tree planting to the rear of tree group G01, the development would be further exposed to views from Astrope Lane thereby exacerbating the harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and of Astrope as a dispersed pattern of buildings. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS7, 11, 12, 13 and 25 of the Dacorum Core Strategy, saved Policies 79 and 100 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 and Paragraph 96 and 180 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.
4. The proposed layout would provide insufficient car parking spaces to serve the development and an exception is not considered to be justified in this case. Overspill parking would be likely to compromise the arrangements for refuse vehicle access and turning to the detriment of highway safety whilst also impacting adversely on the character and appearance of the

development in this rural location. Furthermore, the lack of details of the siting and appearance of refuse and cycle storage fails to demonstrate that the proposals accord with guidance. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy CS12 of the Dacorum Core Strategy September 2013, the standards within the Dacorum Parking Standards SPD November 2020 and the Refuse Storage Guidance Note February 2015.

5. The proposed development fails to provide an appropriate legal mechanism to secure the diversion of public footpath 054. The proposal also fails to provide an appropriate signed legal agreement to mitigate the adverse impacts on the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area for Conservation in accordance with the Council's mitigation strategy. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies CS26 and CS35 of the Dacorum Core Strategy September 2013, Paragraph 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework Dec 2023, and the requirements of the Habitats Regulations 2017 and 2019.

**Informatives:**

1. Planning permission has been refused for this proposal for the clear reasons set out in this decision notice. The Council acted pro-actively through early engagement with the applicant at the pre-application stage which advised that residential development could not be supported. Since fundamental objections cannot be overcome, the Council has therefore acted pro-actively in line with the requirements of the Framework (paragraph 38) and in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No. 2) Order 2015.

**APPENDIX A: CONSULTEE RESPONSES**

Consultee	Comments
Parish/Town Council	<p>SUBMISSIONS BY TRING RURAL PARISH COUNCIL CONCERNING PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 23/02646/FUL</p> <p>Tring Rural Parish Council oppose this application on four grounds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It represents a disproportionate increase in the population of Puttenham/Astrope when considered alongside the existing developments by the same applicants (Laxton Properties) at Old Rectory Farm as well as the adjoining development at Little Copse. The Council has become increasingly concerned by the cumulative affect of a number of small (less than 10 houses) development schemes.</li> <li>2. Astrope Lane is already a 'rat run' which is far more heavily used than is appropriate with a weight restriction which is largely ignored, and this development would add to the problems.</li> <li>3. Once again this application causes concern about flooding and drainage. Building houses at a higher level does not assist the drainage issues surrounding the site. Recently Astrope Lane has been cut off because of flooding on the road believed to have been caused by the non- porous construction of a new access road to Old Rectory Farm, and the development at Little Copse has caused almost permanent drainage problems from run off with water pouring across Astrope Lane and the neighbouring footpath impassable.</li> <li>4. The footpath network around this area is a crucial characteristic and</li> </ol>

	<p>in itself offers mitigation for the concerns expressed about the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. This development would disrupt that network, in particular the important Aylesbury Ring route of paths.</p>
<p>Thames Water</p>	<p>Thank you for consulting Thames Water on this planning application. Having reviewed the details, we have no comments to make at this time.</p> <p>Should the details of the application change, we would welcome the opportunity to be re-consulted</p>
<p>Hertfordshire Highways (HCC)</p>	<p>8/12/23</p> <p>HCC Highways are happy to keep our reason for refusal, I have read the document set out by the developer in response to highway matters. The points I would raise is that the 5 dwellings nearby that were approved in May 2021 are closer to Long Marston than the proposed site and although adjacent by boundary are not adjacent by access. 9 dwellings is also nearly double the number of 5 and therefore double the trips to the site so the highway aspects are different. The 5 dwellings (21/02015/FUL) site was approved in May 2021 and the NPPF was updated that year in July 2021 to put more emphasis on sustainable travel and sustainable housing location which was implemented within this application but obviously for time reasons not within the 5 dwelling application.</p> <p>The document provided by the developer states;</p> <p>"The Highways Officer notes that the nearest bus stop is within Long Marston and estimates this to be c. 17 minutes walk away. We note that from the entrance of the site Google Maps measures a distance of 0.6 miles (just under 1km) and 13 minutes walk. Whilst this is just above the preferred maximum walking distance stated by the Officer of 800m to a town centre, it is within the 2km distance suggested for commuting (access to public transport and school) and other uses (1.2km). "</p> <p>We estimated the walk from the proposed dwellings front door whereas the document has estimated from the sites mains access. Unless the occupants would drive to the front of the development and then walk, they would still have to walk from their front doors to Long Marston making it 17 minutes. I would also agree with the statement that the 1 km is above the walking distance of 800 metres requested.</p> <p>Our main concern is how would vulnerable highway users without access facilities from the site without access to a car. These groups include but are not exclusive to children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Without the infrastructure in place for 9 dwellings in the</p>

current location, this would not be achievable. The adjacent footpath is not a viable route for access to services especially on wet and dark night such as the ones we are experiencing right now and indeed throughout the entirety of British winters.

The final point I would address is this statement within the conclusion

"The Highways Officer's assessment of the adjacent consented site concluded that 'this site could be accessed via sustainable travel means but the primary mode of travel would be that of the private motor car.' Given the immediate proximity of the sites it is reasonable to expect the same conclusion to be reached for the application site as well."

The adjacent site mentioned is still door to door a 5 minute extra walk along either an unlit unpaved footpath or an unlit 30 mph highway network without a footway from the proposed site. It is also nearly double the amount of dwellings and as such has double the amount of trips needed. The adjacent site for 5 dwellings was assessed on previous NPPF revision which post July 2021 has placed more emphasis on sustainable locations. For this reason HCC Highways are still happy to recommend refusal for the site notwithstanding issues of relocating a footpath for 9 dwellings.

8/11/23

Notice is given under article 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 that Hertfordshire County Council as Highway Authority recommends that permission be refused for the following reasons:

1) The development site, by reason of its' remote location from local shops, services and employment, shall not be sustainable in transport terms, with all residents heavily reliant on the use of private vehicles contrary to the paragraphs 110 and 112 of the NPPF and contrary to Hertfordshire County Councils Local Transport Plan (2018) policies 1 and 5.

Comments:

The proposal is for construction of a residential Development including formation of 9 new houses, access, landscaping and all ancillary features. Diversion of public footpath. The application is submitted accompanied by a Transport transport technical note dated October 2023, prepared by JPP on behalf of their client.

The application site is located on Astrope Lane, Astrope. Astrope Lane is an unclassified local access route that is highway maintainable at

public. Vehicle speeds immediately fronting the site are subject to 30mph speed limit. Development proposals seek to use the unused existing gated access for a single dwelling and then a new Bellmouth for the other eight dwellings. The surrounding site provides a number of rights of way including (Tring Rural Footpath 51,52,53,54). Such routes do provide permeability to the surrounding villages and if a person is ambitious enough to Alyesbury. All routes are unsigned, unlit and unbound routes. They do not represent an attractive walk route (particularly in the dark or wet) and are unlikely to represent an attractive alternative to use of footways for anyone other than for leisure (pedestrian) activities.

Astrope Lane does not feature footways. The use of RoW network is not appropriate for most journey choices (school access, employment, access to shops / services etc for matters of convenience and safety (particularly for school age, or in wet weather whereby the route can be extremely muddy, or dark). Walk distances via the highway footway network are not available in this location. The consideration of this site as a non-sustainable location is consistent with the HA's determination across the whole of Hertfordshire.

The TA recognises there are no bus services within the immediate vicinity of the site (no routes traverse Astrope Lane). The nearest bus stop is within Long Marston. These stops is served by routes 207. Route 207 does not run everyday or even every other day. The bus stops are some 17 minute walk distance from the site (on road or PROW), and significantly beyond the distance the HA would seek to ensure (normally 400 metres). Rail services are not within 2.9 miles of the site. The IHIE document - Guidelines for providing for journeys on Foot (2000) directs (table 3.3)that the accepted preferred Maximum walk distance to town centres should be 800m, for commuting (e.g. access to rail, school etc) is 2km and, elsewhere is 1200m. This therefore places the development site above all such maximum walk distances, giving weight to the HA's position that residents will elect to use the car.

The County Councils Local Transport Plan (policy 1) seeks to ensure that, in line with the golden thread of the NPPF, development is sustainable and located such that it can enable opportunity of choice to travel mode to reduce the reliance on the use of the private car. Such objective also underpins policy 5 to the LTP (adopted 2018). The HA present that the development does not offer alternatives to the use of the private car, and is therefore contrary to Policies 1 and 5 of the LTP, as well as failing to comply with the NPPF. The NPPF directs that development should give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements, both within the scheme and with neighbouring areas; and second - so far as possible - to facilitating access to high quality public

transport, with layouts that maximise the catchment area for bus or other public transport services, and appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use and that the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility in relation to all modes of transport are addressed. (Para 111/112 NPPF) nor that safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users;(Para 110 NPPF). This Authority therefore presents significant concern that residents of the site shall be solely reliant on the use of the private car, and therefore that the development proposals are contrary to national and local highway authority policy, and for this reason recommend that the application be refused.

#### Access

The existing unused access will be used for plot 8 and a new access is formed, to the South. Visibility splays from the access are compliant with the visibility necessary by manual for streets standards for a 30mph road. The application in some places would require the removal of foliage which if on highway land would need additional investigation but is not required for this reason for refusal. The Transport Note provides swept path arrangements, sufficient to demonstrate that the access is suitable for the nature of vehicles to attend.

#### Parking

29 Parking spaces are proposed within the development, such level of provision accords with the Boroughs own parking standards. Cycle parking is to be provided. The developer proposes at least 50% parking provision as being EV, this is supported by this Authority, but recognised that building regulations shall be changing to secure 100% EV charging for all new residential units, with a recognition that - in this instance - the other 50% of parking spaces will have passive provision for conversion to EV. This Authority recognise the importance of EV charging, given the benefits to air quality and the environment.

#### Other matters

The applicant proposes alterations to PROW route through the site. HCC Highways recommends that the Rights of way team at Dacorum be contacted regarding the feasibility of the relocation of the rights of way route. The PROW routes surrounding the site will be paved, however, this will only be limited real life need for this paved route as it only extends to the end of the site so has no wider use.

#### Conclusion

The Highway Authority are acceptant of the access proposals if the trees removed are not of any highway benefit. Similarly the HA does not present that the vehicle trips arising from the residential shall have an unacceptable impact on their own to the network, however this Authority identifies that the development shall be car borne. Whilst the use existing represents a traffic demand, the Residential units proposed

	<p>shall have differing needs (shopping, access to schools, employment, leisure) with differing user needs (children, mobility impaired, elderly). Residents shall be reliant on the private car. The Hertfordshire County Council LTP (adopted 2018), as well as input to local plans, is predicated upon achieving a mode shift for all development in the plan period, recognising without the network impacts of development shall be severe. The non-sustainable nature of this development is therefore contrary to LTP4 and NPPF policies, and for this reason, the HA presents an objection to the development as a whole.</p>
<p>Conservation &amp; Design (DBC)</p>	<p><u>Site context</u></p> <p>The application site is located to the north-west of Tring, within the village of Astrope. The site lies outside of the Green Belt and the AONB. The site is accessed off Astrope Lane which leads North-east to Long Marston and west towards Puttenham.</p> <p>Two Public Rights of Way pass through the site, including no. 53 which crosses the site diagonally from north-west to south-east terminating on Astrope Lane. PRoW no. 53 forms part of the Aylesbury Ring, which is a 32-mile circular walk around Aylesbury. In addition to the above, PRoW no. 54 runs along the northern boundary of the site.</p> <p>The site is centrally located between Orchard House and Knoll Cottage, beyond which are a small number of neighbouring properties. The area is predominantly modest, two-storey, semi-detached and detached dwellings. In close proximity of the site a recent residential development for five new dwellings was approved under application referenced: 21/02015/FUL</p> <p>The application site is bound to the north and south by extensive tree and hedgerow planting, with open fields and grassland beyond. To the immediate west of the site beyond a row of mature trees is a quaint set of two-storey, semi-detached cottages that front onto Astrope Lane with associated parking to the side and rear. To the east of the application site is a larger detached dwelling set back from Astrope Lane, beyond which is another set of semi-detached cottages fronting Astrope Lane.</p> <p><u>Site history</u></p> <p>Pre-application advice was previously sought where the officer concluded that the application site was inappropriate due to its unsustainable location.</p> <p><u>Recommendation:</u></p> <p>We generally support the principle of development on this site from a design perspective, however there are some concerns regarding the design and layout that need to be addressed prior to moving forward with this application. We are aware that there are some concerns regarding the suitability of the development in this location that will be addressed in the Lead Planning Officer's report.</p> <p>The remaining comments in this document respond to the design of the submitted scheme:</p>

Character and building appearance: Overall the proposed appearance and materiality of the dwellings are considered to be appropriate and the response to the local character is welcomed.

Re-arrangement of the public footpath: the existing public right of way no. 53 runs through an undisturbed, open landscape. In contrast the proposed rearrangement of the footpath is a narrow strip, bound by large trees and vegetation and planted hedgerows with little overlooking and natural surveillance. We are concerned with the safety of its users and the overall negative impact this development would have on the setting and environment of the footpath. There is an opportunity to maintain the existing alignment of the footpath and creating a series of landscape-led spaces and courtyards across the site. In rural settings such as this, it is not uncommon for public footpaths to pass through farmstead courtyards, which would be considered an appropriate approach if it is of a high-quality, landscape-led design.

Layout: the proposed layout does not work practically or achieve a high-quality design. Firstly the development should respond to the neighbouring cottages, Knoll Cottage and Green End. These existing cottages change the character of Astrope Lane, pulling the building frontage closer to the road with a positive frontage and parking to the side and rear of the properties. We would suggest responding to this typology whilst retaining the existing tree belt, continuing the same terraced cottage style with parking to the rear and rearranging the 'farm' building to the other side of the site, which is more in line with Orchard House and relocating Houses 8no and 9no which do not reflect the size and scale of other dwellings along Astrope Lane.

Similarly, the proposed orientation of the Farmstead buildings to the rear is not considered an effective response to the site and results in all the units having impractically shaped rear gardens. The below mark-up indicates how the scheme could be rearranged to create functional plot sizes and shapes, whilst maximising the space available on site for residential amenity space, rather than parking.

Vehicle access: the scheme proposes two vehicle access points which is considered to be excessive for the number of dwellings proposed. We recommend the omission of the eastern-most vehicle access and retain this as the Public Right of Way access point.

Indicative revised suggested layout

Parking: whilst we welcome the farmstead approach the shared-surface yard dominates the scheme and results in a car dominated central space. As suggested above, the scheme would benefit from refocusing the priorities and shifting the focus onto the landscaped spaces, vegetation and planting within the core of the development. It is also not considered appropriate to have the parking for plots 8no and 9no to be fronting Astrope Lane and should be located to the side or rear of the dwellings.

Building typologies: we suggest the scheme incorporates a

	<p>'Flat-over-garage' building typology which is consistent with agricultural buildings and would alleviate some of the pressures of the parking areas required. This could replace units 8 and 9 and reduce the overall impact of car parking on the site.</p> <p><u>Conclusion:</u></p> <p>Overall we consider the principle of development on this site to be suitable from a design perspective. However, the current scheme and layout creates a number of complicated and impractical spaces that are concerning. The character along Astrope Lane needs greater consideration, and the setting of the neighbouring dwellings needs to be reflected in the layout. We suggest that the applicant withdraws the current application and the resubmits a revised scheme that addresses the above concerns, taking on board the design recommendations.</p>
Strategic Planning & Regeneration (DBC)	We do not wish to comment on this application on this occasion.
Trees & Woodlands	<p>The development area is very limited in regard to tree presence. According to the information submitted 2 x ash trees will be require removal. However, they are infected with ash dieback and significant decline has been recorded.</p> <p>A Landscape Plan has been submitted but is not in accordance with BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape. I therefore require the applicant to submit further information to support tree planting that clearly describes a robust aftercare programme to ensure trees are afforded the best opportunity to reach maturity. This should also include replanting in the event of failure. This can form part of a condition to be agreed with the LPA prior to completion.</p>
Environmental And Community Protection (DBC)	<p><u>22/11/23</u></p> <p>Having reviewed the planning application and considered the information held by the ECP Team in relation to the application site I am able to confirm that there is no objection to the proposed development.</p> <p>However, as the proposal is for 9 residential properties to be built on land that has not previously been used for a residential end use, the following condition is recommended to ensure that, if encountered, unexpected ground contamination can be appropriately addressed.</p> <p>Contaminated Land - Discovery Condition: Should any ground contamination be suspected or encountered during the construction of the development hereby approved (including groundworks), works shall be temporarily suspended, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and a Contamination Remediation Scheme shall be submitted to (as soon as practically possible) and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The</p>

Contamination Remediation Scheme shall detail all measures required to render this contamination harmless and all approved measures shall subsequently be fully implemented prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved.

Should no ground contamination be encountered or suspected upon the completion of the groundworks, a statement to that effect, with supporting documentation e.g. photographic record of ground conditions and geotechnical logs (if applicable), shall be submitted in writing to the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved.

Reason: To ensure that the issue of contamination is adequately addressed to protect human health and the surrounding environment and to ensure a satisfactory development, in accordance with Core Strategy (2013) Policy CS32.

Informative: Identifying Potentially Contaminated Material

Materials or conditions that may be encountered at the site and which could indicate the presence of contamination include, but are not limited to:

Soils that are malodorous, for example a fuel odour or solvent-type odour, discoloured soils, soils containing man-made objects such as paint cans, oil/chemical drums, vehicle or machinery parts etc., or fragments of asbestos or potentially asbestos containing materials. If any other material is encountered that causes doubt, or which is significantly different from the expected ground conditions advice should be sought.

14/11/23

With reference to the above planning application, please be advised the Environmental Health Pollution Team have no objections in principal to the application. However, given the residential properties in the locality already, we have concerns regarding the possible cumulative impacts of noise, dust and air quality during the development, and therefore we would look to propose the below condition, prior to commencement:

1. Prior to determination, a Construction Management Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period and the approved measures shall be retained for the duration of the demolition and construction works

REASON: Details are required prior to the commencement of development in the interests of safeguarding highway safety and

residential amenity of local properties in accordance with Appendix 3 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan (2004), Policy CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy (2013) and the relevant sections of the NPPF (2019).

Informative:

The Statement required to discharge the Demolition and Construction Management Plan condition of this consent is expected to cover the following matters:

- the parking and turning of vehicles of site operatives and visitors;
- loading and unloading of plant and materials;
- storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development;
- the erection and maintenance of security hoarding including decorative displays and facilities for public viewing, where appropriate;
- details of measures to prevent mud and other such material migrating onto the highway from construction vehicles;
- wheel washing facilities;
- measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during demolition and construction;
- a scheme for waste minimisation and recycling/disposing of waste resulting from the demolition and construction works, which must not include burning on site.
- design of construction access
- hours of demolition and construction work
- control of noise and/or vibration
- measures to control overspill of light from security lighting

Additionally, I would recommend the application is subject to informatives for waste management, construction working hours with Best Practical Means for dust, and Invasive and Injurious Weeds which we respectfully request to be included in the decision notice.

#### Working Hours Informative

Contractors and sub-contractors must have regard to BS 5228-2:2009 "Code of Practice for Noise Control on Construction and Open Sites" and the Control of Pollution Act 1974.

As a guideline, the following hours for noisy works and/or deliveries should be observed: Monday to Friday, 7.30am to 5:30pm, Saturday, 8am to 1pm, Sunday and bank holidays - no noisy work allowed.

Where permission is sought for works to be carried out outside the hours stated, applications in writing must be made with at least seven days' notice to Environmental and Community Protection Team

	<p>ecp@dacorum.gov.uk or The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1DN. Local residents that may be affected by the work shall also be notified in writing, after approval is received from the LPA or Environmental Health.</p> <p>Works audible at the site boundary outside these hours may result in the service of a Notice restricting the hours as above. Breach of the notice may result in prosecution and an unlimited fine and/or six months imprisonment.</p> <p><u>Construction Dust Informative</u> Dust from operations on the site should be minimised by spraying with water or by carrying out of other such works that may be necessary to suppress dust. Visual monitoring of dust is to be carried out continuously and Best Practical Means (BPM) should be used at all times. The applicant is advised to consider the control of dust and emissions from construction and demolition Best Practice Guidance, produced in partnership by the Greater London Authority and London Councils.</p> <p><u>Waste Management Informative</u> Under no circumstances should waste produced from construction work be incinerated on site. This includes but is not limited to pallet stretch wrap, used bulk bags, building materials, product of demolition and so on. Suitable waste management should be in place to reduce, reuse, recover or recycle waste product on site, or dispose of appropriately.</p> <p><u>Invasive and Injurious Weeds - Informative</u> Weeds such as Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Ragwort are having a detrimental impact on our environment and may injure livestock. Land owners must not plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any plant listed on schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Developers and land owners should therefore undertake an invasive weeds survey before development commences and take the steps necessary to avoid weed spread. Further advice can be obtained from the Environment Agency website at <a href="https://www.gov.uk/japanese-knotweed-giant-hogweed-and-other-invasive-plants">https://www.gov.uk/japanese-knotweed-giant-hogweed-and-other-invasive-plants</a></p>
Fire Hydrants	We'd like to request a condition for the provision and installation of fire hydrants, at no cost to the county council, or fire and rescue service. This is to ensure there are adequate water supplies available for use in the event of an emergency.
Natural England	<p>NATURAL ENGLAND'S ADVICE</p> <p>OBJECTION - FURTHER INFORMATION REQUIRED TO DETERMINE IMPACTS ON DESIGNATED SITES - DEVELOPMENT WITHIN 12.6 KILOMETRES OF CHILTERN'S BEECHWOODS</p>

**SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION (SAC)  
WITHIN 12.6 KILOMETRES**

Between 500 metres to 12.6km from Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required to determine Likely Significant Effect. Mitigation measures will be necessary to rule out adverse effects on integrity:

- o Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) or financial contributions towards a strategic SANG.
- o Financial contributions towards the Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) strategy.

Natural England requires further information in order to determine the significance of these impacts and the scope for mitigation.

Please re-consult Natural England once this information has been obtained.

When there is sufficient scientific uncertainty about the likely effects of the planning application under consideration, the precautionary principle is applied to fully protect the qualifying features of the European Site designated under the Habitats Directive.

Footprint Ecology carried out research in 2021 on the impacts of recreational and urban growth at Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), in particular Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Due to this new evidence, Natural England recognises that new housing within 12.6km of the internationally designated Chilterns Beechwoods SAC can be expected to result in an increase in recreation pressure.

The 12.6km zone proposed within the evidence base<sup>1</sup> carried out by Footprint Ecology represents the core area around Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI where increases in the number of residential properties will require Habitats Regulations Assessment. Mitigation measures will be necessary to rule out adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC from the cumulative impacts of development.

In addition Footprint Ecology identified that an exclusion zone of within 500m of the SAC boundary was necessary as evidence indicates that mitigation measures are unlikely to protect the integrity of the SAC.

Impacts to the SAC as a result of increasing recreation pressure are varied and have long been a concern. The report identified several ways in which public access and disturbance can have an impact upon the conservation interest of the site, these included:

- o Damage: encompassing trampling and vegetation wear, soil

- compaction and erosion;
- o Contamination: including nutrient enrichment (e.g. dog fouling), litter, invasive species;
  - o Fire: increased incidence and risk of fire; and
  - o Other: all other impacts, including harvesting and activities associated with site management.

In light of the new evidence relating to the recreation impact zone of influence, planning authorities must apply the requirements of Regulation 63 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, to housing development within 12.6km of the SAC boundary. The authority must decide whether a particular proposal, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, would be likely to have a significant effect on the SAC.

Natural England are working alongside all the involved parties in order to achieve a Strategic Solution that brings benefits to both the SAC and the local area to deliver high quality mitigation. Once the strategy has been formalised all net new dwellings within the 500m - 12.6km zone of influence will be expected to pay financial contributions towards the formal strategy.

Consequently, it is Natural England's view that the planning authority will not be able to ascertain that this proposed development as it is currently submitted would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC. In combination with other plans and projects, the development would be likely to contribute to a deterioration of the quality of the habitat by reason of increased access to the site including access for general recreation and dog-walking. There being alternative solutions to the proposal and there being no imperative reasons of overriding public interest to allow the proposal, despite a negative assessment, the proposal will not pass the tests of Regulation 64.

We would like to draw your attention to a recent appeal for St Leonard's Church Hall (Ref: APP/X0415/W/21/3278072) dated 1 March 2022. The appeal relates to net development within 12.6km of Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and was dismissed. The appeal decision is attached in Annex A.

1 Panter. C, Liley. D, Lake. S, Saunders. P & Caals. Z, March 2022, Visitor Survey, recreation impact assessment and mitigation requirements for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan. Available at: dacorum-recreation-evidence-base-200322.pdf

Further general advice on the consideration of protected species and other natural environment issues is provided at Annex B.

	If you have any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact the case officer Betsy Brown on Consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. For any new consultations or to provide further information on this consultation please send your correspondences to consultations@naturalengland.org.uk
Affordable Housing	Thank you for requesting comments on affordable housing. It's understood from the current application that there is currently no requirement for Affordable Housing onsite due to the overall number of Dwellings being proposed. However if this site were to be deemed cumulative at a later date and the proposal were to include dwellings which would take the site above 9; the Strategic Housing, Investment and Regeneration Team would be happy to give further advice regarding the Affordable Housing quota of the development.

## APPENDIX B: NEIGHBOUR RESPONSES

### Number of Neighbour Comments

Neighbour Consultations	Contributors	Neutral	Objections	Support
10	34	1	33	0

### Neighbour Responses

Address	Comments
1 White Cottages Astrope Lane Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PW	<p>As a resident in the neighbourhood I have concerns about the detrimental impact more dwellings will have on the environment. Astrope is a hamlet and Puttenham a small village with no amenities in the immediate vicinity. Nor a bus service. There has already been considerable development in both areas.</p> <p>There are major concerns, which have already been highlighted with the council, regarding the increased volume and speed of traffic along the narrow lane. This together with the increase of commercial vehicles and large lorries makes the lane very hazardous. There are no pavements for pedestrians and in parts no space to get off the lane to avoid traffic. The development is sited at one of the narrowest and most dangerous parts in the lane. Entrance and exit will prove dangerous. This is an area that cyclists and ramblers use for recreation. The water table in this area is very high and flooding is a frequent problem. The surface water takes time to dissipate and this will be made worse by more of the drainage area being covered by buildings. There have already been instances of increased flooding in the vicinity of new developments.</p> <p>Although data is given regarding doctors and schools in the wider vicinity there is no information as to whether these facilities are able to accommodate an increase in numbers. It is my experience that these provisions are already stretched and under considerable pressure.</p>

	<p>The volume and architecture of the development are not in keeping and are at odds with the area. The gardens and surrounding landscaping are limited and sparse. The number of houses and cars in such a concentrated area will increase noise and pollution levels.</p> <p>The development will put considerable pressure on the local environment and resources and have a negative impact on the ecology of the area.</p> <p>I am strongly against this development and any more development in this area.</p>
<p>2 White Cottages Astrope Lane Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PW</p>	<p>I strongly object to this planning application for the following reasons</p> <p>1) Location and style of development - Conflicts with the existing ambience of the location</p> <p>Astrope is a tiny, rural hamlet surrounded by farmland. It is a peaceful location, without local amenities or public transport within a safe walking distance - there are no pedestrian walkways adjoining the local roads, which are winding and have multiple blind bends. The surrounding footpaths undulate across fields and are muddy or flooded for most of the year.</p> <p>Puttenham is a small, village displaying the same characteristics.</p> <p>Houses in this area are typically cottage style, facing the main road and with large gardens - which contribute to the rural ambience. This development seeks to squeeze in a mini 'estate' in this established rural area - 9 houses in a very small space compared to other houses in the vicinity. This proposed development is not sympathetic with the local character and history.</p> <p>2) Change of use and footpaths</p> <p>The proposed site is currently classed as for agricultural use, rather than residential. Through that use, it adds to the ambience and agricultural/rural nature of the area - in the spring and summer months, the field is full of wildflowers and attracts many species of butterfly. The footpaths running through the field are in regular use by both locals and those who are walking the Aylesbury Ring walk and contribute to the wellness of the community.</p> <p>Saved Policy 79 of the Public Plan states that changes to footpaths should not inconvenience walkers or adversely affect residential amenities. It also promises that attention will be given to the creation and signing of circular walks - specifically those that link to the Grand Union canal. It states that diversion of public footpaths as a result of development plans will only be supported where the environmental character of the paths is maintained, there are significant planning advantages arising and/or walkers are not significantly inconvenienced. Given that the changes to the footpath as part of this application completely change the environmental character of the path crossing the field diagonally (walking through a rural field/flower meadow versus walking around a mini housing estate) and walkers are</p>

also inconvenienced by a longer route as a result of the diversion, I cannot see how this bar can be met and I object strongly to the relocation of this footpath.

3) Not within an area where residential development is deemed acceptable.

I understand that Policy CS7 of the Dacorum Core Strategy 2013 states that within the rural area, residential development is unacceptable. This development does not meet the additional criteria set out for where such development might be permitted as it is not

- For rural use
- Replacement of buildings for the same use
- Extensions to existing buildings
- Appropriate reuse of permanent, substantial buildings
- Redevelopment of previously developed site

As this site is not within Aldbury, Long Marston or Wilstone it is also not within the concessions for small scale developments that apply exclusively to these locations.

9 houses in Astrope would be significant and damaging growth to this small hamlet, especially taking into account the previously granted application 21/02015/FUL on neighbouring land.

4) Not a sustainable location

Notwithstanding any local pressures to increase land supply, this site is not in a location where the development would be sustainable.

There are no notable amenities in Long Marston - other than a school and a pub.

The closest doctor's surgery in Aston Clinton will not accept patients from Hertfordshire and earlier this year removed residents from Puttenham, Astrope and Long Marston from their books, forcing Astrope and Puttenham residents to all re-register elsewhere. Any doctor surgery would require the use of private transport and there is no public transport within Astrope and Puttenham. It would be impossible to have an appropriate bus stop in this location as the entire road is dangerous for pedestrians due to narrow roads, no pedestrian paths, safe verges, street lighting and there are multiple blind bends.

There are also no shops within walking distance and so all trips to amenities would likely be made by unsustainable means i.e. private cars, which is not consistent with a reduction in carbon emissions.

5) Traffic impacts

The site proposes 9 houses with parking for just under 30 cars. This section of road is a small, winding, country lane, riddled with potholes and the section just past Orchard House when heading towards Long Marston is not wide enough for two vehicles unless they are both very small. There are no passing places and so vehicles regularly have to reverse back to allow others to pass, causing traffic backlogs and safety concerns.

As noted above, access to local facilities would be predominantly via

private vehicle and such a significant development would significantly increase the number of vehicle movements every day on a stretch of road that is already a problem.

In addition, the planned exit from this site is at a point of very poor visibility - even if the hedges were well cut back (as proposed - though I would question how this would be guaranteed to be maintained with changes in ownership) the natural bend in the road at this point would result in poor visibility for those pulling out and gives me significant safety concerns.

#### 6) Flooding impacts

At present, excess surface water from the site flows downhill via the nearby footpath and gardens before reaching the small brook that runs as a boundary between my house and Green End. During period of prolonged rainfall, the brook fills up quickly and overflows into our garden, our neighbours and the local road. Cars driving on the road then create waves of water which flood our driveway and garden.

In October 2023, a number of cars were damaged driving through these floods which were logged with the Environment Agency.

I understand the proposed development plans to discharge treated water from the 9 houses into a drainage system which doesn't currently exist and will eventually end up in the brook next to my house.

If the brook floods at present with just excess surface water from the field (which acts as a natural soak away for a lot of the water), how can it possibly cope with the increased volume of treated wastewater from 9 households? This will increase the frequency and volume of flooding onto our property which - if it coincides with power cuts (which are frequent in periods of bad weather) could mean that a large volume of untreated water is flowing down and flooding our property. Development should not result in an increased flood risk for neighbouring properties

Videos and photos to demonstrate the problem can be provided on request.

#### 7) Noise, light and air pollution

9 households in a small space will cause significant noise and light pollution in this currently quiet and peaceful hamlet. Noise travels particularly well in this area - due to the rural location - and 9 households will significantly and negatively impact our quality of life and that of our neighbours, whether through vehicles, lawn mowers, families in gardens etc.

In addition, any lighting - whether domestic, security or simply car headlamps - on these houses will have a detrimental impact on those living in neighbouring properties

As noted above, a significant number of cars will be included on a site which is currently entirely agricultural. This will have a negative impact on both the local residents and also anyone using the footpath, which

	we do with our children on a regular basis in terms of carbon emissions.
<p>Knoll Cottage Astrope Lane Astrope Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PN</p>	<p>Objection to Application 23/02646/FUL Site Address: Land to West of Orchard House Astrope Lane Astrope HP23 4PN</p> <p>Description: Residential Development including formation of 9 new houses, access, landscaping, and all ancillary featuresr. Diversion of footpath 53.</p> <p>OBJECTION to this application is made on the following grounds:</p> <p>1. Disproportionate Scale of Development in Rural Agricultural Area</p> <p>Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that "to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities." Neither I, nor any of my neighbours in our small rural community of Astrope, can see how this development can meet that requirement.</p> <p>The development would amount to an outward extension of development beyond the build area of Long Marston Village, into open Countryside.</p> <p>The small rural hamlet of Astrope (Tring Rural) comprised of a total of 8 houses, within the HP23 4PN postcode: Astrope Folly, Astrope House, Willow Cottage, Orchard House, Knoll Cottage, Green End, 1 Gregorys Field and 2 Gregorys Field. The increase of housing in this rural hamlet to 13 houses (following development of Little Copse, 21/02015/FUL) is already a 62.5% increase. To increase by a further 9 houses up to 22 houses (from the original 8), would represent a 175% increase in housing in this tiny rural hamlet. It is submitted that this scale of development on rural agricultural land is completely disproportionate.</p> <p>The increase in demand for local amenities, schools, etc is not viable and completely unsustainable when considered against the backdrop of this scale of development.</p> <p>Notably, the previous approval decision for 21/02015/FUL indicated that Little Copse was located a 2 minute drive, 3 minute cycle and 11 minute walk from the centre of Long Marston. As a resident in the immediate vicinity, I can state with certainty that this is misleading as Astrope Lane is a narrow lane with no footpaths and therefore it is rarely feasible to walk to the village centre. There are currently no bus stops on Astrope Lane &amp; no public footpaths. There are no local amenities (shops/grocery stores) proximate to the development site. Therefore, the proposed development will necessitate any future residents within the 9 houses to drive to/from schools, shops, work, etc. This will place a significant and overwhelming pressure on the highway infrastructure (as outlined below) as well as presenting a significant carbon footprint.</p> <p>2. Impact on Ecology (Wildlife)</p>

This proposed development is situated in a very rural area on a plot of agricultural land. The land comprises a meadow, which is home to a broad range of wildlife. When walking through the meadow at any time of year, it is teeming with wildlife. A very broad range of moths, butterflies, dragonflies, birds including woodpeckers & nightingales as well as field mice, voles, moles. At night-time owls and bats are regularly seen. The rural hedgerows are thick (several meters) and provide sanctuary for this wealth of wildlife. The development of 9 houses on this land will destroy the wildlife in the area and the submissions outlined within the application are unrealistic and minimise the impact that this development will have. The site's access will be located centrally, within the existing hedgerow. Significant amounts of the hedgerow will need to be removed to provide the required visibility splays. A significant area of the site would be laid in hardstanding, to provide access and parking. The erection of 9 houses would clearly create significant light pollution, noise, waste and carbon emissions. All of which at significant detriment to ecology/wildlife.

### 3. Impact - Highways & Footpaths

Astrope Lane is a very narrow & windy rural Country Lane with limited street lighting. The lane is already in a poor state of disrepair with many significant potholes. The lane is used by ramblers, horse-riders and cyclists in the daytime. The impact of recent development (21/02015/FUL) on the road infrastructure is as yet unknown, but it will undoubtedly create additional pressure. The prospect of yet another development, and this time of 9 houses, will place significant additional pressure on this Country Lane, which is already struggling to cope with pressure of traffic volume. Unless the Local Authority intend to significantly redevelop Astrope Lane by total resurfacing and addition of footpaths, it is submitted that the current application is completely unsustainable.

Taking into consideration the fact that Astrope formerly comprised 8 houses, each with approx. 2 cars per household (16 cars), the addition of 5 further houses at Little Copse will add a further 10 cars. This will be compounded further if the proposed development is approved adding a further 18 cars (with each house having 2 car parking spaces). Given the size of the houses proposed, it is conceivable that some houses may well have more than 2 cars and it is unclear how parking would be accommodated & would most likely risk over-spill onto the very narrow Country Lane, which would be at significant detriment to the farming community who use the roads daily operating substantially sized agricultural vehicles which would be blocked by any parking overspill.

### 4. Impact - Flooding (and impact of non-mains drainage required for proposed 9 house development in rural area)

Our neighbour (Green End) is already shown as medium risk of flooding. While our property (Knoll Cottage) is currently shown as low risk, it is submitted that this is outdated given the extent of flooding that has taken place over the last 5 years. On an annual basis flooding in this area (HP23 4PN) is so severe that at times it has been not possible to drive or walk down Astrope Lane, which has meant we have been stranded - sometimes for days. The existing culverts and waterways

are already over-capacity. The submissions made in this application minimise the real-life risk of flooding in this area, citing an out-dated overview of flooding risks in this area. It follows that the mitigation proposed is not adequate. Were the site significantly more modest (e.g. 3 houses), then it would be conceivable to factor in significant soakaway areas (as achieved at the Loxley Stables Development on Astrope Lane adjacent to Long Marston Village Centre).

The application does not propose to connect this development to any mains sewerage, as this is not feasible due to the rural location. The consequence is that all waste from the 9 houses will need to be dealt with by waste management facilities on-site, which will need to release effluent into the existing waterways, which will further compound the flooding issues.

5. Residential Amenity Impact on Knoll Cottage (immediately adjacent to proposed development)

PRIVACY. The proposed development of 9 houses on the meadow which is located immediately adjacent to Knoll Cottage will clearly significantly adversely affect the rural amenities of our property. Knoll Cottage is currently not overlooked to the side/rear and enjoys peaceful amenities of a rural countryside meadow adjacent, with nothing but wildlife neighbouring. The proposed development will result in THREE gardens adjoining the boundary line. To move from a position of having had no gardens/properties immediately adjoining the boundary-line to the proposed position of three properties adjoining, presents a significant and disproportionate impact on our property. The design of the proposed development is focussed purely on commercial gain (squeezing as many properties into the site as possible) & therefore with a disregard to the adjacent properties and the impact on them. It is submitted that this is an unsympathetic approach to development in a currently uncultivated agricultural area, where much greater care & consideration ought to be taken. A more modest site (e.g. 3 properties) would allow the properties to be appropriately spaced & would cater for a design requiring only one property to adjoin the boundary line of Knoll Cottage (and would be in keeping with the character of the existing area).

The plans submitted by the applicant are inaccurate & it is entirely unreasonable for the decision-maker to make a decision based on inaccurate plans. Knoll Cottage is clearly the property most significantly adversely affected by this proposed development and the applicant has failed to accurately portray the current size of the property (which was extended via double storey rear extension in 2016). The plans also do not accurately reflect the current location of key/significant trees.

The submissions made within the application to preserve a meter of hedgerow are completely inadequate to maintain any level of privacy. The existing hedgerow is several meters depth and notably full of wildlife including birds & bats. The plans submitted are grossly inaccurate, depicting our property pre-extension

DESIGN/CHARACTER. Knoll Cottage has existed in the hamlet of Astrope since 1880 and has throughout that time been adjoined by the

	<p>agricultural/meadow where this proposed development is to be situated. Clearly the development in this area will significantly adversely impact the character of the property.</p> <p>The design/character and aesthetics of the proposed development are completely inconsistent with other houses within the hamlet of Astrope, which ALL take the form of detached or semi-detached dwellings facing Astrope Lane with gardens to the rear/side. The Courtyard design does not therefore appropriately reflect the immediate area (and is clearly solely focussed on commercial gain, rather than acknowledging the character of the area).</p> <p>SECURITY/ACCESS. It is acknowledged that the proposed application caters for access to be granted via the rear garden of Knoll Cottage via a footpath (to be constructed by the developer) into the proposed development. This is to permit access on foot to the public footpath which currently runs through the field/meadow where the site is proposed. While this concession is appreciated, it presents vulnerabilities which clearly did not exist previously (in terms of rear security vulnerabilities).</p> <p>SUMMARY</p> <p>This is a wholly overwhelming development for the hamlet of Astrope, disproportionate, out of scale &amp; unsustainable. It will clearly detract from the current vitality and character of our historic hamlet and the rural &amp; agricultural nature of the area. We therefore wholeheartedly object to the planning application and trust that the decision-maker will arrive at the same conclusion.</p>
<p>Green End Astrope Lane Astrope Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PN</p>	<p>Please see below the reasons why I strongly object to this development.</p> <p><b>Draining and Flood Risk</b> The over-riding concern for me as a neighbour to this site is the lack of drainage provision. My garden is situated downhill from this field and sits between the site and Puttenham Brook. Contrary to the information in the application, there is no "watercourse" across my garden so there is nowhere for all the waste water from the nine houses and the associated water treatment plant to go. I am sending an email with photographs of the trees that are growing where the developer would like to extend his new ditch across my garden. I have not given permission for this to happen. The water table in this area is also very high, making it difficult for any water to drain away.</p> <p>In addition, even if there was a way of conveying all this foul water to the Brook, the Brook is already at capacity. It floods my garden, my neighbours' garden and the road on a regular basis. Last month (October) the road was impassible for many vehicles and many of those that attempted it lost parts of their cars in the deep flood. I am sending pictures of my garden under water and the flood in the road to demonstrate how bad this problem is.</p> <p>In summary, this development would have disastrous consequences by exacerbating the flood risk problems for the near neighbours, road</p>

	<p>users and the wider community.</p> <p><b>Footpath Diversion and Loss of Wildlife Habitat</b>  Although it is proposed to divert the Aylesbury Ring footpath around the site this will result in the path being of a completely different character; no longer a rural walk across a field but a narrow footpath around a housing development. This also means a severe loss of habitat for many forms of wildlife seen by myself and other users of this path. These might not be protected species but all habitat and wildlife contribute to the diversity of our countryside.</p> <p><b>Traffic and Safety Concerns</b>  The lane going through the hamlet of Astrope has become exceedingly busy recently. Although no very severe or fatal accidents have luckily been recorded, we have witnessed several accidents outside our property. The fence around the Brook bridge has been replaced more than once by the Highways work teams because vehicles have driven into it. The lane is too narrow in many places for vehicles to pass and they either leave the road if travelling too fast or have to reverse if travelling slowly. This makes the road extremely dangerous for vehicles, pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists. Introducing new access points onto the lane and increasing traffic to and from the site would I feel increase the risk of a dangerous accident.</p> <p><b>Suitability and Sustainability of the Housing</b>  As far as I understand it, neither the National Planning Policy Framework nor the local planning policies advocate the building of new houses in the countryside where there is no reason for the development. These plans show large houses covering the area of this field which cannot be described as "infilling". This is totally unsuitable for this rural area even if there were no flooding or road safety concerns. There are no local amenities or public transport and the new residents would have to travel by for work, schooling, health, shopping, entertainment and visiting family and friends. There is no way these residents could be expected to contribute anything to the local community.</p> <p>The five new houses already being built in Astrope should satisfy any requirement for new homes that existed. I would hope that the permission that was granted for that development does not set a precedent for the hamlet of Astrope to become a housing estate instead of the rural hamlet it is today.</p>
<p>Manor Farm House  Church Road  Puttenham Tring  Hertfordshire  HP23 4PR</p>	<p>The consultant instructed by the Puttenham community has given all the salient points for objection to the proposed plans.</p> <p>All I can emphasise is how much it would change the character of the village, and the fact that it is situated on a very dangerous stretch of road.</p> <p>The continual and more recent flooding should also make a strong case to prevent any considered planning to be passed.</p>
<p>High End Barn  Church Road</p>	<p>I object to the development as the significant increase in housing (essentially doubling the current size of Astrope) would adversely</p>

<p>Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PR</p>	<p>impact the following;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Traffic. Astrope and adjoining Puttenham have seen a huge increase in traffic in recent years making the winding, narrow, through-road dangerous for drivers, cyclists, horse-riders etc., and making it nearly impossible for children (to get to school) and the elderly to walk safely. There is zero public transport therefore requiring homeowners in the development to be car users.</li> <li>2. Flood risk. Both locations already regularly flood to quite a high level, due to the poor infrastructure. Adding more housing would only exacerbate this.</li> <li>3. Ecology/ Design. The proposed development is large relative to the size of plot and is not in keeping with the character of the rural area which is very importantly currently home to unspoilt flora and fauna.</li> </ol>
<p>15 Astrope Lane Long Marston Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PL</p>	<p>As a resident who lives on and uses Astrope Lane daily I strongly object to the number of houses being proposed. The road is narrow, twisty, has poor vision, already over used, and often flooded. Adding nine new houses is totally disproportionate, bringing more traffic on a narrow and winding stretch of road. There is not sufficient space for passing vehicles as it is. The roads become pot holed very easily due to the high level of surface water and cars and vans and lorries often have to wait to pass each other. There is no public transport whatsoever, and the road is hazardous to bikes at night, so the residents would be totally dependant on using cars. My tyres have to be replaced regularly due to the state of the road.</p> <p>I am also very dismayed at how out of character these houses are, Astrope/ Puttenham is an area full to the brim of wildlife. This is due to the beautiful historic hedgerows and trees. The wildlife in the UK is in a terrible state of depletion, and there are very few trees or hedges shown within the development. The hedgerows and trees need to be fully protected and kept thick so that they can continue to support the birdlife and animal life that is so rich in this spot. There are woodpeckers, barn owls, tawny owls, small owls, foxes, deer, small mammals and much more sheltering in the hedges and trees. The plan does not make any attempt to support these by adding green spaces and hedges within it for the wildlife to continue to use the land in between. The owls thrive in dark areas, and having so many houses, with no hedging or trees in between them, will cause significant light pollution. There are already more new houses being built and the light pollution from other developments is a big concern.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the risk of 'fencing in' the footpath which runs through from Astrope to Puttenham. This is a beautiful, well loved local amenity and corridor for nature. It is currently a pleasure to walk along it in all seasons due to the wild nature of the area. The council should ensure that the footpath is kept wild and open and not fenced in or urbanised. The footpath should be kept in situ in my opinion as it is a part of a local walk and not a part of a housing development. If it is moved it should be kept natural, using native wildlife rich species, thickly planted, so that wildlife and people continue to enjoy the rural nature of the walk and area. The blackthorn and wild plum/bullace and</p>

	<p>blackberries provide food and shelter for the wildlife, and need to be kept safe from this development.</p> <p>While I do not object to developments per se, this is a very quiet nook in which wildlife has thrived, and which has a particular feel and character. It is absolutely not suitable for such a high density of housing. Barn style developments or fewer houses with wider spaced with natural areas and hedges in between would fit in far better. New housing has already been built, and any additional housing is adding to the burden of traffic and depletion of a wild and natural area.</p> <p>The planning department should by now be fully aware and at high alert of the problems of water and flooding to local residents, the heartache, the inconvenience, the risk to insurance claims, the distress of clearing out houses, the impact on house prices, the delay on selling houses locally, the stress on neighbours of not being able to flush at times of flooding, knowing that effluence backs up in the houses of others. It is a long running problem for local residents, and many of us feel that it is not being taken seriously enough by this planning department, who do not live locally. There are problems with surface water, which affects the roads very frequently, and the more serious occasional flooding in which the whole area is literally swamped, and floors and carpets under water. The planning department will be neglecting its duty if it does not ensure that every existing house locally is fully protected from flooding, and that the plans for any new houses locally has sufficient drainage, if this is even possible. The planning department need to listen to the experience of people who actually live locally, and have experienced these flooding episodes and not just take on board reports from 'experts' who do not live here and are no where to be seen when the water is high, before making decisions in this area. The plans for drainage need to be put under very careful and expert scrutiny before any further housing should be built.</p> <p>I do not see that there is any need for so many houses in this area, and believe that fewer houses which are integrated into the wild and natural habitat (by protection of the hedging and trees and creating spaces for wildlife) would be more suitable, if sufficient and robust drainage can be put in place. There would be fewer cars and less impact of flooding.</p>
<p>2 Rectory Stables Draytonmead Farm Road</p> <p>Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PS</p>	<p>There should be No more development in this Rural area, it will be totally out of character and affect the wildlife. And development of rural areas is not supported by the Dacorum local plan.</p> <p>There will be increased traffic which is already a problem on these narrow roads and this road floods regularly already.</p>
<p>Oakley House Astrope Lane Astrope Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PJ</p>	<p>The surrounding gardens and road to this property are often flooded. The water table is high in the area and there are inadequate and ill maintained ditches and streams for the run off from so many properties. There is no mains drainage.</p> <p>The traffic on this road has recently been surveyed logging 2,000 vehicles a day. The entrance proposed by the developer is at a narrow bend with no visibility.</p>

	<p>The existing field is full of cowslips and provides a rich wildlife habitat. There is a proposal to reroute the Aylesbury Ring footpath, changing centuries of village tradition.</p> <p>This development is too large in such a small site and totally out of keeping with the hamlet of Astrope.</p>
<p>2 Rectory Stables Draytonmead Farm Road</p> <p>Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PS</p>	<p>This objection letter relates to application 23/02646/FUL, which is a full planning application relating to the formation of 9 new houses, access, landscaping, and ancillary features, along with the diversion of footpath 53.</p> <p>The application site comprises an area of uncultivated land to the north of Astrope Lane. The site is bounded on all sides by vegetation. A right of way (Footpath 53, part of the Aylesbury Ring) runs directly through the site.</p> <p>Relevant Planning Policy: National Planning Policy: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) National Design Guide (NDG) Local Planning Policy: Core Strategy (2013): NP1 - Supporting Development CS7 - The Rural Area CS10 - Quality of Settlement Design CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design CS12 - Quality of Site Design CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction CS31 - Water Management Local Plan (2004): Saved Policy 18 - Size of New Dwellings Saved Policy 21 - Density of Residential Development Saved Policy 51 - Development and Transport Impacts Saved Policy 54 - Highway Design Saves Policy 79 - Footpath Network Saved Policy 99 - Preservation of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands</p> <p>Dacorum Local Plan (2024 - 2040) Revised Strategy for Growth (in consultation) No policies yet formulated. Supplementary Planning Guidance: Car Parking Standards (2020) Roads in Hertfordshire, Highway Design Guide 3rd Edition (2011) Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (2011)</p> <p>Discussion of Scheme:</p> <p>Principle of Development:</p> <p>Policy CS7 states that within the rural area, residential development is unacceptable. It goes on to state that small-scale development will be permitted for rural uses, along with the replacement of buildings for the</p>

same use, limited extensions to existing buildings, the appropriate reuse of permanent, substantial buildings; and the redevelopment of previously developed sites. It concluded by stating that small-scale development for housing, employment and other purposes will be permitted at Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone.

The site is situated within the designated rural area, outside of any settlement boundary, and is not located within Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone; as such, the principle of development in this location is not supported by planning policy.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 105 of the NPPF states that significant development should be focussed on locations which are, or can be made, sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. The term 'significant' is not defined.

While not yet adopted, the issues and options consultation for the new Local Plan states that the Council does not consider that directing a substantial proportion of the Borough's future development to the countryside, and in particular the Rural Area, is sustainable, desirable, or necessarily deliverable. We do not consider that this would be a sustainable approach and would therefore not be in conformity with the policies contained within the NPPF.

The application site is located outside the formal village boundary of Long Marston. The site is therefore located in a designated rural area outside the village where Policy CS7 would apply with respects to the Rural Area. This policy states the small-scale development for housing within the rural area will only be permitted at Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone. The site is not located within these areas.

The provision of 9 houses in this location would be considered to represent "significant" growth, in relation to the small hamlet of Astrope; this significance is increased when taken into consideration with the previous approval (21/02015/FUL) on the land adjacent to the east.

While the previous approval noted that "the site would be located a 2 minute drive, 3 minute cycle and 11 minute walk from the centre of Long Marston", it is not considered that the pedestrian access would be suitable for daily use; Astrope Lane is a thin, winding country lane with no footpath, verges, surveillance or street lighting; as such, it is considered that Long Marston would be beyond a reasonable walking distance, and the nature of the access would discourage trips by foot or bicycle and that trips from the site to local services would be made by car.

Moreover, it is likely that residents would need to travel to a broader range of facilities at larger settlements further away from the site; while the provided Planning Statement outlines amenities such as school and doctors' surgeries, school spaces in the surrounding area are generally oversubscribed, and nearby Buckinghamshire surgeries are no longer seeing Hertfordshire residents. Furthermore, the surrounding

area lacks bus routes to access these services within a safe, walkable distance. As such, it is unlikely the location of the proposal would promote the use of sustainable modes of travel as advocated in the NPPF. Instead, it is probable that occupants and visitors would be highly reliant upon private motorised transport to get to and from the development.

When taken in conjunction with recently approved development within Astrope, it would be considered that the proposal would represent significant development, and due to the lack of suitable pedestrian access, it is not believed that it would help to promote the vitality of the hamlet through increased social and economic participation by future residents; rather, it would promote the use of private motor vehicles to access further away centres which offer a full range of services.

As such, while the lack of a five-year housing land supply would mean that Policy CS7 is out-of-date, the NPPF still requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development; accordingly, the proposal would be significant development that would increase the need to travel but not offer a genuine choice of transport modes. This weighs heavily against the scheme, especially so when factoring in Paragraph 152 of the NPPF, which seeks a transition to a low carbon future and radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

#### Design and Visual Amenity:

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that all developments will add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, establish and maintain a strong sense of place using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF goes on to state that development that is not well designed should be refused.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that achieving good design "is about creating places, buildings, or places that work well for everyone, look good, and will adapt to the needs of future generations."

Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) state that development should not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and give guidance on site design.

Policy CS7 is also considered relevant to this proposal, in that development should not have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

The application site comprises an area of uncultivated land to the north of Astrope Lane, which contributes to the rural nature of the locality. Nearby dwellings enjoy large back gardens and are well spaced,

resulting in an open and verdant character. There is a ribbon of development along Astrope Lane, comprising attractive, traditional style cottages.

The site's access would be located centrally, within the existing hedgerow. Significant amounts of the hedgerow would need to be removed to provide the required visibility splays. A significant area of the site would be laid in hardstanding, to provide access and parking.

The dwellings would be significantly sized two-storey houses, with little relation to surrounding development; the dwellings would have brick elevations, and a mixture of slate and tiled roofs. It is not considered that the dwellings would integrate well with the existing form of development within the locality in terms of bulk, massing, and design.

Given the scale of development proposed and the loss of hedgerow required for access and visibility, it is considered that the proposal would represent the encroachment of built, domestic form into the open countryside, resulting in significant urbanisation of this rural area which would harm the prevailing rural character of this part of Astrope Lane.

Furthermore, the layout of the site itself is considered to be unacceptable; while there is a ribbon of development along the northern side of Astrope Lane, Plot 1 fails to maintain an active frontage onto the lane, resulting in an inward facing layout which fails to respect the character of development in this location.

This impact is exacerbated by the "backland" dwellings, which by reason of bulk, massing, and design, fail to appear subservient to the dwellings located to the frontage of the site, and would not represent "infill" development. Furthermore, the cul-de-sac layout of the rear part of the site would be inward facing and would be dominated by the hardstanding and parking provision to the front of the dwellings, resulting in a car-dominated design which would diminish the quality of the public realm and would appear incongruous with the grain of local development by virtue of its extension to the rear of the site.

As such, it is not considered that the proposal complies with Policies CS7, CS11 or CS12 of the Core Strategy, or the relevant provisions of the NPPF, and as such, permission should be refused.

Highways:

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy states that on each site development should provide a safe and satisfactory means of access for all users.

Saved Policy 51 of the Local Plan (2004) states that the acceptability of all development proposals will always be assessed specifically in highway and traffic terms and should have no significant impact upon the nature, capacity and use of the highway network and its ability to

accommodate the traffic generated by the development and the environmental and safety implications of the traffic generated by the development.

There are concerns relating to the access to the site along Astrope Lane, especially in conjunction with the recently approved development to the east (21/02015/FUL). Astrope Lane is a winding, thin country lane which lacks passing places and is single lane in some parts; the proposal would significantly intensify the use of this lane, if opposing vehicles met along this lane, one vehicle would need to make reversing manoeuvres, which would lead to highway safety concerns. It is considered that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, and as such, the application should be refused.

The visibility splay from the "main" central entrance appears to pass directly over hedges and trees; the provided soft landscaping plan states that this would be trimmed back to keep the visibility splay clear, but due to the nature of the landscaping, this would be expected to grow back extremely quickly, blocking the visibility splay to the detriment of road safety.

Similarly, the visibility splay for the "private drive" would require significant cutting back of the hedge. The visibility splay for this entrance would also pass over land outside of the site's red line boundary and is currently undeliverable without the removal of landscaping features outside of the application site. While this is currently within the ownership of the applicant, were this land to be sold in the future, it is likely that this visibility splay would be blocked, to the detriment of the safety of road users.

As such, it is considered that the proposal fails to maintain highway safety, and that there would be both an unacceptable impact on highway safety and that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The proposal fails to comply with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy, Policy 51 of the Local Plan, and the relevant provisions of the NPPF, and as such, the proposal should be refused.

#### Footpaths:

Saved Policy 79 of the Local Plan states that the public footpath network will be protected, improved, and promoted through joint action with the highway authority, the Countryside Management Service (see Policy 96), other organisations and private landowners. It states that changes should not inconvenience walkers or adversely affect residential amenities.

It goes on to state that particular attention will be given to the creation and signing of circular walks including links with the Grand Union Canal towpath, town to country routes, permissive links, interpretative facilities, and to accessibility by passenger transport.

Finally, it states that the diversion of public footpaths as a result of development proposals will only be supported if the environmental character of the paths is maintained, walkers are not significantly inconvenienced and/or significant planning advantages accrue.

The Aylesbury Ring footpath passes directly through the centre of the site. This would be diverted around the edge of the site. At present, this part of the Aylesbury Ring passes through an attractive, open, rural field; the diversion of this path, and associated development, would be considered to cause significant harm to this circular route through the urbanisation of this segment, and would significantly inconvenience walkers by extending the length of the section. As such, it is not considered that the proposal complies with Saved Policy 79 of the Local Plan.

#### Flood Risk and Drainage

Paragraph 167 of the NPPF states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

Policy CS29 states that development should provide an adequate means of water supply, surface water and foul drainage.

The provided drainage strategy relies on the outfall of water to a "drainage ditch", to the rear of the site. The "drainage ditch" which is to be utilised is extremely old and is mostly filled in; and as outlined within the drainage strategy, would require clearing and regrading to restore downstream connectivity. However, the land between this ditch and Puttenham Brook sits outside of the applicant's ownership, and the engineering works for the regrading and clearance would likely require a separate full application and permission from the relevant landowners; it is unlikely that local landowners would give permission for these works. Furthermore, as the ditch is likely to become heavily vegetated again in the future, it is questioned who is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of this ditch to ensure that adequate flood risk mitigation is provided in the future.

Furthermore, the drainage strategy would output sewerage into this ditch; following a power cut, which happens regularly within this area due to falling trees taking out overhead power cables, there are concerns that neat sewerage would be pumped into the ditch, the brook, and nearby gardens.

The brook that the ditch would output to is already at capacity, and it often overflows its banks and floods the fields, roads, and surrounding gardens; as such, even if permission were given to regrade and clear the ditch, it is highly likely that this would lead to further flooding elsewhere, outside of the application site. Tring Rural Parish Council have a flood working committee looking into the flooding issues affecting the whole area. Any increase in foul and surface water drainage from this site will also have an effect on the villages of Puttenham and Long Marston as all the streams and water courses eventually merge.

As such, it is not considered that the drainage strategy would be deliverable and would lead to increased flood risk elsewhere; as such, the proposal fails to comply with Policy CS29, or the relevant provisions of the NPPF, and as such, permission should be refused.

	<p>Conclusion</p> <p>Paragraph 11d of the NPPF starts with the premise that a proposal should be granted where a five-year housing land supply is absent. This presumption should be displaced if the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As outlined above, it is considered that the proposal would have significant negative impacts in relation to sustainability, visual amenity, highway safety, the local footpath network and flood risk and drainage.</p> <p>It is considered that these would, in this instance, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, and as such, permission should be refused.</p>
<p>2 Rectory Stables Draytonmead Farm Road</p> <p>Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PS</p>	<p>Please refer to comments above (an identical representation was received from the same address).</p>
<p>Woodlands Astrope Lane Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PP</p>	<p>This is a rural area and there is a concerted effort underway to urbanise our villages. This development is a pastiche of an agricultural community which has never existed in this field. All local drainage is by biodegrader sewerage systems that soak away into local ditches and fields. These are overwhelmed already and cause flooding into gardens and the roads. There is no capacity to accommodate additional houses and their output.</p> <p>This proposed development being rural is contrary to the Dacorum Local Plan.</p> <p>Traffic is a major issue, a traffic survey was recently carried out and over 2,000 vehicles a day were registered. Any more houses would add to this with owners' cars and courier/delivery vehicles.</p>
<p>The Calf Shed 3 Puttenham Court Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PY</p>	<p>I object to this proposal on the grounds of safety for local residents who use the road, notably cyclists and pedestrians. I have walked and cycled in this area for over 20 years and I can say with certainty that this development would increase the risk to my life when using Astrope Lane.</p> <p>---</p> <p>Growing up in the local area, and witnessing it change over time, it has been made clear to me that Astrope Lane has long been operating far above its reasonable capacity in terms of traffic.</p> <p>Due to the layout of the footpaths, going on walks around the area often involves walking down or crossing the road. Given the verges have been effectively destroyed in most areas due to construction and commuter traffic, this means mostly walking on the tarmac. The tarmac</p>

itself is in poor condition due to over-use, meaning that you will often have to meander around large puddles. This means, walking near the middle of the road for extended periods of time when on a walk. Combined with the increase in traffic, this has created a dangerous situation on the road for walkers. It wasn't always like this, it wasn't noticeable when I was a kid, but now I would never let my children walk on the road unattended. This new development will create more traffic, deteriorate the road surface, and undoubtedly the accompanying construction vehicles will further destroy the verges because the road is simply not wide enough for them. This will significantly increase the risk of danger to walkers in the area.

Astrope Lane is a road used by many cyclists including myself. Previous construction on Astrope Lane (Little Copse) has highlighted several negative consequences of developing houses on the road. As mentioned, Astrope Lane is a thin road and single lane in most areas, this means any large vehicles exiting construction sites have to straddle the whole road. Getting pulled out on by massive lorries that frankly are completely out of place on this road is both terrifying and frustrating. With two proposed exits to the proposed development, once construction is finished myself and other road users will also need to worry about getting pulled out on by cars from 9 households on a narrow road. I am aware that there are solutions such as erecting safety mirrors (which people use on the road), however by even considering using these measures (which have limited efficacy anyway) you've acknowledged you've built something that is fundamentally not safe and you're compensating with half measures. Cyclists are extremely vulnerable road users and I'd rather not put my life in the hands of a mirror. The other noticeable side effect of the previous construction was coating the road surface in dirt and grit, from the destroyed verges and site. This has meant the bend has been covered in slime for quite some time due to large quantities of dirt mixing surface water. This has turned the bend into an obstacle course as I dodge potholes, slippery slime, and cars. I now tend to avoid the road out of concerns for safety, I think this is a real shame.

Whilst construction is not indefinite and the reader may have the opinion that many of these side effects are temporary, I would highlight that the decrease in safety to local residents is simply not acceptable for any amount of time. Further, houses are not built overnight and we're not talking about a few months of inconvenience, instead several years. This development represents compounded months and months of deteriorated safety to local residents.

The persistent consequences of the development also cannot be overstated. Road and verge destruction will last after the construction and will be left in the hands of the local council. In my experience, we will be lucky if it's fixed in under a dozen years, and even more lucky if it's not a half measure that will last for a few years before needing replacing. Finally, I have highlighted that, even ignoring construction, we are still left with 9 households worth of cars increasing traffic, destroying the road, and pulling out of two tight openings onto a very narrow road with poor visibility causing potentially fatal accidents. I count 24 car parking spaces on the site (residents and visitors), anyone who has been on Astrope Lane will understand just how significant an

	extra 24 cars is for the local area.
<p>5 Puttenham Court Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PY</p>	<p>Although a relative newcomer to Puttenham Village, in the short time living here we have noted a few issues, which we believe a further development of 9 dwellings in Astrope Lane will certainly impact further and would therefore like to comment as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Highway safety - the road running from Aston Clinton through Puttenham and Astrope to Long Marston is used regularly by cars, cyclists, farmers, walkers and occasionally wildlife. It is a narrow and winding road with single vehicle passing areas in some places. There are no street lights or pavements, which makes it additionally hazardous for walkers during the day and at night you would not attempt to walk along the road. This road is already used as a cut through first thing in the morning and evening and since being here we have definitely seen an increase in volumes of cars coming through, together with the speed at which they travel. The development will generate more traffic both cars and in the short term site traffic, which will only have a detrimental affect on the surrounding area and the state of the roads.</li> <li>2. Flooding - again since being here the roads have flooded on a number of occasions with heavy rainfall making access hazardous. Obviously, further hard standing incorporated within the development will exacerbate the situation.</li> <li>3. Local amenities- there is no local bus route in this area meaning that residents will have no option but to use the car to travel further afield, again increasing car usage. I know that the GP Surgeries in Bucks have been redefining their boundaries, which is already seeing a knock on effect in Hertfordshire. I have no personal knowledge of whether the schools in the area are at capacity but it is something that needs to be taken into consideration.</li> <li>4. Wildlife - there is an enormous amount of wildlife living in the hedgerows and surrounding area and any further upheaval or removal of hedges would have a definite impact on those habitats.</li> <li>5. Development- 9 dwellings seems excessive and not in keeping with the surrounding rural area, especially taking into consideration the recent development already undertaken on Astrope Lane.</li> </ol> <p>These are our concerns surrounding this planning application as it stands.</p>
<p>The Calf Shed 3 Puttenham Court Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PY</p>	<p>As a resident of Puttenham for over 20 years, I feel obliged to object to this development. My primary concerns are around the increased risks to both traffic and flooding, which affect the entire village, as well as those passing through.</p> <p>Astrope Lane, which is winding and effectively single lane in many parts, has become increasingly used as a commuter rat run over the years and is a constant concern for residents who drive, let alone attempt to walk or cycle. We use this road in a daily basis. Our small community, who have chosen to live here for the peace and beauty of the natural surroundings, are put at increased risk on their own doorsteps. The road condition has also significantly deteriorated over the years, with deep potholes and damage to verges caused by regular</p>

	<p>and construction traffic.</p> <p>To access and exit this new development will prove to be a challenge to all and add further risk to what is already a very dangerous stretch of road.</p> <p>Additionally, flooding and drainage are already a major issue for the village and increasingly frequently, has resulted in the cutting off of access to the village, particularly at the Astrope Lane end. It is noted that a property adjacent to the proposed new development falls in to the category of 'high risk' surface water.</p> <p>This is cannot continue, and further development, related water output and traffic will only exacerbate the situation well beyond capacity.</p>
<p>87 The Green Aston Abbotts Buckinghamshire HP22 4LY</p>	<p>I am not a local resident but do visit family on Astrope Lane on a regular basis.</p> <p>I object to this development as Astrope Lane is not suitable for a development of this nature. It is a narrow lane and already has problems with the volume of traffic and speeding vehicles. The lane is also subject to flooding.</p> <p>The existing properties are full of character and I do not think this development will fit in with the area.</p> <p>The proposal is for large houses with insufficient car parking. As there are very few amenities in the surrounding area, people will have to use their cars to travel to the shops, thus increasing the daily volume of traffic along a totally unsuitable lane.</p> <p>I also believe there will be an adverse affect on the flora and fauna in the local area as this is a very rural location and benefits from an extensive range of birds, wild flowers and other wildlife.</p>
<p>87 The Green Aston Abbotts AYLESBURY HP22 4LY</p>	<p>As a frequent visitor to Astrope Lane it is evident that the width of the road is already entirely inadequate for the levels of traffic flow and the type of traffic to which it is subjected. The proposed substantial development would make driving and parking along the lane both extremely difficult and highly dangerous, particularly for children and elderly members of the community. In addition the development seeks to add a high density cluster of buildings to what is a currently a linearly disposed group of buildings and is thus entirely out of keeping with the character of the area.</p>
<p>The Cottage Draytonmead Farm Road  Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PS</p>	<p>Objection to proposed development next to Orchard House Astrope.</p> <p>As a local who has grown up here in Puttenham, I fear the constant granting of 'small-scale' housing developments is in fact turning into one very large housing development which if left unchecked will allow the urbanisation of a beautiful rural village and hamlet and surrounding areas.</p>

I grew up in a 'Rural Village', this development's marketing leans heavily on the fact that this is a 'Rural Area' but it won't be 'Rural' for very long if we just keep building all over it.

The older houses around here are generally all set in more space, Astrope is a well spread-out rural hamlet but this development is optimised to allow for as many houses as possible in a small field, it does not fit in with its surrounding and is unsuitable.

Yes, I have seen changes in the village over the years as barns have been converted and more people moved in but the current proposed influx based on the number of houses being built and the number developers plan to build in the future is unprecedented, if everything goes through Puttenham and Astrope will more than double in population based on the proposed occupancy and sizes of the new houses. The planning guidelines for rural areas call for 'small scale' development, which this is not! It is doubling the size of the hamlet. Therefore, permission should be refused.

Quite honestly this is unsustainable, unsuitable and alas for my brother, sister and myself totally unaffordable!

Growing up here means you need a lift everywhere, anyone who comes to see you needs to drive and so on, this is a very car orientated place to live, as soon as you are old enough and able to afford and drive a car you buy one, eventually everyone living in the house has one, so where are all the cars going to park? Where are all the visitors going to park?

This development is a proposal for a lot houses in a small area and a lot of parked cars (if they can all fit in), it is not in keeping with the local surroundings and permission should be refused.

Please note we are heading towards the age of the electric cars and electric heat pumps etc. Based on the number of proposed houses and parking spaces will there be enough charging points and robust incoming power supply for the future when everything is electric? My fear here is that in ten years we discover we've totally underestimated requirement and overburdened the infrastructure and there will need to be a lot of future upgrades on this site, if not in the whole area in general which is why I feel, as well as this and the obvious lack of amenities. it is unsustainable.

Plus, where are all these cycle paths I read about? I am a very keen cyclist; I have travelled across the UK and Europe taking parts in Down Hill Mountain Biking Events, you are safer cycling down the side of a mountain than you are cycling around here - if the cars don't get you the pot holes will, I have been forced off the road by many a car, usually because I am trying to avoid a pot hole!!! There is no safe pedestrian or cycle access anywhere around here, anyone who moves in will be going everywhere by car, which is unsuitable and unsustainable and permission should be refused.

<p>18 Blackthorn Walk Kingswood Bristol BS15 1TZ</p>	<p>Description: Residential Development including formation of 9 new houses, access, landscaping, and all ancillary features. Diversion of footpath 53.</p> <p>Introduction:</p> <p>This objection letter relates to application 23/02646/FUL, which is a full planning application relating to the formation of 9 new houses, access, landscaping, and ancillary features, along with the diversion of footpath 53.</p> <p>The application site comprises an area of uncultivated land to the north of Astrope Lane. The site is bounded on all sides by vegetation. A right of way (Footpath 53, part of the Aylesbury Ring) runs directly through the site.</p> <p>Relevant Planning Policy: National Planning Policy: National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) National Design Guide (NDG) Local Planning Policy: Core Strategy (2013): NP1 - Supporting Development CS7 - The Rural Area CS10 - Quality of Settlement Design CS11 - Quality of Neighbourhood Design CS12 - Quality of Site Design CS29 - Sustainable Design and Construction CS31 - Water Management Local Plan (2004): Saved Policy 18 - Size of New Dwellings Saved Policy 21 - Density of Residential Development Saved Policy 51 - Development and Transport Impacts Saved Policy 54 - Highway Design Saves Policy 79 - Footpath Network Saved Policy 99 - Preservation of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands</p> <p>Dacorum Local Plan (2024 - 2040) Revised Strategy for Growth (in consultation) No policies yet formulated. Supplementary Planning Guidance: Car Parking Standards (2020) Roads in Hertfordshire, Highway Design Guide 3rd Edition (2011) Site Layout and Planning for Daylight and Sunlight: A Guide to Good Practice (2011)</p> <p>Discussion of Scheme:</p> <p>Principle of Development:</p> <p>Policy CS7 states that within the rural area, residential development is unacceptable. It goes on to state that small-scale development will be permitted for rural uses, along with the replacement of buildings for the same use, limited extensions to existing buildings, the appropriate</p>
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reuse of permanent, substantial buildings; and the redevelopment of previously developed sites. It concluded by stating that small-scale development for housing, employment and other purposes will be permitted at Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone.

The site is therefore situated within the designated rural area, outside of any settlement boundary, and is not located within Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone; as such, the principle of development in this location is not supported by planning policy.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF states that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 105 of the Framework states that significant development should be focussed on locations which are, or can be made, sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. The term 'significant' is not defined.

While not yet adopted, the issues and options consultation for the new Local Plan states that the Council does not consider that directing a substantial proportion of the Borough's future development to the countryside, and in particular the Rural Area, is sustainable, desirable, or necessarily deliverable. We do not consider that this would be a sustainable approach and would therefore not be in conformity with the policies contained within the NPPF.

The application site is located outside the formal village boundary of Long Marston. The site is therefore located in a designated rural area outside the village where Policy CS7 would apply with respects to the Rural Area. This policy states the small-scale development for housing within the rural area will only be permitted at Aldbury, Long Marston and Wilstone. The site is not located within these areas.

The provision of 9 houses in this location would be considered to represent "significant" growth, in relation to the small hamlet of Astrope; this significance is increased when taken into consideration with the previous approval (21/02015/FUL) on the land adjacent to the east.

While the previous approval noted that "the site would be located a 2 minute drive, 3 minute cycle and 11 minute walk from the centre of Long Marston", it is not considered that the pedestrian access would be suitable for daily use; Astrope Lane is a narrow, winding country lane with no footpath, verges, surveillance or street lighting; as such, it is considered that Long Marston would be beyond a reasonable walking distance, and the nature of the access would discourage trips by foot or bicycle and that trips from the site to local services would be made by car.

Moreover, it is likely that residents would need to travel to a broader range of facilities at larger settlements further away from the site; while the provided Planning Statement outlines amenities such as school and doctors' surgeries, school spaces in the surrounding area are generally oversubscribed, and Buckinghamshire surgeries are no longer seeing Hertfordshire residents. Furthermore, the surrounding area lacks bus routes to access these services within a safe, walkable

distance. As such, it is unlikely the location of the proposal would promote the use of sustainable modes of travel as advocated in the Framework. Instead, it is probable that occupants and visitors would be highly reliant upon private motorised transport to get to and from the development.

When taken in conjunction with recently approved development within Astrope, it would be considered that the proposal would represent significant development, and due to the lack suitable pedestrian access, it is not believed that it would help to promote the vitality of the hamlet through increased social and economic participation by future residents; rather, it would promote the use of private motor vehicles to access further away centres which offer a full range of services.

As such, while the lack of a five-year housing land supply would mean that Policy CS7 is out-of-date, the NPPF still requires a presumption in favour of sustainable development; accordingly, the proposal would be significant development that would increase the need to travel but not offer a genuine choice of transport modes. This weighs heavily against the scheme, especially so when factoring in Paragraph 152 of the Framework, which seeks a transition to a low carbon future and radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

#### Design and Visual Amenity:

Paragraph 130 of the NPPF states that planning decisions should ensure that all developments will add to the overall quality of the area over the lifetime of the development, are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping, are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, establish and maintain a strong sense of place using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit, optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF goes on to state that development that is not well designed should be refused.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that achieving good design "is about creating places, buildings, or places that work well for everyone, look good, and will adapt to the needs of future generations."

Policies CS11 and CS12 of the Core Strategy (2013) state that development should not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and give guidance on site design.

Policy CS7 is also considered relevant to this proposal, in that development should not have a significant impact on the character and appearance of the countryside.

The application site comprises an area of uncultivated land to the north of Astrope Lane, which contributes to the rural nature of the locality. Nearby dwellings enjoy large back gardens and are well spaced, resulting in an open and verdant character. There is a ribbon of

development along Astrope Lane, comprising attractive, traditional style cottages.

The site's access would be located centrally, within the existing hedgerow. Significant amounts of the hedgerow would need to be removed to provide the required visibility splays. A significant area of the site would be laid in hardstanding, to provide access and parking.

The dwellings would be significantly sized two-storey houses, with little relation to surrounding development; the dwellings would have brick elevations, and a mixture of slate and tiled roofs. It is not considered that the dwellings would integrate well with the existing form of development within the locality in terms of bulk, massing, and design.

Given the scale of development proposed and the loss of hedgerow required for access and visibility, it is considered that the proposal would represent the encroachment of built, domestic form into the open countryside, resulting in significant urbanisation of this rural area which would harm the prevailing rural character of this part of Astrope Lane.

Furthermore, the layout of the site itself is considered to be unacceptable; while there is a ribbon of development along the northern side of Astrope Lane, Plot 1 fails to maintain an active frontage onto the lane, resulting in an inward facing layout which fails to respect the character of development in this location.

This impact is exacerbated by the "backland" dwellings, which by reason of bulk, massing, and design, fail to appear subservient to the dwellings located to the frontage of the site, and would not represent "infill" development. Furthermore, the cul-de-sac layout of the rear part of the site would be inward facing and would be dominated by the hardstanding and parking provision to the front of the dwellings, resulting in a car-dominated design which would diminish the quality of the public realm and would appear incongruous with the grain of local development by virtue of its extension to the rear of the site.

As such, it is not considered that the proposal complies with Policies CS7, CS11 or CS12 of the Core Strategy, or the relevant provisions of the NPPF, and as such, permission should be refused.

Highways:

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy states that on each site development should provide a safe and satisfactory means of access for all users.

Saved Policy 51 of the Local Plan (2004) states that the acceptability of all development proposals will always be assessed specifically in highway and traffic terms and should have no significant impact upon the nature, capacity and use of the highway network and its ability to accommodate the traffic generated by the development and the

environmental and safety implications of the traffic generated by the development.

There are concerns relating to the access to the site along Astrope Lane, especially in conjunction with the recently approved development to the east (21/02015/FUL). Astrope Lane is a winding, narrow country lane which lacks passing places and is single lane in some parts; the proposal would significantly intensify the use of this lane, if opposing vehicles met along this lane, one vehicle would need to make reversing manoeuvres, which would lead to highway safety concerns. It is considered that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe, and as such, the application should be refused.

The visibility splay from the "main" central entrance appears to pass directly over hedges and trees; the provided soft landscaping plan states that this would be trimmed back to keep the visibility splay clear, but due to the nature of the landscaping, this would be expected to grow back extremely quickly, blocking the visibility splay to the detriment of road safety.

Similarly, the visibility splay for the "private drive" would require significant cutting back of the hedge. The visibility splay for this entrance would also pass over land outside of the site's red line boundary and is currently undeliverable without the removal of landscaping features outside of the application site. While this is currently within the ownership of the applicant, were this land to be sold in the future, it is likely that this visibility splay would be blocked, to the detriment of the safety of road users.

As such, it is considered that the proposal fails to maintain highway safety, and that there would be both an unacceptable impact on highway safety and that the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. The proposal fails to comply with Policy CS12 of the Core Strategy, Policy 51 of the Local Plan, and the relevant provisions of the NPPF, and as such, the proposal should be refused.

#### Footpaths:

Saved Policy 79 of the Local Plan states that the public footpath network will be protected, improved, and promoted through joint action with the highway authority, the Countryside Management Service (see Policy 96), other organisations and private landowners. It states that changes should not inconvenience walkers or adversely affect residential amenities.

It goes on to state that particular attention will be given to the creation and signing of circular walks including links with the Grand Union Canal towpath, town to country routes, permissive links, interpretative facilities, and to accessibility by passenger transport.

Finally, it states that the diversion of public footpaths as a result of development proposals will only be supported if the environmental character of the paths is maintained, walkers are not significantly inconvenienced and/or significant planning advantages accrue.

The Aylesbury Ring footpath passes directly through the centre of the site. This would be diverted around the edge of the site. At present, this part of the Aylesbury Ring passes through an attractive, open, rural field; the diversion of this path, and associated development, would be considered to cause significant harm to this circular route through the urbanisation of this segment, and would significantly inconvenience walkers by extending the length of the section. As such, it is not considered that the proposal complies with Saved Policy 79 of the Local Plan.

#### Flood Risk and Drainage

Paragraph 167 of the NPPF states that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere.

Policy CS29 states that development should provide an adequate means of water supply, surface water and foul drainage.

The provided drainage strategy relies on the outfall of water to a "drainage ditch", to the rear of the site; the connection to this ditch as shown in the provided drainage strategy sits outside of the site's red-line boundary; further information is required to ascertain whether connection to this ditch is feasible. The "drainage ditch" which is to be utilised is extremely old and is mostly filled in; and as outlined within the drainage strategy, would require clearing and regrading to restore downstream connectivity. The ditch sits outside of the applicant's ownership, and the engineering works for the regrading and clearance would likely require a separate full application and permission from the relevant landowners; it is unlikely that local landowners would give permission for these works. Furthermore, as the ditch is likely to become heavily vegetated again in the future, it is questioned who is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of this ditch to ensure that adequate flood risk mitigation is provided in the future.

Furthermore, the drainage strategy would output sewerage into this ditch; following a power cut, which happens regularly within this area due to falling trees taking out overhead power cables, there are concerns that neat sewerage would be pumped into the ditch, the brook, and nearby gardens.

The brook that the ditch would output to is already at capacity, and the brook often overflows its banks and floods the fields, roads, and surrounding gardens; as such, even if permission were given to regrade and clear the ditch, it is highly likely that this would lead to further flooding elsewhere, outside of the application site.

Finally, the properties along Astrope Lane in this location suffer from drainage issues already; Tring Rural Parish Council have a flood working committee looking into the flooding issues affecting the whole area. Any increase in foul and surface water drainage will also have an impact on the villages of Puttenham and Long Marston as all the streams and water courses eventually merge; there has been significant amounts of development approved in these areas recently, and there are concerns regarding the impact of these developments as

	<p>a whole on flood risk and drainage.</p> <p>As such, it is not considered that the drainage strategy would be deliverable and would lead to increased flood risk elsewhere; as such, the proposal fails to comply with Policy CS29, or the relevant provisions of the NPPF, and as such, permission should be refused.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Paragraph 11d of the Framework starts with the premise that a proposal should be granted where a five-year housing land supply is absent. This presumption should be displaced if the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As outlined above, it is considered that the proposal would have significant negative impacts in relation to sustainability, visual amenity, highway safety, the local footpath network and flood risk and drainage.</p> <p>It is considered that these would, in this instance, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole, and as such, permission should be refused.</p>
<p>12 Gilders Sawbridgeworth Sawbridgeworth CM21 0EF</p>	<p>This development is suitable for the inclusion of integrated Swift bricks within the fabric of the new dwellings</p> <p>The Design and Access Statement indicates that Swift bricks will be included as a biodiversity enhancement, and the Ecological Impact Assessment recommends them, but neither provides a firm commitment or details of how many will be installed.</p> <p>The design of the buildings with brick sided elevations is ideal for Swift bricks, allowing them to be located high up and away from windows.</p> <p>Guidance from NHBC and RIBA suggest a ratio of 1 per dwelling: <a href="https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/S067-NF89-Biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments_FINAL.pdf">https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/S067-NF89-Biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments_FINAL.pdf</a></p> <p>Please do not impose a condition simply to comply with the EIA given the lack of firm detail. Instead, in the interests of certainty, please secure Swift bricks by way of a condition, the wording adapted from the British Standard for integrated bird boxes, BS 42021:2022:</p> <p>"no development shall take place until written details are approved by the LPA of the model and location of 9 integrated Swift bricks, to be fully installed prior to occupation and retained thereafter", in accordance with the NPPF</p>
<p>7 Puttenham Court Puttenham Hertfordshire HP23 4PY</p>	<p>Puttenham/Astrope are small hamlets with no facilities. There are no buses, shops, schools etc. the village is prone to flooding and more houses will increase this problem. The road is already dangerous as the villages are used as a cut through. There have been several accidents recently, one over the canal bridge and one where Laxtons have converted barns in Puttenham.</p>

	<p>Local schools are already full so where will a possible 18 children be educated.</p> <p>As planning has already been granted on 2 sites another 9 dwellings will significantly increase the size of the hamlet. In the case of Astrope more than doubling the number of houses.</p> <p>The roads are dangerous to walk or cycle and so more cars would increase the traffic flow considerably.</p>
<p>Ivy Cottage Astrope Lane Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PP</p>	<p>I am writing to formally object to the planning permission application for the proposed Orchard House Development I am writing to formally object to the planning permission application for the proposed Orchard House Development, which is set to significantly alter our rural community in Puttenham and Astrope. This objection outlines several concerns that I believe must be carefully considered before any decision is made regarding this development.</p> <p><b>Impact on Rural Living:</b> My wife's family has resided in this rural area for over 35 years, giving us a profound understanding of the unique challenges and beauty of country living. We often experience power cuts, face difficulties navigating muddy fields, and endure regular flooding. The absence of amenities, such as street lights, footpaths, and reliable internet connectivity, contributes to our unique way of life. We have no shop or playground. Cars are our only mode of transport.</p> <p><b>Safety Concerns:</b> The proposed development presents potential dangers to families in the area. The existing road infrastructure is inadequate and poses risks to children and pedestrians. The absence of public transport, limited access to medical facilities, and already overburdened schools make it an unsuitable location for further development.</p> <p><b>Flooding Risks:</b> Our community already contends with serious flooding issues, and this development will only exacerbate the problem. Recent incidents have highlighted the inability of the current drainage systems to cope with additional housing. The proposed development risks further inundating our homes and roads, endangering the entire neighbourhood.</p> <p><b>Traffic Congestion:</b> The proposed entrance to the development is on a bend and incline, making it a dangerous access point. Increased traffic flow from the new houses, combined with speeding commuter vehicles, along a well potted road poses significant risks. The removal of ancient hedges and limited passing places add to the potential traffic hazards.</p> <p><b>Lack of Amenities:</b> Our community is underserved when it comes to essential amenities. Existing local services like doctors' offices and schools are already strained. The absence of public transportation and reliance on personal vehicles makes daily life challenging for residents.</p> <p><b>Impact on Biodiversity:</b></p>

	<p>The proposed development threatens the rich biodiversity of the area, which includes bluebells, primroses, owls, bats, frogs, butterflies and newts. It also disrupts the cherished Aylesbury Ring Footpath, an important element of our rural heritage.</p> <p><b>Design Compatibility:</b> The proposed housing designs are inconsistent with the existing rural architecture. Their modern, bulky structures are incongruent with the predominantly Victorian-style cottages with larger nature space and garden in the area, negatively affecting the visual harmony of the neighbourhood.</p> <p>In summary, this development proposal contradicts Dacorum's own policy of favouring minimal development in rural areas. It poses numerous risks to our community, environment, and way of life.</p> <p>Therefore, I urge the council to reject this application to protect the well-being and character of our historic rural community. I appreciate your attention to this matter and request that this objection be considered during the planning decision process. which is set to significantly alter our rural community in Puttenham and Astrope.</p> <p>This objection outlines several concerns that I believe must be carefully considered before any decision is made regarding this development.</p>
<p>Potash Farm Astrope Lane Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PP</p>	<p>I object to this development as a resident in Puttenham. The amount of traffic is so high already and people completely ignore the speed limit. There is no footpath and there are no traffic calming measures in place which we would need as a bare minimum to allow this level of development. We've already seen an increase in flooding since the recent Laxtons development at the other end of the village. This combined with general climate change is only going to get worse so building more homes and removing existing drainage will compound the flooding issue.</p> <p>The proposal states there are 4 schools within 2.5 miles but 2 of these are in Bucks so have no obligation to take children from Herts and of the 2 remaining schools, 1 is a Primary with a limit of 15 children in each year group and the other is an Infant school that then feeds into the same Primary. This is misleading the planning committee about the existing local services.</p> <p>There is no public transport to allow access to these local services so the only access would be via car. The roads in this area are in a poor state of repair, with potholes caused by surface water and are narrow in many places with regular accidents caused by impatient drivers not allowing enough room for others.</p> <p>Finally, the existing recent developments in Puttenham and Long Marston haven't even sold so it seems strange to be building even more homes that clearly aren't affordable in the current climate.</p>
<p>Oakley House</p>	<p>I object to this proposal which is totally out of character for a small</p>

<p>Astrope Lane Astrope Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PJ</p>	<p>hamlet. There is no public transport and local surgeries and schools are full.</p> <p>The access is at a dangerous point on a very busy and narrow road. The hedges on the roadside would have to be totally destroyed to provide any visibility at all, causing more damage to the ecology of an ancient site.</p> <p>The main concern has to be the additional water run off into an area that is constantly flooding. The field at present helps water to soak away, this asset would be destroyed and adjacent properties would suffer.</p>
<p>The Cottage Draytonmead Farm Road</p> <p>Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PS</p>	<p>I am writing to object to the proposed development of land next to Orchard House Astrope.</p> <p>Whereas I understand the need for more housing, I question the sustainability and suitability of this Rural Development as I cannot see how it will have nothing other than a negative and detrimental impact on the local surroundings, community and overall environment.</p> <p>From what I have seen very recently in Astrope and Puttenham where there have been a number of developments it seems that the main objective is to fit as many high end and expensive houses as possible into as smaller space as possible, which in Astrope's case, if this goes through on top of the other recent development would nearly double the size of the Hamlet.</p> <p>How can two high density developments fit in with the requirements for things to be 'sustainable and desirable' with the surroundings? The requirement as I understand is for the approval of small-scale developments and I can not see how doubling the size of Astrope can be thought of as small scale, for this reason alone permission should be refused.</p> <p>However, my next comments are about the location. The well-honed and professionally polished marketing material which accompanies this application paints an idyllic picture of footpaths and cycleways with everyone working from home having food delivered, this is, as said, an idyllic picture which is incorrect and must be ignored. The main way that most people get around by here is by car, you have to, everything you really need is a car ride away, which includes among other things employment, so this brings up a number of points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is this a suitable place for more houses? Unless you have access to motorised transport you are stuck. Surely developments should be in areas which limit the need for car travel and where people have a choice of transport modes.</li> <li>- There is no safe pedestrian access to anywhere except by crossing fields.</li> <li>- Are the local amenities really as bountiful as the marketing material makes out, most of the schools, doctors' surgeries etc are over subscribed already, we do not have access to surgeries (or the local tip) in Bucks, as said everything is a car ride away - it is an unsustainable location and for this reason, permission should be refused.</li> </ul>

	<p>My next comments are about the build itself. This is a Rural area, most of the surrounding houses are well spaced and surrounded by large gardens and land, how does a high-density housing project of large houses fit in with the local 'rural' surroundings other than to urbanise them. Also this is on a busy narrow country road, creating safe access to the site can only be done by removal of significant amounts hedgerow which will only add to the urbanisation. Fundamentally this will be a lot of houses, a lot of hard standing and a lot of cars and not fit in with the local surroundings at all. For this reason, permission should be refused.</p> <p>My final comments are about drainage and flooding. Hard standing, tarmac, roofs and houses create more water run off running into an unmaintained drainage system in an area on heavy clay that already floods. Although I understand some work will be done to dig out ditches these will no doubt silt up again, eventually the permeability of the hard standing drainage will clog up creating more run off and unless there is some sort of ongoing drainage strategy throughout the local area (which there isn't) the medium to long term effect of this will all add considerably to the localised flooding and contribute to other flooding further on in the adjacent area. For this reason, permission should be refused.</p>
<p>Oakley Grange Church Road Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PR</p>	<p><b>OBJECTION TO PLANNING FOR 9 HOUSES ON ASTROPE LANE, ASTROPE</b></p> <p>1) Flood Risk Whilst the site itself is not at risk of flooding the proposal is that these houses will be discharging treated foul and surface water into Puttenham Brook. This joins with other water courses and streams from Long Marston and Puttenham before joining the Thistle Brook.</p> <p>These streams and water courses are struggling to cope with the current levels of water from properties and surface drainage from the roads and fields.</p> <p>The consequence is that during periods of heavy rainfall the roads and the gardens of the lower lying properties get flooded.</p> <p>During the last 3 instances of heavy rain that has meant the outfall to our sewage plant was below water level along with the outfalls to Church Barn, Paston Cottage, Pegasus Barn, Grange Farm and Bethel Grange. (photographic evidence available)</p> <p>This means that for us we need to limit the use of toilets, showers/baths and appliances such as washing machines until the water level subsides.</p> <p>We have yet to experience the affect that the 12 houses under construction (5 in Astrope and 7 in Puttenham) will have on the situation as so far only 1 of these has been sold and occupied.</p> <p>The National Planning Policy Framework says that development should take into account cumulative impacts on flooding and not cause issues elsewhere to people and property. This is clearly going to</p>

	<p>happen and because of this the application should be refused.</p> <p>2) Highway access. The proposed entrances to the site and plot 1 have inadequate vision splays to enable vehicles to safely exit onto Astrope Lane. The road rises and curves slightly at this point and following a recent traffic survey we know that 85% of vehicles using Astrope Lane are travelling at at least 40mph. This means 85% of vehicles are travelling at at least 33% above the 30mph speed limit. The survey also stated that there were up to 2000 vehicle movements per day on what is a narrow country lane which is deteriorating rapidly.</p> <p>To provide adequately safe vision it is likely that all the hedgerow and trees between Orchard House and Knoll Cottage will need to be removed which will significantly alter the appearance of this section of Astrope which is not in line with protecting the rural area or the street scene and will irreversibly alter this section of the Hamlet forever. This should also mean that the application be refused.</p> <p>3) This proposal does not represent the accepted meaning of "infill" development as the bulk of the properties are behind the natural building line between Orchard House and Knoll Cottage and is more akin to "backland" development. Furthermore it is convoluted in so far that the design is attempting to create an appearance that redundant farm buildings have been re-purposed as housing where in fact no such buildings have ever existed.</p> <p>This is clear over development and totally out of keeping with the surrounding area and therefore should be refused.</p>
<p>11 Astrope Lane Long Marston Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PL</p>	<p>We object to this development for the following reasons:</p> <p>Flooding:</p> <p>This area is known to be a flood risk zone. I often travel along here and the road beyond the proposed development is deep under water. This water isn't stagnant either, it flows like a river. This proposed development will be built higher to avoid flooding but will then put the neighbouring homes in even higher risk of being flooded themselves. The development which is being built at the moment has added to the area flooding. We live in Astrope Lane and as neighbours know the impact flooding has on these villages already. It would be incredibly short sighted to build more houses in an already flooded area. I would invite the planning officer to take a drive or even better yet a walk around the area to see the extent of the flooding (remember your wellies!)</p> <p>Traffic:</p> <p>This road is already used as a thoroughfare for commuters. This road can't cope with more traffic especially not abiding to speed limits. It's dangerous for motorists as well as pedestrians. There have been a number of accidents along this road due to the volume of traffic, visibility and speeds motorists drive.</p> <p>Over development:</p>

	<p>I can't see the need of these houses as there are still unsold houses in previous developments. Perhaps the development in Wilstone should be completed and those houses sold before granted permission for more.</p>
<p>Knoll Cottage Astrope Lane Astrope Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PN</p>	<p>Objection to Application 23/02646FUL - Land to the West of Orchard House, Astrope Lane, Astrope, HP23 4PN</p> <p>I am making comments objecting to application 23/02646FUL on the following grounds:</p> <p>Negative adverse visual impact of the development:</p> <p>Astrope is a small rural hamlet comprising of just a few houses. These houses enjoy large gardens, are well spaced and their frontages are close to Astrope Lane, many date back to the last century. They are traditional in appearance which adds to the appeal of the area.</p> <p>The proposed development is not in character with existing buildings. Some of the proposed houses are imposing being three stories in height. The farmyard style does not complement the existing settlement patterns along Astrope Lane or the character and material of the existing dwellings.</p> <p>They are not in keeping with the rural nature of the area and the existing houses and will have a negative visual impact on the hamlet.</p> <p>There is now a new development of 5 houses in Astrope (Little Copse) in which arguably the very large houses and design are also not in keeping with the hamlet's housing style.</p> <p>The comparison for what is in character should be the older historic houses that made up Astrope prior to this, it would be a sad precedent if the style of an area was set by the newest rather than the oldest dwellings and would lead to the loss of traditional, historical, rural areas like Astrope and not in keeping with the Dacorum Local Plan which recognises the importance of protecting the character and quality of rural areas.</p> <p>The proposed site is currently surrounded by a substantial hedge providing ecological and environmental benefits, housing wildlife and forming part of the rural landscape of the hamlet and surrounding area. A proportion of this will be lost with negative consequences for the visual impact of the area and to the detriment of the wildlife and vegetation.</p> <p>The proposed design:</p> <p>The proposed design of 9 houses in a farmyard style is out of character with the hamlet of Astrope.</p> <p>The number of houses is out of proportion with the surrounding houses, which are either cottages or detached houses, evenly and generously spaced out along Astrope Lane and with large gardens extending</p>

behind them.

The current site is a field in a rural area. There are no buildings on the site and the proposed development is not small scale development in keeping with surrounding properties in the hamlet of Astrope. It is disproportionate.

There is insufficient parking factored into the development for the quantity and size of houses. They are likely to house a significant number of people as family houses and any guests, deliveries, trades people, cleaners, food deliveries etc. The lack of any amenities and public transport in this area mean that driving is essential. This increases the number of likely cars per household compared to an urban area.

The parking shows 26 spaces either outside or in garages and only 3 visitor spaces. A conservative estimate of the number of inhabitants for a development like this is between 30 - 40. Whilst some of those are initially likely to be children, over time they will begin to drive and have their own cars and the parking will become unsustainable. The provision of 3 visitor spaces for 9 houses is a vast underestimation of what will be required.

Should cars park on Astrope Lane it would block the road making it unpassable and even less safe than it already is.

This proposal cannot be considered to be small-scale infilling due to the number of houses, the scale of the properties, the current nature of the site and the character.

#### Over development

The proposal for 9 properties is not in keeping with the local area. There have already been developments at Little Copse, Astrope and Old Rectory Farm, Puttenham, adding another would be over development and detrimental to the rural character of Astrope and Puttenham.

#### Flooding

Tring Rural Parish Council have a flood working committee looking into the flooding in this area. The brook between Green End and 2 White Cottage regularly floods, this extends onto Astrope Lane and makes the road unpassable. There are other sections further towards Puttenham where this also occurs. The most recent being in October 2023, this year. Documentary evidence of this and previous bad flooding can be provided.

Surface water from the land which is being proposed for development runs downwards into the garden of Knoll Cottage as the land has a downward gradient towards the brook. This already make much of the land unusable during the wetter months.

It then flows down into the garden of Green End.

Green End is shown as medium risk of flooding for surface water, 2 White Cottage is shown as high risk of flooding from surface water and medium from rivers and the sea on the government's website for checking flood risk <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk>. Both of these properties suffered flooding in October 23 and at frequent intervals over recent years.

The proposed development would increase the risk both from surface water and rivers and the sea, which in this case, refers to the brook.

Surface Water: The government website states that surface water flooding happens when rain water cannot drain away through the normal drainage systems, instead it lies on or flows over the ground.

Surface water flooding already occurs around Knoll Cottage, Green End, 1 and 2 White Cottages and is evidenced by the governments flood risk website as well as documentary evidence of the occupiers. The website goes on to say that surface water flooding affects areas with harder surfaces more severely. The development will change a field into a development mostly made up of hard surfaces and will increase this surface water flooding even further.

Rivers and the Sea (brook between Green End and 2 White Cottage):

The existing drainage for this area relies on the system of culverts and brooks. As indicated above, the brook already floods - contributed to by surface water flooding. 9 houses will produce a very significant increase in the water running into the existing water course which will lead to worse flooding.

The plans state the intention to use a drainage ditch which currently is mostly filled in but even if serviceable ultimately leads to the stream so this will only get worse, increasing the risk of flooding even further to existing properties.

Traffic/Highways

Astrophe Lane is a restricted width road (single track to 3/4 width) which is already unsuitable for the traffic that currently travels upon it, as a result traffic calming/reduction is being discussed at parish council.

The current verges are being worn away in places, extending the road surface and increasing large pot holes. The verge protects the culverts, the degradation of these verges which is occurring simply by the volume and size of vehicles attempting to pass on these small rural roads risks compromising the culverts next to the verges which lead down to the stream and are intended to prevent flooding (see above).

The proposed access route in and out of the site is insufficient to enable vehicles to get in and out safely. It does not appear large enough for

emergency vehicles (fire engines) or refuse trucks to be able to safely get in and out. The parking provision as mentioned above will exacerbate this issue.

#### School and amenities

There is one primary school in Long Marston which services the surrounding villages to Long Marston. The number of pupils attending the school is increasing and the school is limited to 5 classes which are mixed year groups.

This year class 2 has 30 pupils, a mixture of class 1 and class 2, which is the maximum amount for this age.

This development will likely contain primary school aged children who will seek to attend the school.

Added to previously mentioned recently approved developments in Astrope, Puttenham, Long Marston and Wilstone which are also likely to house primary school aged children the school infrastructure is insufficient for Tring rural.

There are no footpaths to walk safely into Long Marston, Wilstone or Puttenham, which increases the reliance on cars. This creates significant traffic issues around the crossroads in Long Marston every school day.

#### Residential amenity impact

The plan itself is not accurate. It does not show Knoll Cottage's true size (post extension) or its gardens correctly (and access to the footpath). Therefore it is not possible to accurately assess from the plans that have been submitted whether the mitigation to reduce overlooking has been met. This has been pointed out to the developers.

The development will have a residential amenity impact on Knoll Cottage in respect of:

##### Loss of privacy:

There are two bedroom windows that face out to the proposed development site. There is also a double glass door to a bedroom with an aspect to the proposed site. The proposed plan shows three houses and gardens which will have a view into these bedrooms within Knoll Cottage affecting the privacy of the occupants within.

##### Noise and disturbance:

A conservative estimate of the habitants of such a development could be 30 - 40 additional adults and children. Just going about their daily business this number of people will create a significant amount of noise and disturbance to the surrounding properties to detrimental affect.

##### Outlook and loss of daylight:

The current outlook from Knoll Cottage and its gardens are to

	<p>uninterrupted vistas of the rural landscape. The proposed development will replace this with large imposing buildings causing significant detrimental impacts to the residents and reducing available daylight.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>The Dacorum Local Plan Revised Strategy for Growth 2024-2040 which is currently being consulted on, notes that given policy and environmental constraints, only modest levels of growth can be accommodated in the countryside.</p> <p>It notes, it is the least sustainable location for new development due to the lack of facilities, poor accessibility and limited public transport. It goes on to note that it is important to protect the character and quality of smaller settlements.</p> <p>All of the above seems very relevant to this proposal and support why this proposal is not suitable.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
<p>2 Rectory Stables Draytonmead Farm Road</p> <p>Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PS</p>	<p>There has just been a housing development built in this rural village and rural development is not supported by the Dacorum local plan</p> <p>There will be an impact of even more traffic on this very narrow and windy road plus the very dangerous bridge.</p> <p>There is often flooding in this area already.</p> <p>plus all the above reasons</p>
<p>Ivy Cottage Astrope Lane Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PP</p>	<p>My family have lived in this rural area for many years, therefore have experience of living in a place where there are no amenities, often we have power cuts, walking in fields is hampered by animals and mud. Flooding is regular occurrence. And there is no one to sort or protect our houses but us neighbours. Who have to unblock the debris. There are no footpaths or lights. So it is dangerous for children and dog walkers. Children cannot ride their bikes as the road is currently lethal. There is no shop or playground. We have a church. Which is used once a month.</p> <p>So with no street lights or footpath and many homes including ours with no workable 'at home wifi'. How does this modern urban development imagine it would sit well in these kinds of surroundings. It seems untrue to market these houses, when they are positioned in such an inhospitable location. Offering a dangerous living experience for families. Let alone how significantly negative the impacts will be in relation to sustainability, visual amenity, highway safety, the local footpath network, flood risk and drainage. This proposal will be a travesty for this area that has remained contained and manageable, particularly regarding flooding.</p>

#### Pressure on this area

Already there is significant growth in relation to a small rural hamlet of Astrope. Please note previous approval of (21/02015/FUL). In the the last two years between the two development the population has almost doubled. There is nothing to make this area easy to live in and putting more houses in so called 'infill' will be the destruction of many homes already living here. Surely that should be a priority? Protecting peoples in their own homes from harm.

#### Lack of local Amenities;

Doctors are at capacity. Schools also. Puttenham, Astrope and Long Marston have been asked to move surgeries to Tring from Aston Clinton as they are under pressure already to accommodate housing estates popping up. Marsworth is an infant school. There are no buses or public transport in Astrope.

We are totally reliant on cars and we have no bus route. Tring is the closest shopping centre. Long Marston has only a pub as a facility. Puttenham only has a church and village hall. Only safely reached with cars.

#### Flooding

Flooding is very serious in this area and incredibly sensitive to increased pressure. I cannot see how the current brook can sustain more housing and drainage. Since we have had two new developments next to Orchard House (21/02015/FUL) and in Puttenham at Rectory Farm. The Brook that links all homes in this area has flooded onto the roads. In some places not seen by some in the 50 years of living here.

This proposal will almost certainly significantly heighten the flood risk for neighbours. The road is also on an incline and access is on a bend. Debris from fallen trees and hedge blockages affects us all. The ditches are not owned by the applicants so surely they will need planning permission from the owner. Who's garden already floods.

Who will be clearing ditches in the future to keep us all safe? The drainage and sewerage after a power cut will cascade into this ditch. We often have power cables issues and power cuts and outages in this area due to power cables being close to trees.

#### Traffic

The development site is on a bend and incline, water floods down that road collecting at the brook. Allowing an entrance at this very busy and tricky corner and road seems reckless and dangerous, adding to congestion and slowness of traffic travel. We assume the houses will have 2-3 cars being 3 - 4 bedroom houses - a potential vehicle flow in and out of the development of between 18 and 27 cars.

Access would require removal of these precious ancient hedges. An important wild life corridor that also absorbs the toxicity from the road. Who will maintain the hedge to allow safe access to and from site. How will bin men cope and Amazon or other deliveries. And residents from 9 houses coming in and out of one access point onto a dangerous busy lane? It all seems complete unpractical and not thought through. On

paper you can make anything look attractive. But in reality, in the cold hard light of day, this proposition is a fantasy that will cause considerable harm to the area.

#### Road Safety

Due to increased development traffic and changes in sat nav routes this road now attracts 2000 vehicles HGV vehicles, delivery vans, and commuter cars with 85% exceeding the speed limit. According to a study carried out this year. Many commuter cars used this road from Milton Keynes heading to the A41 or High Wycombe. So is very busy especially at rush hour times.

There are few passing places and it becomes a single track, close to this proposed site. Reversing is often required. We have had several accidents at the single track canal bridge in the last month and last night!

#### Footpath

There is no footpath or street lighting along this road for children, walkers to walk to Long Marston Junior school. Footpaths across fields are poorly maintained and access hampered by animals occupying the fields and weather conditions. Mostly children cannot walk to school. Cars have to be used.

Diverting the heritage Aylesbury Ring Footpath which runs through this field is disappointing. They plan to reroute it around the site.. and include benches. Which again is an urban inclusion. Out of character with rural living.

#### Design;

The houses are not in keeping with the current type of rural building in surrounding homes. Most houses offering 3 - 4 bedrooms in this area are single two story victorian cottage style abodes with shallow slate roof pitch with larger gardens surrounding them. Which gives each house balance and space with a rural garden setting that enhances the area. These are the wrong sorts of houses excessive for the size of plot and inconsiderate to the current neighbours and community.

They are bulky, modern and urban in style. With little relation to the rest of the houses in this area or consideration for wild life. The houses are all backing onto each other. And squeezed in with little room for nature - like a housing estate and completely out of keeping with any other collection of dwellings in Astrope or Puttenham. There is dubious water management and sewer management for the additional 9 houses proposed. There are no other original farms and house in this area that look in anyway like this proposed cluster of houses.

#### Biodiversity

This meadow holds a considerable amount of wild life and flora such as bluebells, primroses, owls, bats, frogs and newts that are prevalent as well as the Aylesbury Ring Footpath that is a delight to walk. It's interesting that the prudent and thoughtful previous owner had a 14 year covenant on this land which runs out in 2024.

#### Summary

	<p>This is over development of a sensitive site, full of wildlife and thick hedges, offering biodiversity to thrive and an ancient footpath running through the middle of it. This proposal is unsympathetic for current neighbours, the light pollution will alter this area for animals and wildlife and people. Already suffering from an over development (21/02015/FUL), there is a danger it poses for the people who live there regarding traffic, lack of parking, total reliability of cars with no amenities. Plus there is an unstable water and drainage system which is already is overwhelmed and not controllable due to the extent of the brook running Puttenham, through Astrope to Long Marston. This area is notorious for flooding. Please understand that fact.</p> <p>It seems this development proposal goes against Dacorum's own policy of preferring not to developing in un connected rural areas such as this.</p>
<p>The Cottage Draytonmead Farm Road</p> <p>Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PS</p>	<p>As I local resident I strongly oppose the proposed development of 9 houses in the small field adjacent to Orchard House Astrope.</p> <p>With 5 houses already being built next to this land another 9 would be a significant growth doubling the number of houses in this small rural hamlet, which is not 'small scale' and certainly not in keeping within the guidelines. The proposed houses are not in keeping with the unique character of other properties in Astrope which are road facing with good size gardens and ample parking facilities. Apart from the new build Little Copse, there are no other 3 storey houses in Astrope.</p> <p>I question with the houses at the rear of the site that this proposal can be classed as infill, in fact based on my understanding of the Local Plan they are not, there is a ribbon of houses running through Astrope and this is not in keeping in anyway and permission should be refused.</p> <p>I fear that because permission has been granted to build houses on the small plot of land east of the site, this gives the green light to build more. These houses would not enhance the vitality of this rural community but simply add more strain to the existing amenities and infrastructure, overdeveloping and harming the rural nature by urbanising it and for this reason it is unsuitable and unsustainable and permission should be refused.</p> <p>Some of the information on the design and access statement about the local area are either misleading or incorrect. It states there is direct access to bridle paths and cycle paths but there are no such paths in Astrope. The road is narrow and winding and dangerous for pedestrians to walk to Puttenham or Long Marston. The grass verges are either non-existent or have been eroded over the years by the volume of traffic and worsened recently no doubt by the heavy traffic accessing the new developments being built in Astrope and Puttenham. The schools and doctor's surgeries are not as abundant as suggested and mostly oversubscribed. There are few local amenities and due to lack of pedestrian access and no public transport, residents rely heavily on private motorised vehicles i.e., cars. Apart from going out for a walk on the public footpaths across the fields, anywhere else you need to go will be by car, you have no other option.</p>

	<p>Flooding is also a big issue in this area when there is significant rainfall. The ditches and brooks are already at capacity and the gardens and road downhill of this site frequently floods. The proposed drainage ditch for surface and foul water at the rear of the site will only make matters worse. In the future when this ditch overgrows and silts up, who will be responsible for maintaining it and how would a digger gain access to clear it? Given this fact it is hard to understand how this site will not eventually lead to more localised flooding and permission should be refused.</p> <p>I worry that with Dacorum not meeting their 5-year housing plan this has created an opportunity for developers to exploit the situation and push through plans and be granted permissions on builds which match their ambitions and desires to build what they want where they want (i.e., maximising their profits and balance sheets) and not the needs of the local community to build what is needed where it is needed - Would this even be considered if there was a 5-year plan in place?</p> <p>This simply put is overdevelopment of a rural area, forced in some part by the need to meet the 5-year plan with houses that are not in keeping not only in design and layout but also in location, it is unsuitable and certainly given the local amenities and infrastructure, unsustainable and permission should be refused.</p>
<p>Grange Farm Astrope Lane Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PP</p>	<p>I've been fortunate to call Puttenham 'home' for the past two years and feel privileged to live here with my family. We enjoy the rural aspect of the village yet the proximity to Tring and Wendover serves this small community well. You will be aware that there have recently been 7 new homes built in Puttenham; they were old farm barns that have been sympathetically transformed into a small development of expensive houses. None of these homes are for sale with the objective of affordable housing.</p> <p>This is a rural location, with absolutely no public transport available to anyone. The roads are problematic currently - they are not wide enough, and they are used as a 'cut through' for many commuters, t times our roads in Puttenham are dangerous. This has been reported to Highways and we are requesting traffic calming measures to be introduced asap before an accident happens.</p> <p>The addition of these 7 houses mentioned previously plus this additional 9 will add to the traffic issues; each home will have to have a minimum of 2 cars given they are large homes with multiple occupants with no public transport on offer.</p> <p>This development constitutes over development and should not be approved, it will increase the already worrying situation with the flood risk and poor drainage.</p> <p>The impact of the local wildlife has not been considered with these new builds, we are fortunate to live in an area where we see deer, badgers and owls on a regular basis. This is their natural habitat.</p>

	<p>On the grounds of over and unnecessary development I would like to recommend you refuse planning permission for this development. Thank you</p>
<p>2 Potash Farm Bungalows Astrope Lane Puttenham Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PP</p>	<p>I object to this development as a resident in Puttenham, we have far too much traffic coming through the hamlet at present without almost doubling the size of our population. I have to walk just 300 feet along the main road on a regular basis to get from my house to my mother in law's with a toddler and a baby and I'm basically taking our lives in our hands each day because the amount of traffic is so high and people ignore the speed limit. There is no footpath and there are no traffic calming measures in place which we would need as a bare minimum to allow this level of development. Additionally we've already seen an increase in flooding since the recent Laxtons development at the other end of the hamlet. This combined with general climate change is only going to get worse so building more homes and removing existing run offs and drainage will compound the flooding issue.</p> <p>There is already a strain on local GP services as we are on the border with Bucks but Bucks GPs are now refusing patients from this area citing county lines. Similarly I note the proposal states there are 4 schools within 2.5 miles but 2 of these are over county lines in Bucks so have no obligation to take children from Herts and of the 2 remaining schools, 1 is a tiny Primary with a limit of 15 children in each year group and the other is an Infant school that then feeds into the same Primary so if each of the residents of these homes have 2 primary school aged children there would not be space to accommodate them all at Long Marston. Additionally there are currently no NHS dentists with availability in the immediate area (we had to register on Leighton Buzzard).</p> <p>There is no public transport to allow access to these local services so the only access would be via car. The roads in this area are in a poor state of repair and are narrow in many places with regular accidents caused by impatient drivers not allowing enough room for others. We are a common cycling route especially on weekends so an increase in cars would be dangerous for the many cyclists we get. Finally, this area is primarily farmland which is actively being farmed, an increase in traffic leads to an increase in cars blocking access to fields, more residents also leads to an increase in people accessing fields with livestock and leaving gates open where they shouldn't, allowing their dogs to roam through crop fields and generally failing to respect the countryside.</p>
<p>Green End Astrope Lane Astrope Tring Hertfordshire HP23 4PN</p>	<p>A hamlet is a small settlement that has no central place of worship and no meeting point such as a village hall. It is a handful of houses dotted along a road or a crossroads, perhaps separated from other settlements by countryside or farmland. Astrope is just this, it has approximately 26 houses of various older designs, including thatched properties, which are separated by large gardens and small fields. I think it is fair to say that the residents of Astrope enjoy the countryside and open spaces. This development is set to change this as I believe it is the thin end of the housing development wedge. Laxtons, the developers, have clearly stated, in open meetings and in their documentation, that they intend to fill in the in-fills. If this is allowed to</p>

happen then the residents of Astrope will no longer be living in a hamlet, instead they will be living in a housing estate.

#### Design of houses and placing

The design of the proposed houses is totally inappropriate for the surrounding area. The 9 houses will be tightly packed around a small square and will have small gardens. Some of these houses will be three stories tall which does not fit in with the hamlet character of Astrope at all. The character of Astrope will be completely spoiled by this 30% increase in housing.

#### Highways - traffic - roads

Astrope Lane is an extremely small, winding, narrow country lane and in places is single track where it is almost impossible to pass oncoming vehicles. It is extremely dangerous to walk down this lane due to its restricted width and blind corners. It is just as dangerous for cyclists where frustrated motorists attempt high-speed overtaking manoeuvres sometimes into the face of oncoming traffic. The exit from the proposed development is approximately 30 yards from the narrowest part of the lane and it is in the middle of an arc of a bend. This will create an extremely dangerous situation where not only will the traffic be pulling out into the narrow part of the road but also with restricted view of oncoming traffic. The required splay for clear vision of oncoming traffic I don't think can be achieved without removing all of the trees and bushes at the front of the plot plus perhaps trees and bushes in adjacent properties.

There is no possibility for families to take their children to school other than by car. It is not possible to walk along the roads to Long Marston or to the local school bus pick-up point in Puttenham, and cycling in rush-hour traffic is not an option worth considering. The footpaths around the rear of properties and across the fields are not maintained in any way so are a nightmare to navigate due to mud and flooding in the winter and overgrown vegetation and nettles in the summer.

#### Flood risk and drainage

The proposed development of 9 houses will have their sewerage output to a treatment plant that will subsequently pump out treated water into a ditch at the rear of the property. This ditch should run into a nearby brook. The brooks, ditches and gullies in this area have not been maintained for decades and are full of falling trees, bushes and undergrowth - they clog up regularly. The ditch that the developers are referring to currently is shown as outside of their property, plus it is mostly filled in. The ditch does not run directly into the brook but travels 70 meters across my property first, then it enters the brook. As mentioned already the ditch is mostly filled in and has some very mature trees growing out of it. I would not give my permission for the developers to dredge this ditch as I do not want the sewerage plant outflow of 9 houses coming across my property. The brook regularly floods during the winter and completely floods my back garden, this would cause any sewerage system feeding into the brook to backup, so the proposed houses would have to stop using their facilities until the water had subsided.

Also, in the event of a power cut, which happens fairly frequently in

Astropes due to trees taking out overhead power cables, then the sewerage plant would cease to function. If this failure of electricity supply were to coincide with a flood (which is highly likely) then neat sewerage would be pumped into the brook and this would also flood my back garden once power had been restored.

#### Conclusion

This is an undesirable development in a beautiful part of the countryside. It would lack access to any local amenities such as schools (already oversubscribed), Doctors surgeries (nearest surgery 2 miles away is in Buckinghamshire and they are no longer accepting patients from Hertfordshire) and shops.

There is insufficient infrastructure in place (brooks, ditches, gullies) to support further housing in this area.

The exit from the proposed site is at an extremely dangerous point on an already overused country lane. The speed limit on this road is not observed by drivers and has never been policed in any way so it is only a matter of time before there are more serious accidents. We have already had head-on collisions and many cars in ditches.

The design of the houses is totally out of keeping with other properties in the area.

I strongly object to this proposed development and I would like permission refused.