



Appeal Decision

Inquiry held 24 February 2026

Site visit made on 25 February 2026

by **P Hanna PGDip MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/W/25/3374132

**Land Adjacent to Amersham Road and Minerva Way (Beeches Park),
Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Catesby Strategic Land and The Portman Estate against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
- The application reference is PL/25/0492/OA.
- The development proposed is outline planning permission for the erection of residential dwellings (Use Class C3), elderly/extra care and/or later living accommodation (Use Class C2 and C3) mobility hubs and a community building (Use Class F2), including public open space, means of vehicular access into the site (not internal roads) and associated infrastructure, with all other matters (relating to appearance, landscaping, scale and layout) reserved.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for outline planning permission for the erection of residential dwellings (Use Class C3), elderly/extra care and/or later living accommodation (Use Class C2 and C3) mobility hubs and a community building (Use Class F2), including public open space, means of vehicular access into the site (not internal roads) and associated infrastructure, with all other matters (relating to appearance, landscaping, scale and layout) reserved at land adjacent to Amersham Road and Minerva Way (Beeches Park), Beaconsfield in accordance with the terms of the application reference PL/25/0492/OA and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Catesby Strategic Land and The Portman Estate against Buckinghamshire Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The application seeks outline planning permission with the principal means of access to be determined at this stage. Appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved matters to be considered in the future. A series of parameters plans have been provided which are to be subject to a condition requiring compliance with these. I have determined the appeal on that basis.
4. A planning obligation pursuant to s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, in the form of a deed of agreement, was discussed at the inquiry. The obligation was signed 11 March 2026. I return to this below.

5. On 9 December 2025 the Council advised that it was withdrawing reasons for refusal one to four, relating to Green Belt, landscape, agricultural land and flood risk. The parties also subsequently agreed the above obligation in respect of the fifth reason for refusal relating to provision of infrastructure and services.
6. The Beaconsfield Society (TBS) were granted Rule 6 party status. Following the Council's change in position, TBS confirmed it would no longer be pursuing its objections, subject to conditions and planning obligations.
7. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken and reported in an Environmental Statement in accordance with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2017. This has been taken into account in making this decision.
8. A previous appeal for development at the site was dismissed in December 2022 for reasons including the development being inappropriate development in the Green Belt and that no very special circumstances existed.¹

Main issues

9. Notwithstanding the change in position of the Council and Rule 6 party, there are objections from interested parties. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to the utilisation of grey belt land;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area;
 - the effect of the proposal on best and most versatile agricultural land;
 - whether there are any reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas at lower risk of flooding; and
 - whether the proposal makes adequate provision for services and infrastructure.

Reasons

10. The appeal site is some 23.8 hectares of agricultural land with woodland, hedgerows and trees bisecting and bordering the site. The eastern edge of Beaconsfield lies to the west of the site, with the Beaconsfield Old Town Conservation Area (BOTCA) to its south west. The southern boundary of the site is adjacent to Minerva Way, now stopped-off to general vehicular traffic and used as a cycle and pedestrian path. To the west and north of the site is Bowl Barrow Way, the eastern relief road for the town, which became operational in 2022. There is an existing access from Bowl Barrow Way to the eastern part of the appeal site.
11. The proposal is for up to 330 dwellings, including the provision of 50% affordable housing and up to 17 custom/self-build plots, 0.76 hectares of later living accommodation, community building and mobility hub, and up to 13.36 hectares of public open space including allotments.
12. The development plan includes the saved policies of the South Bucks District Local Plan (1999)(LP) and the South Bucks District Core Strategy (2011)(CS). The draft Chiltern and South Bucks District Local Plan (dLP) was withdrawn from examination and attracts no weight, albeit that the evidence base for the dLP continues to provide the most recent position for the region's constraints and

¹ Appeal reference APP/N0410/W/22/3299849.

needs and is of significant weight. Whilst a neighbourhood plan for Beaconsfield was prepared in 2024, it did not pass the necessary local referendum.

Green Belt

13. The site is within the Buckinghamshire Green Belt. The proposal is in conflict with saved policy GB1 of the LP relating to Green Belt, which dates back to 2011, as it does not meet any of the criteria under which development would have been permitted at that time. The 2024 revision of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) introduced new provisions for grey belt land within the Green Belt. Grey belt land is defined in the Framework as land that does not contribute strongly towards the purposes of (a), (b) or (d) in paragraph 143, amongst other things. These purposes are to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas, prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another, and preserve the setting and special character of historic towns respectively.
14. The Council and appellant agree that the appeal site does not perform strongly against these purposes, and the evidence base for the dLP indicates that the site would be provisional grey belt.² Interested parties are concerned that the definition of grey belt differs from that stated during the 2024 election campaign, such as poor quality land and wastelands. However, I am required to assess the proposal against the current policy framework.
15. In terms of sprawl, in the previous appeal decision, and before the introduction of grey belt land, the Inspector concluded that the eastern relief road represented a clear and robust defensible boundary that would be capable of restricting further sprawl. I agree. The relief road is an urban feature that would logically and rationally define the settlement edge and check unrestricted development into the surrounding countryside.
16. The nearest neighbouring towns are more than 3.84km distant, and the site forms only a very small fraction of the distance between them and Beaconsfield. The separation gap between neighbouring towns is sufficiently large, and would be adequately protected, such that the site does not contribute strongly to the purpose of preventing the merging of towns.
17. The eastern edge of Beaconsfield includes the BOTCA, located some 95 metres from the appeal site. The significance of this designated heritage asset is discussed further below, where I find that only the immediate countryside to the east forms part of its setting. As views from the appeal site to the conservation area are well screened by trees, the site makes only a limited contribution to significance by way of impact upon setting and does not contribute strongly to the third identified purpose of the Green Belt.
18. The Framework's definition of grey belt land also excludes land where, in summary, areas or assets under footnote 7 would provide a strong reason for refusal. Such an exclusion does not apply here, as I conclude elsewhere in this decision. There is no dispute, with regard to the discussion on housing land supply below, that there is demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed. I have also found below that the development would be in a sustainable location, and would meet the requirements of the Golden Rules.

² The AECOM Draft Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment Main Report (February 2026) identifies that where uncertainty arises as a result of future footnote 7 judgements it is appropriate to conclude the site is provisionally constrained, in line with the PPG which states that it may only be possible to provisionally identify grey belt land in advance of more detailed specific proposals.

19. On this basis, whilst the proposal would be in conflict with the development plan policy on Green Belt, the proposal would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, having regard to the utilisation of grey belt, as set out in the Framework. Accordingly, there is no need for me to go on and make an assessment on openness or very special circumstances.

Character and appearance

Landscape

20. The character and special qualities of the appeal site derive from it being open agricultural land, framed by and bisected by woodland and mature tree belts, albeit influenced by the urban edge of Beaconsfield and the eastern relief road. The Framework recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and interested parties appreciate the site's scenic quality as a cherished part of the community. Nonetheless, the site is not a valued landscape as described in the Framework.
21. The relevant characteristics of the landscape character area for the site (the Beaconsfield Mixed Use Terrace) are its mosaic of land cover and uses, regularly patterned agricultural fields, woodland blocks and smaller wooded areas. Whilst the site itself would be irrevocably changed with the loss of the agricultural fields, the wooded areas on the site would be retained and enhanced, such that the significance of the effect on the landscape would be no more than moderate.

Visual

22. Residents of Amersham Road currently experience views across the agricultural fields at the edge of the settlement, although in some places this view is screened by mature vegetation. The proposed development would bring about a permanent and significant change, with newly built forms eroding the rural edge of the settlement, albeit that this would reduce with the introduction of mitigation planting. The public right of way (PROW) across the northern agricultural fields would also be permanently altered, with buildings of up to 2.5 to 3 storeys in height to the north and 2 to 2.5 storeys to the south, notwithstanding that green infrastructure would provide some softening. For these receptors, the effect of the proposal would be significant, but reduce over the 15 year landscaping maturation period.
23. Recreational users of other PROWs in the locality, including Minerva Way and two to the north east of the site, would experience changes to views across the site, with the introduction of built forms where there would have been fields. However, for both PROWs to the north east, the greatest change would be when close to the site, beyond which the routes are heavily dominated by blocks of woodland, with views to the site being limited by topography and intervening landscape features. Initial views from Minerva Way would similarly change, but predominantly towards 2 storey buildings only, and with the nearest development parcel some 50 metres distant. From the relief road, the full range of heights would be experienced as a new urban edge, but with buffer and gap landscaping as mitigation. The effects on these receptors would be significantly adverse, but intervening landscaping would considerably soften this new edge to the settlement over time.
24. The visual effects of the proposal from other receptors within 250 metres of the site boundary would be very limited in extent, and the parties agree that effects would be contained within this envelope. Although interested parties refer to longer

distance views, from these the site would read as being part of the overall settlement form, contained by the eastern relief road and nearby wooded areas.

Heritage assets

25. There are five designated heritage assets that are potentially sensitive to adverse impacts from the development, these being four Grade II listed buildings at Wilton Park Farm³ and the BOTCA. The buildings at Wilton Park Farm principally derive their significance from their historic interest as 18th century farm buildings. In terms of setting, the agricultural land around these buildings enables the buildings to be understood in their historic context and therefore contributes to significance. However, this does not extend as far as the appeal site which has no strong visual connection with the heritage assets. The significance of the BOTCA derives from the architectural and historic interest of its built form and historic layout. The site does not abut the BOTCA and there is limited visibility of the site from it, such that the site does not contribute to its significance. Overall, any harm arising from the loss of limited agricultural views from the heritage assets would be negligible.
26. I find this harm to be at the lowest end of the scale of less than substantial harm but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. In accordance with the Framework, I give great weight to the conservation of the heritage asset and conclude that the public benefits of the proposal, including the contribution to housing supply addressed below, would outweigh the identified harm.

Design

27. The current proposal can be clearly distinguished from the previous appeal scheme. That earlier scheme was considerably denser, being up to 450 dwellings, and dismissed on grounds including that the design vision failed to fully understand the area's defining characteristics and special qualities. Through introduction of tightly drawn landscaping and design parameters, the current appeal scheme satisfactorily addresses those earlier deficiencies.

Conclusion on character and appearance

28. Although the views from several receptors would be affected, overall, the proposed development would have no more than a moderate adverse effect on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. As such, there is a degree of conflict with policies 8 and 9 of the CS, saved policies EP3 and EP4, and chapter 15 of the Framework, which together require decisions on development to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. I return to this in the planning balance.

Agricultural land

29. The Framework requires planning decisions to recognise the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land (BMV). The site contains some 5.0 hectares of BMV, at the lowest Grade 3a. This amounts to some 21% of the site, over two parcels of land, separated by lower quality agricultural land, woodland, and the public footpath. In the previous appeal, the Inspector concluded that BMV is a factor of very limited negative weight. There have been no material changes in circumstances since that time and, despite the concerns of interested

³ The House (ref. 1332641), the Stables (ref. 1124577), the Granary (ref. 1160749) and the Barn (ref. 1160752).

parties, I see no substantive evidence that would cause me to reach any different conclusion. I return to this in the planning balance.

Flood risk

30. The latest flood mapping indicates a risk of surface water flooding, with two flow routes and localised ponding on the site. A site specific flood risk assessment has been undertaken, and a sustainable drainage strategy has been prepared to manage surface water runoff from within the site, using swales, detention and infiltration basins and trenches, and other features, with a level of redundancy to protect against extreme events. Whilst interested parties are concerned about the existing surface water levels on the site, the assessment and strategy demonstrate clearly that the proposed layout, design and mitigation measures would ensure that occupiers and users would remain safe from current and future flood risk for the lifetime of the development. On this basis, the main parties agree that there is no requirement for a sequential test to be undertaken, with regard to the latest iteration of the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).
31. Therefore, it is not necessary to demonstrate whether there are any reasonably available sites appropriate for the proposed development in areas at lower risk of flooding. The proposal complies with policy CS13 of the CS, chapter 14 of the Framework, and the PPG, which together seek to direct inappropriate development away from areas at the highest risk of flooding.

Other matters

Housing land supply and housing need

32. It is common ground that there is a significant shortfall in housing supply in the area, with the Council accepting it has just a 0.91 year supply of housing sites for the five year period 2024 to 2029, as of 6 May 2025. Whilst the appellant suggests that the position may be even lower, it has not been challenged with evidence. In any case, there is no need, with even the Council acknowledging that this position is “extremely poor”. Indeed, the position has worsened significantly since the previous appeal at this site in 2022, when the Inspector found supply to be 2.02 years, at best, and there is no substantive evidence before me to suggest that the position will improve significantly anytime soon.

Affordable housing and the Golden Rules

33. Only some 19% of affordable housing need has been delivered over the past 12 years in the former South Bucks district, and delivery across Buckinghamshire as a whole is between 29% and 66%. There is a waiting list of almost 6,000 households as of 2023, and as of 2022 a house priced in the lower quartile cost over 11 times a lower quartile salary. In total, there is a minimum shortfall of 3,397 dwellings across Buckinghamshire. Accordingly, there is a significant need for affordable housing. The proposal would secure 50% affordable housing which would, despite the high house prices in the area, comply with the Framework’s definition of affordable housing.
34. In compliance with the Framework’s Golden Rules, the development would also make the necessary improvements to infrastructure, as secured in the planning obligation, and provide good quality new public green spaces within a short walk of

the new homes. The development is therefore given significant weight in favour of the grant of permission.

Sustainable location

35. The appeal site is located on the existing edge of the settlement. A number of sustainable travel and infrastructure measures would be secured, including new pedestrian crossings, advisory cycle lanes, footway widening, mobility hub, car club scheme and new bus stops.
36. Interested parties are concerned that the provision of cycle lanes are too narrow, fragmented and restricted. On London End, advisory cycle routes would be provided which would serve to increase cyclist priority and make drivers more aware of cyclists on this busy historic thoroughfare, notwithstanding the width of just one metre. A wider shared cycle and pedestrian route along Maxwell Road would be provided, albeit that localised narrowing is necessary in places. Car parking could potentially result in some limited conflict on the proposed routes. However, when considering constraints against opportunities, the proposals represent a positive and pragmatic approach.
37. Walking distances to the train station from most of the site would be within the 1.6km recommended by the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation. The town centre, with a range of facilities, is similarly close to the site, and the old town and St Mary & All Saint primary school are closer still. Local facilities that contribute to creating a walkable neighbourhood such as a nursery, café, public house and shops are within some 900 metres, a walk of around 10 to 11 minutes. Regular bus services depart from stops close to the site and additional bus stops would be secured. Overall, the proposal ensures that sustainable transport modes would be prioritised.

Transport

38. Revised parking provision measures and additional road crossings have been suggested by interested parties, including at the primary school. However, such infrastructure would not be required by the additional demands of the development itself. Other identified impacts on the highways network, including at the Pyebush Roundabout, would be addressed by mitigation. The modelling of the Ledborough Lane and Long Bottom Lane intersection with Amersham Road was not considered necessary by the highways authority either during scoping or review of the transport assessment. Traffic speeds along the relief road were also surveyed as part of the transport assessment, notwithstanding speed assumptions in the air quality report. Neither the local highways authority nor National Highways raised any objection, and there is no substantive evidence before me to indicate that these factors represent a failure of the modelling or assessment.
39. Overall, no unacceptable impact on highway safety is anticipated, and the residual cumulative impacts on the road network following mitigation would not be severe.

Ecology

40. The appeal site is located some 3km from the Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated for its Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with Ilex, and with conservation objectives to maintain or restore its integrity. The site is located within the zone of influence of the SAC, and the development is

anticipated to have likely significant effects because of increased recreational use from residents of the proposed development. Mitigation is proposed in the form of a financial contribution which would help to mitigate visitor impact and inform future management. In addition, high-quality open space would be provided to create on-site recreational opportunities for new residents, including a new footpath network, without the need to provide a formal greenspace elsewhere. Overall, the proposed mitigation would prevent likely adverse effects on the SAC.

41. The Council have carried out an appropriate assessment (AA), and Natural England raise no objection to the proposal. I find no reason to disagree and, as there have been no material changes to the scheme or circumstances since then, I therefore adopt the AA for the purposes of this appeal.
42. There is a single veteran tree on site, within the retained woodland corridor. To ensure its longevity and minimise adverse impacts, an increased root protection area is proposed. New habitat for reptiles would be delivered adjacent to the nearby local wildlife site, and ecologically valuable woodland, hedgerows, mature trees and ponds would be mostly retained. No trees with potential bat roosts would be lost, and a sensitive lighting strategy would ensure ecological connectivity and maintain suitable foraging habitat. Compensatory skylark habitat would be delivered off-site, and suitable habitat for reptiles and amphibians would be retained on site. A biodiversity net gain of some 27.65% would be delivered.

Other matters

43. An air quality assessment has been conducted by specialist consultants and reviewed by the Council's environmental protection officer, concluding that predicted operational NO₂, PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} concentrations would be negligible. I give greater weight to this than the concerns raised by interested parties. Hyde Farm has been proposed as an alternative site. However, my remit here is to consider the particular merits of this appeal for planning permission.

Obligation

44. A contribution of 50% affordable housing would be secured by the obligation and is necessary for the reasons discussed above. The affordable housing will include housing for sale or rent (at no more than 80% of the local market rent) including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership or is for essential workers, and an off-site affordable housing contribution is secured where a reserved matters application contains provisions for assisted living units. Open space would be provided, managed and maintained in accordance with a scheme to be agreed, as would the community building.
45. Contributions would be required for construction or enhancement of off-site playing pitches in the vicinity; expansion of primary and secondary school facilities, as well as special education needs, at appropriate locations in the vicinity; season tickets for public transport for residents of the development; monitoring of the biodiversity impact of the development and the habitat management and monitoring plan; the Burnham Beeches contribution discussed above; and improvement of capacity at the appropriate local healthcare centre.
46. Maintenance of the sustainable drainage scheme would be secured in perpetuity. A travel plan would be submitted for approval and monitored for not less than five years. A programme of highway works would be delivered, including off-site

junction improvements and cycleways. An education and skills plan would provide for creation of local jobs and procurement. A management company would be set up for the purposes of managing the open space, SUDS scheme and community building. Arrangements for a car club and mobility hub are to be secured to reduce car use. To serve demand for self-build, serviced plots would be laid out and marketed accordingly. The management of the care units, along with eligibility requirements, would secure appropriate occupancy of the units.

47. BTC are concerned that its own assessment of infrastructure needs has not previously been fully considered by the Council. For the purposes of this appeal proposal, however, BTC and other interested parties participated in the inquiry round table session on infrastructure and services. Even so, I heard no substantive evidence that would cause me to reach a different conclusion on the provisions set out in the obligation.
48. Overall, I am satisfied that the obligations are necessary, directly related to the development, and fairly related in scale and kind. They comply with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) and paragraph 58 of the Framework.

Conditions

49. A list of suggested conditions was circulated before the inquiry, followed by correspondence on revisions, and discussion at the event. Amendments have been made to the wording of some conditions for clarity or brevity, and to ensure accordance with the tests set out in paragraph 57 of the Framework.
50. Conditions relating to submission of reserved matters, compliance with parameters and other plans, phasing, and quantum of development are necessary for certainty (conditions 1 to 4, 7 and 8). Submission of a design code, strategic landscaping plan, levels, materials, landscaping scheme and tree protection are required to protect the character and appearance of the area and secure high quality design (conditions 5, 6, 10 to 12, and 18). To meet climate change ambitions, conditions requiring details of sustainable design and energy efficiency measures are imposed (conditions 9 and 19). To minimise environmental risks, further ground investigations and measures are necessary (conditions 13 and 25).
51. Conditions for a construction environmental management plan (CEMP), habitat management and monitoring plan, skylark compensation scheme, scheme of ecological enhancement, reptile mitigation strategy, and sensitive lighting scheme are required for the protection of ecological interests (conditions 14 and 20 to 24). However, a suggested clause in the CEMP for highways surveys has not been imposed as surveys would not, in the absence of any subsequently required remedial measures, be necessary or relevant to the development. To ensure the site is suitably serviced, conditions for the management of foul and surface water are imposed (conditions 15, 26 and 27). A construction traffic management plan is necessary to protect the living conditions of nearby residents (condition 16). Given the potential for archaeological remains within the site, a programme of archaeological works is justified (condition 17).

Planning balance

52. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the

development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Framework is a material consideration, and this states that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Council is unable to demonstrate that it has a five year housing supply. Therefore, paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is triggered, and my above findings indicate that, in terms of footnote 7 of paragraph 11(d), there are no policies in the Framework of relevance to this appeal that protect areas or assets of particular importance that provide a strong reason for refusal. In ascribing weight to the planning balance, the scale used is; limited, moderate, significant and substantial.

53. In terms of harms, the proposal is in conflict with the development plan overall. The conflict with development plan policy relating to the Green Belt is given limited weight, given its lack of compliance with the Framework and grey belt policy. Other harm is derived from the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area, to which I give moderate weight. As discussed above, the heritage harm is less than substantial and is outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal, including the provision of housing. The loss of best and most versatile agricultural land is a harm of only very limited weight.
54. Turning to the benefits of the proposal, compliance with the Golden Rules attracts significant weight in favour of the grant of planning permission. The provision of up to 330 residential dwellings including up to 165 affordable houses and up to 17 self-build dwellings would, when taken together, make a considerable contribution to housing supply in the area. This is afforded substantial weight. The delivery of later living accommodation attracts significant weight, as would the provision of generous open space with increased public access and biodiversity net gain of some 27%. The economic benefits of the proposal, including construction jobs and the increased economic output from new residents, is of moderate weight. The provision of a mobility hub and community centre attract moderate weight.
55. Drawing together the above harms and benefits, the adverse effects of the proposed development would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. The proposal therefore benefits from the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Although the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, material considerations indicate a decision other than in accordance with it.

Conclusion

56. For the reasons given above the appeal is allowed.

P Hanna

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Rupert Warren KC, instructed by Savills.

He called:

Michael Davies MRTPI	Savills
Andrew Williams CMLI DipUD	Define
Edward Barrett MRTPI	Catesby Estates
Matthew Nixon	Shoosmiths LLP
Adrian Forte MCIHT	Mode Transport

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Nick Grant, instructed by Buckinghamshire Council.

He called:

Laura Lee Briggs	Assistant Team Leader Planning and Highways
Fiona Jones	Cameron Jones Planning
Rachel Marber	Strategic Technical Lead Planning Growth

FOR THE BEACONSFIELD SOCIETY:

Ed Grant, instructed by The Beaconsfield Society

INTERESTED PARTIES:

Joy Morrissey MP	Member of Parliament
Cllr Paul Mason	Beaconsfield Town Council
Alexa Collins	Beaconsfield Town Council
Dennis Elsey	Local Residents Group and local resident
Bruce Goodwin	Local resident
Simon Iley	Local resident

INQUIRY DOCUMENTS

INQ1 - Appellants Opening Statement
INQ2 - Councils Opening Statement
INQ3 - Rule 6 Opening Statement
INQ4 - Beaconsfield Town Council additional statement (Cllr Mason)
INQ5a - Residents group statement
INQ5b - Residents group photographs
INQ6 - Local resident statement (Mr Elsey)
INQ6b - Local resident heritage portal maps (Mr Elsey)
INQ7 - Appellant response to Draft Green Belt Assessment
INQ8 - Appellant response to Mr Elsey's site visit comments
INQ9 - Appellant highways response to Beaconsfield Town Council statement
INQ10 - Final draft s106 planning obligation
INQ11 - Webpage extract: The Local Plan for Buckinghamshire
INQ12 - Beaconsfield Town Council additional statement (Ms Collins)
INQ13 - Local resident statement (Mr Iley)
INQ14 - CIL Compliance Schedule (updated)
INQ15 - S106 Comparison Document
INQ16 - Education Forward Plan (Education 106)
INQ17 - Affordable Housing SPD
INQ18 - Wilton Park Care Appeal Completed S106
INQ19 - Appellants Cost Application
INQ20 - Appellants Closing Statement

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) Details of the appearance, landscaping, layout (including internal circulation routes) and scale (hereinafter called 'the reserved matters') for each phase of development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before any development on that phase takes place and the development shall be carried out as approved.
- 2) All reserved matters applications shall be in accordance with the following plans:
 - (i) Site Location Plan (ref: 7a);
 - (ii) Parameter Plan 1- Land Use (ref: DE594_24 Rev D);
 - (iii) Parameter Plan 2 - Building Heights (ref: DE594_25 Rev D);
 - (iv) Parameter Plan 3 - Access / Movement (ref: DE594_26 Rev E);
 - (v) Parameter Plan 4 - Green / Blue Infrastructure (ref: DE594_27 Rev F);
 - (vi) Access General Arrangement Sheet 1 (ref: AR-MI-GEN-XX-DR-C-0101 P02); and
 - (vii) Access General Arrangement Sheet 2 (ref: AR-MI-GEN-XX-DR-C-0102 P03);
- 3) Within 12 months of the date of this planning permission a Phasing Plan shall be submitted for approval in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Phasing Plan shall show the scale and phased sequence of build out including the relationship of dwellings to the delivery of infrastructure and Reserved Matters Submission. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed Phasing Plan.
- 4) The applications for the approval of the reserved matters for the first phase of development (as defined within the agreed Phasing Plan) shall be made to the local planning authority:
 - (i) before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission; or
 - (ii) within 12 months of the approval in writing of the Phasing Plan by the local planning authority, whichever of these is the later.
- 5) No applications for the approval of reserved matters shall be submitted until an updated Design Code covering the whole site which builds on the strategic principles set out in the Design & Access Statement (Define, February 2025), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Reserved matters applications for each phase shall thereafter be designed in accordance with the approved Design Code.
- 6) No applications for the approval of reserved matters shall be submitted until a strategic landscaping plan for the entire site shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategic landscape plan shall have consideration to the site-wide landscaping principles included within the Design and Access Statement and Illustrative Framework Plan (ref: DE594_200 Rev I). Reserved matters applications for each phase shall thereafter be designed in accordance with the approved strategic landscaping plan.
- 7) The total number of dwellings excluding elderly/extra care and/or later living accommodation (Use Class C2 and C3) hereby approved shall not exceed 330 dwellings.

- 8) The number of elderly/extra care and/or later living accommodation (Use Class C2 and C3) shall not exceed 60 units.
- 9) Each reserved matters application shall include details for approval of the measures for embedded sustainable design and energy efficiency for that phase. No building within the relevant phase shall be occupied until these have been incorporated (into its construction) in accordance with those approved details. The approved measures shall thereafter be retained.
- 10) No development shall take place until drawings that identify the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
 - (i) existing ground levels on site (spot heights) including a datum point that is located off site. Levels should be Above Ordnance Datum (AOD);
 - (ii) the level of the roads outside the site (AOD);
 - (iii) the proposed levels on site (for each existing height a proposed height should be identified on a contour drawing);
 - (iv) the location and type of any retaining structures needed to support ground level changes;
 - (v) the Finished Floor Level for every building that is proposed;
 - (vi) cross sections within the site taken up to the site boundaries, which should clearly identify if land levels are being raised or lowered.The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved details.
- 11) No development within a phase shall take place until a schedule and / or samples of the external facing materials and finishes for the development have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the development within that phase shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details.
- 12) No development of any phase shall commence until a fully detailed hard and soft landscaping scheme for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall include details of all new planting species, sizes, and densities; trees to be retained; hard surfacing and permanent seating; and details of provision for tree planting. The scheme shall also include a sub-phasing plan/timetable for the implementation of the hard and soft landscaping. Thereafter the development shall be landscaped and planted in accordance with the approved scheme and any trees, plants or areas of turfing or seeding which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the local planning authority first gives written consent to any variation.
- 13) No development within any phase shall take place until an assessment of the risks posed by any contamination, based on the Phase 1 Geo-Environmental Assessment (Document ref. 232488-BWB-EGT-XX-RP-LE-0001_DS) and the Geo-Environmental Assessment (Document ref. 232488-BWB-EGT-XX-RP-LE-0002_Ph2) prepared by BWB Consulting, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. If any contamination is found, no development shall take place until:

- (i) a report specifying the measures to be taken, including the timescale, to remediate the site to render it suitable for the development hereby permitted has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority;
- (ii) the site has been remediated in accordance with the approved measures and timescale; and
- (iii) a verification report has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved remediation measures prior to first occupation.

- 14) No development shall take place within any phase of the development (including ground works and vegetation clearance) until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP (Biodiversity)) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority for that phase. The CEMP (Biodiversity) shall include the following:

- (i) risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities;
- (ii) identification of biodiversity protection zones including off-site receptors;
- (iii) practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements);
- (iv) updated bat surveys where potential roost features (suitable for supporting multiple bats i.e. a maternity roost) have been identified at the time remedial measures are required to trees within the site;
- (v) the location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features;
- (vi) the times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to oversee works;
- (vii) responsible persons and lines of communication;
- (viii) the role and responsibilities on site of an Ecological Clerk of Works or similarly competent person; and
- (ix) use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

The approved CEMP (Biodiversity) shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period strictly in accordance with the approved details.

- 15) No development shall take place within any phase until a surface water drainage scheme for that phase, based on Flood Risk Assessment (PL_25_0492_OA-ES_VOL_2_-_APPENDIX_10.1, January 2025, BWB) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before development within that phase is completed. The scheme shall also include:

- (i) water quality assessment demonstrating that the total pollution mitigation index equals or exceeds the pollution hazard index; priority should be given to above ground SuDS components;
- (ii) ground investigations including infiltration in accordance with BRE Digest 365 and groundwater level monitoring over the winter period (from November until March);
- (iii) floatation calculations based on groundwater levels encountered during winter monitoring (November-March);
- (iv) full construction details of all SuDS and drainage components;

- (v) detailed drainage layout with pipe numbers, gradients, and pipe sizes complete, together with storage volumes of all SuDS components;
 - (vi) calculations of existing (greenfield) and proposed discharge rates;
 - (vii) calculations to demonstrate that the proposed drainage system can contain up to the 1 in 30 storm event without flooding. Any onsite flooding between the 1 in 30 and the 1 in 100 plus climate change storm event should be safely contained on site; and
 - (viii) details of proposed overland flood flow routes in the event of system exceedance or failure, with demonstration that such flows can be appropriately managed on site without increasing flood risk to occupants, or to adjacent or downstream sites.
- 16) No development shall take place within each phase of the development until a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) for that relevant phase which includes the following details has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority:
- (i) construction phasing of the development;
 - (ii) construction access;
 - (iii) the proposed construction traffic routes to the site, to be identified on a plan which takes into account the Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation, including hours of work;
 - (iv) proposed site security measures to remain in place during the construction of the site, to be identified on a plan;
 - (v) an estimate of the daily movement of the construction traffic, profiled for each construction phase, identifying the peak level of vehicle movements for each day including an agreed daily maximum for HGV movements;
 - (vi) management and timing of deliveries;
 - (vii) vehicle parking for site operatives and visitors;
 - (viii) site compound;
 - (ix) storage of materials;
 - (x) dust management plan to include the measures described in Section 8.2 of the Institute Air Quality Management 'Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction';
 - (xi) precautions to prevent the deposit of mud and debris on the adjacent highway;
 - (xii) mitigation measures in respect of noise and disturbance during the construction phase including vibration and noise limits, monitoring methodology, screening, a detailed specification of plant and equipment to be used and construction traffic routes;
 - (xiii) storage and dispensing of fuels, chemicals, oils and any hazardous materials (including hazardous soils);
 - (xiv) soil management plan;
 - (xv) proposed maintenance and aftercare of the site setting out a strategy for revegetating the site as soon as practicable; and
 - (xvi) details of stakeholder/public communications plan, including contact details of personnel responsible.
- The development hereby permitted shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved CTMP.
- 17) No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work (which may take place over a number of phases) in accordance with one or a number of

written schemes of investigation which have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall only be implemented in accordance with the approved written scheme(s) of investigation.

- 18) No development within a phase shall take place until a detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement for each phase as set out in the approved outline Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development of each phase shall be implemented in accordance with these documents and under the supervision of a retained arboricultural specialist.
- 19) No development shall take place on any relevant phase until an energy statement demonstrating how on-site renewable or low-carbon energy provision (including its distribution and full operational management systems) will be incorporated into the design and construction of the development within that phase, to provide at least 10% of the energy supply of the development secured from renewable or low-carbon energy sources, including details of physical works on site, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The measures in the energy statement shall be implemented as approved prior to the first occupation of any relevant building or use.
- 20) No development shall take place on any phase until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for that relevant phase which details, in full, how the habitat creation and enhancement (identified as a Community Nature Reserve, including the woodland) will be established, managed and monitored for no less than 30 years, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The HMMP will be in general accordance with the submitted draft BNG Report (January 2025) and will be supported by updated ecological surveys where relevant. The HMMP will include:
 - (i) current soil conditions (to include N, P, K and Ph) of any areas designated for habitat creation where the soil status could impact the outcome;
 - (ii) details of capital works required to establish the habitat(s);
 - (iii) details of both species composition and abundance where planting is to occur;
 - (iv) specific management prescriptions for all habitats for a period of no less than 30 years;
 - (v) assurances of achievability;
 - (vi) timetable of delivery for all habitats; and
 - (vii) timetable of future ecological monitoring to ensure that all habitats achieve their proposed management condition as well as description of a feed-back mechanism by which the management prescriptions can be amended should the monitoring deem it necessary. All ecological monitoring and all recommendations for the maintenance/amendment of future management shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority;
 - (viii) details of the responsible organisation who will undertake the management and monitoring; and
 - (ix) details of how the long-term management and monitoring will be funded.The development shall be undertaken and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved HMMP.

- 21) No development shall take place on any relevant phase until a Skylark Compensation Scheme for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall:
- (i) identify the specific locations of measures that will be undertaken to enhance the wider area for skylark; and
 - (ii) be sufficient to compensate for the loss of 7 skylark territories from the development site.
- The development shall be implemented in accordance with the measures set out in the approved compensation scheme.
- 22) No development shall take place on any relevant phase until a Scheme of Ecological Enhancement showing the location and specifications of integrated bird and bat boxes (on 25% of units), hedgehog highways, hibernacula, 15 log-piles, 5 insect hotels and other wildlife features to be installed within that relevant phase has been submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The features shall thereafter be installed and maintained in line with the agreed scheme.
- 23) No development shall take place on any relevant phase until a Reptile Mitigation Strategy for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme shall:
- (i) identify the areas or features within the site that are suitable for reptiles;
 - (ii) identify the areas to be enhanced for reptiles ahead of commencement;
 - (iii) specify the method of moving or translocating the reptiles from the construction areas;
 - (iv) specify specific measures to protect reptiles during construction; and
 - (v) provide for the long-term favourable conservation of reptiles at the site.
- The development shall be implemented in accordance with the measures set out in the agreed strategy.
- 24) No development shall take place on any relevant phase until a Sensitive Lighting Scheme for wildlife for that phase has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme will ensure that the central woodland belt and other sensitive areas remain dark. The scheme shall:
- (i) identify those areas/features on site that are particularly sensitive for nocturnal wildlife such as bats and that are likely to cause disturbance in or around their breeding sites and resting places or along important routes used to access key areas of their territory, for example, for foraging, and
 - (ii) show how and where external lighting will be installed (through the provision of appropriate lighting contour plans and technical specifications) so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent the above species using their territory, commuting or having access to their breeding sites and resting places.
- All external lighting within that phase shall be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy.
- 25) If, during development, contamination not previously identified is found to be present at the site, the local planning authority is to be informed immediately and no further development shall be carried out until a report indicating the nature of the contamination and how it is to be dealt with is submitted to, and agreed in

writing by, the local planning authority. The required remediation shall be detailed in an amendment to the remediation statement and verification of these works included in the verification report.

- 26) Prior to first occupation of each phase, a whole-life maintenance plan for the surface water drainage for the site shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority for that phase. The plan shall set out how and when to maintain the full drainage system (e.g. a maintenance schedule for each drainage/SuDS component) during and following construction, with details of who is to be responsible for carrying out the maintenance. The plan shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details.
- 27) Prior to first occupation, either of the following shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.
- (i) confirmation that foul water capacity exists off site to serve the development, or
 - (ii) a development and infrastructure phasing plan, or
 - (iii) confirmation that all foul water network upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed.
- The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

End of Schedule



Costs Decision

Inquiry held on 24 February 2026

Site visit made on 25 February 2026

by **P Hanna PGDip MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 March 2026

Costs application in relation to Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/W/25/3374132 Land Adjacent to Amersham Road and Minerva Way (Beeches Park), Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire

- The application is made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, sections 78, 320 and Schedule 6, and the Local Government Act 1972, section 250(5).
 - The application is made by Catesby Strategic Land and The Portman Estate for a full award of costs against Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The inquiry was in connection with an appeal against the refusal of outline planning permission for the erection of residential dwellings (Use Class C3), elderly/extra care and/or later living accommodation (Use Class C2 and C3) mobility hubs and a community building (Use Class F2), including public open space, means of vehicular access into the site (not internal roads) and associated infrastructure, with all other matters (relating to appearance, landscaping, scale and layout) reserved.
-

Decision

1. The application for an award of costs is refused.

Reasons

2. Parties in planning appeals normally meet their own expenses. However, the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that costs may be awarded against a party who has behaved unreasonably and thereby caused the party applying for costs to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process. The applicant has applied for a full award of costs on the grounds that the Council demonstrated unreasonable behaviour in refusing an application which should clearly have been granted planning permission with reference to paragraph 049 of the PPG.
3. The aim of the costs regime includes encouraging local planning authorities to properly exercise their development management responsibilities and to rely only on reasons which stand up to scrutiny on the planning merits of the case.
4. The application for planning permission was originally recommended for approval by officers, taking into account revisions made in response to an earlier scheme dismissed at appeal.¹ In August 2025, the Council then refused permission for five reasons relating to Green Belt, landscape and visual effects, agricultural land, flooding, and infrastructure and services requirements. The appeal was started in October 2025 and, in December 2025, the Council withdrew its first four reasons for refusal and advised that the fifth could be agreed following negotiations, such that the Council considered planning permission should now be granted.

¹ Appeal decision APP/N0410/W/22/3299849 dated December 2022.

First reason for refusal – Green Belt

5. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) introducing the utilisation of grey belt land, and the updated PPG on the application of the grey belt policy, were published in December 2024 and February 2025. The policy framework had therefore been in place for some six months at the time of the officer report and committee decision, and the officer report applies that policy framework using planning judgement. Elected members were also entitled to use their own judgement in reaching a different conclusion on this matter, so long as the reasoning for refusal could be substantiated.
6. In reaching its decision, the Council indicates that the officer report before them dealt with the matter only in short form in two key respects, in terms of the Green Belt purpose of checking unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.
7. Firstly, the report states that the eastern relief road “*could*” contain development not ‘*would*’. Although the use of subjunctives is not uncommon in the assessment of planning proposals, I accept that the use of this term could also potentially be interpreted as indicating a degree of dubiety. Secondly, and related to the first point, is the asserted incongruity of the pattern of development in terms of Amersham Road providing a clearly defined and rational edge to the settlement. This is a matter where there is a level of subjectivity, and the Council is not unreasonable to have found that the site could contribute to being a finger of development when taken with the ongoing Wilton Park site, with regard to the illustrative features of grey belt in the PPG.
8. This is, therefore, ultimately a matter of planning judgement, notwithstanding the rigorous work done by the appellant to address the design and landscaping concerns arising from the previous appeal. Although in my appeal decision I found, in agreement with the officer report, that the site did not strongly contribute to the identified Green Belt purposes, I nonetheless accept that it was not unreasonable for elected members to have reached the conclusion that they did.
9. The AECOM Draft Buckinghamshire Green Belt Assessment (GBA) was published in the week before the inquiry. But the Council indicate it was made aware of its finding that the site would be provisional grey belt in early November 2025 and, shortly before the Case Management Conference in early December, elected members revisited their position and decided not to defend the appeal. I am satisfied that this chain of events demonstrates that the Council had, in light of the emerging evidence base, correctly withdrew its reason for refusal relating to the Green Belt. The GBA does therefore reasonably account for the change in position, notwithstanding the relevance to this appeal of subsequent appeal decisions or legal judgements, and the significance of the change to national policy.

Other reasons for refusal

10. A sequential test to demonstrate that there were no reasonably available sites for the proposed development in areas with a lower risk of flooding was required by the PPG at the time of the Council’s decision. However, the weight to be given to the lack of a sequential test was at that time a matter of planning judgement, notwithstanding that the risks from surface water flooding were assessed by the officer report as being capable of being suitably managed and not identified as a strong reason for refusal under footnote 7 of the Framework. Accordingly, elected

members were reasonably entitled to reach the conclusion that they did. Then, in September 2025, the PPG was revised to emphasise that a proportionate approach should be taken, in summary, that the test would not be required where a site specific flood risk assessment demonstrates clearly that users would remain safe from flooding. Following that change, the Council rightly kept its position under review and withdrew its objection on this ground.

11. The appellant argues that this and the other reasons for refusal represent a cascade. Namely, that once the grey belt reason for refusal had been withdrawn, the other reasons for refusal only fell away because they were insufficiently robust to stand on their own. The other reasons relate to landscape and visual effects, agricultural land and flood risk. Again, these are matters to which planning judgement can be applied. Although in my appeal decision, I agreed with the planning merits of the relevant arguments put forward by the appellant in these respects, this does not mean that different conclusions are in themselves unreasonable. Thereafter, the Council, having reviewed new evidence, was entitled to reassess the planning balance in the round, as it did, and to conclude that the proposal could now be supported.
12. In conclusion, whilst I have found in my appeal decision that the proposal should be allowed, it does not follow that the development should clearly have been granted permission. Therefore, unreasonable behaviour resulting in unnecessary or wasted expense has not occurred and an award of costs is not warranted.

P Hanna

INSPECTOR