

LAND NORTH OF CHALFONT ROAD MAPLE CROSS



A briefing for Three Rivers District Council Planning Committee

Outline Planning Application: 25/0484/OUT

December 2025



Before submitting the outline planning application, we undertook a comprehensive programme of stakeholder and community engagement. This included meetings with local councillors, community representatives, and council officers, as well as a public exhibition which provided residents with the opportunity to view, discuss, and comment on the proposals ahead of submission. Through this constructive and ongoing dialogue, the proposals have been shaped to ensure the development responds meaningfully to the needs of Maple Cross.

The scheme represents a significant Community and Social Value opportunity by delivering:



Up to 75 much needed and sustainable new homes, including **50% affordable housing**.



Publicly accessible **green spaces (44%** of the site), including a **children's play area**.



Delivery of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in excess of 10%.



New vehicle and pedestrian access from Chalfont Road, designed to prioritise **safety and efficiency**.



Policy compliant **on-site car parking**, including **visitor** and **reduced mobility spaces**.



New **footpath links** to the wider PRoW and permitted footpath network.



Sustainable and High Quality Homes

- Up to **75 new homes**, designed to be energy-efficient and climate responsive to sensitive local built character.
- A diverse mix of homes to meet local housing needs, including **50% affordable housing**.
- Homes designed with sustainable construction methods, incorporating **solar panels and heat pumps**.



Landscape-Led Design and Green Infrastructure

- Retention of existing trees and hedgerows, plus new biodiversity enhancements.
- Creation of publicly accessible green spaces (**44%** of the site), including a **children's play area**.
- Delivery of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in **excess of 10%**, with new hedgerow planting, tree planting, and habitat corridors.



Sustainable Transport and Connectivity

- A **new vehicle access** from Chalfont Road, designed to prioritise safety and efficiency.
- **New Footpath** link for new and existing residents through the site to the permitted footpath network.
- Widened pavements and providing of new **safe pedestrian routes** to key local amenities.
- On-site **EV charging points** and **cycle storage** to promote low-carbon travel.



Flood Risk and Drainage Management

- **Incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**, including swales and basins to manage surface water.
- **Flood risk mitigation** measures ensuring no increase in runoff or water-related issues.
- **Improvements to off-site surface water and flooding** experienced by existing residents on Chalfont Road and Oakhill Road through the positive design within our proposals.



Community and Local Benefits

- New footpath links to the **wider PRoW** and permitted footpath network.
- A well-integrated extension to Maple Cross, maintaining a strong relationship with the existing settlement.
- New **green spaces** for recreation, relaxation, and social interaction.
- **Job creation** and economic benefits during construction.
- Design that responds to local character, ensuring a **high-quality** and visually attractive neighbourhood.

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION CONCERNS

Following extensive consultation and engagement with stakeholders and the local community throughout the pre-planning process, some concerns were highlighted and have been responded to by the project team.

LOSS OF VIEWS

- **Loss of views for residents whose gardens look out over the site from Oakhill Road.**

Whilst the details of the layout are illustrative at this time, the parameter plans accommodate garden depths/distances in accordance with LPA guidance, to ensure homes are ‘set back’ from the eastern boundary a sufficient distance to avoid overlooking.

Whilst the final details of the layout would be approved through a reserved matters application, the illustrative layout demonstrates semi-detached and detached proposed homes rather than terraces, to enable long views and ‘visual porosity’ through the layout.

NO OBJECTION FROM: Three Rivers DC – Landscape Officer

LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE

- **School places, GP Surgery and Dentists.**
- **General lack of shops, pub & restaurants.**
- **Poor public transport.**

A Section 106 Agreement will be entered into between the Applicant and Three Rivers District Council and will include any appropriate contributions to mitigate the development.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

- **Increase in traffic using Chalfont Road to Denham Way.**
- **Maple Cross gridlocked at peak times.**
- **Chalfont Road (to and from Chalfont) impacted by issues M25.**
- **HGV’s unsuitable for Chalfont Road. Poor junction with Chalfont Road and Oakhill Road.**

The access arrangements have been designed in accordance with Hertfordshire’s ‘Highways Place & Movement Planning & Design Guide’, with a 5.5-metre-wide carriageway and 6 metre kerb radii allowing two-way vehicle movement. Chalfont Road will be widened to 5.5 metres within the vicinity of the site access to allow two HGVs to pass. Visibility splays based on recorded traffic speeds along Chalfont Road are achievable within the site boundary or highway land. The internal road network has been designed in accordance with Hertfordshire’s ‘Highways Place & Movement Planning & Design Guide’.

The Transport Assessment includes detailed junction capacity assessments at the site access and Chalfont Road/Denham Way junction. The conclusion of the analysis indicates that the proposed development will have a negligible impact on the junction and will not result in a severe impact to the operation of the local highway network.

Emergency access to the site will be taken from Chalfont Road via the proposed access.

NO OBJECTION FROM: Hertfordshire CC as Highway Authority.

DRAINAGE AND FLOOD RISK

- **Current drainage systems can’t cope.**
- **Houses on Chalfont Road already prone to flooding (water and sewage).**

The design team carried out detailed flood modelling in close coordination with the local council and LLFA. The modelling confirmed that all proposed properties will remain safe during the 1% AEP event plus climate change allowance, with adequate freeboard provided.

The hydraulic modelling also showed there to be a reduction in flood depths downstream of the proposed development, resulting in betterment to the existing properties on Chalfont Road (East of the proposed development). This is due to the development’s proposed on-site flood storage, in addition to the SuDS proposed to serve the housing areas. The hydraulic flood modelling has been submitted and approved by the LLFA.

As the development will increase surface-water runoff, a sustainable drainage strategy incorporating SuDS will be implemented. These SuDS will attenuate, treat, and infiltrate runoff, while maximising opportunities for habitat creation. Measures will include permeable paving, rain gardens, and swales, draining to infiltration basins or ponds. This will ensure water quality is appropriately treated before discharge to the Thames Water sewer, which has confirmed capacity in Chalfont Road.

All drainage will be designed in line with LLFA requirements and environmental assessment standards.

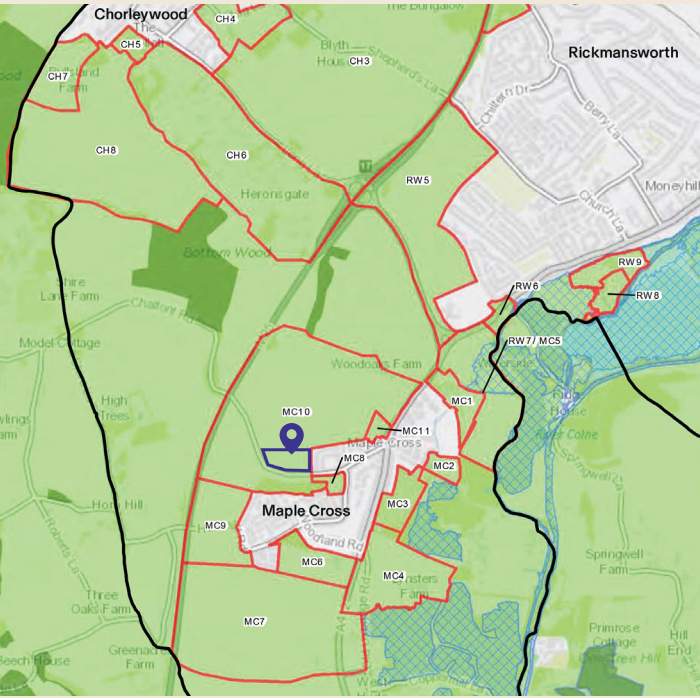
NO OBJECTIONS FROM: LLFA , Thames Water and Affinity Water.

LIST OF STATUTORY CONSULTEE RESPONSES

Statutory Consultee	Response
Hertfordshire CC - Highways	NO OBJECTION
Hertfordshire CC - LLFA	NO OBJECTION
Three Rivers DC – Housing Services	NO OBJECTION
Affinity Water Asset Sustainability and Thames Water	NO OBJECTION
Hertfordshire CC – Flood Risk Management Team	NO OBJECTION
Three Rivers DC – Landscape Officer	NO OBJECTION
Hertfordshire CC - Ecology	NO OBJECTION
Hertfordshire CC – Minerals & Waste Policy Team	NO OBJECTION
British Pipeline Agency Ltd	NO OBJECTION
Hertfordshire CC – Archaeology NS	NO OBJECTION
Three Rivers DC – Local Plans Section	NO OBJECTION

LANDSCAPE, VISUAL AND GREEN BELT ASSESSMENT

The site forms a very small portion of the larger Green Belt parcel identified as MC10 in the Three Rivers District Green Belt Review (Stage 2) (2019), which evaluates the whole parcel.



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|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Parcel Boundary | Scheduled Monument |
| Green Belt | Ancient Woodland |
| District Boundary | National Nature Reserve |
| Flood Zone 3b | SSSI |
| Local Nature Reserve | Common Land |
| Registered Parks and Gardens | Application Site |

The submitted fabrik Green Belt Assessment (GBA) evaluates the site’s contribution to the Green Belt purposes in more detail and at a finer grain than the Stage 2 Review. It concludes that development would reduce openess in a small part of the Green Belt that makes a minimal contribution to its strategic function.

The proposals include mitigation measures, as recommended in the LPA’s Green Belt Assessments, to reduce harm by creating a clear and robust settlement edge. This includes a new boundary with green infrastructure to improve the interface with the remaining Green Belt to the west and north. The site is further contained by local landform and the M25 corridor.

In summary, some localised harm to openess and Purpose C is identified. However, given the absence of harm to Purposes A, B, and D, and when considered across the wider plan area, the development can be accommodated without undermining the overall purposes of the Green Belt at the district level.

The site’s contribution to Green Belt Purposes and Mitigation Strategies are summarised below.



Contribution to Green Belt Purposes

Purpose A: To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.
The site is not adjacent to a “large built-up area” as defined by published Local Authority evidence base. There is little to no defensible boundary adjacent to the built-up area. There is clear potential for a new defensible boundary to be established within the site to prevent pressure on

adjacent land. The site on its own therefore makes no contribution to this strategic purpose.

Purpose B: To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another.
The site forms a very small part of a wide area of Green Belt between Maple Cross, Chalfont St Giles to the west and Mill End to the north. None of these settlements are towns in the definition of terms as included within the published Stage 1 GB Assessment. In addition, there is no intervisibility between the site and any other adjacent settlement beyond Maple Cross. The site therefore makes no contribution to this purpose.

Purpose C: To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment.
Whilst the site contains open land with an absence of built development and is characterised by a sense of rurality, the site is small in scale and experiences urbanising influences from the dwellings at Oakhill Road to the immediate east. The site therefore makes a modest contribution to this purpose.

Purpose D: To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns.
The site does not form part of the setting of a historic town and as such makes no contribution to this purpose.

As such, the site makes no contribution to purposes A, B and D, and a moderate contribution to purpose C, at the Site level

Mitigation

The Proposed Development includes the following measures to reduce harm to Green Belt function:

- Structural planting along the western and northern boundaries to create a clear edge and maintain separation between urban and open land. Once established, this planting will form a strong natural screen to reduce the perception of urbanisation.
- Varied building densities from east to west to provide a gradual transition from urban to rural.
- Public open space at the western edge, overlooked by homes, to create a positive interface with the wider Green Belt.
- Enhanced mature hedgerow along the southern boundary to strengthen its character.
- Access located to minimise the sense of urbanisation.
- Sustainable drainage features integrated with planting at the western edge to reinforce separation between settlement and countryside.
- New footpaths through open spaces connecting to existing public rights of way, improving access to the wider Green Belt.

Considering the site’s contribution to the Green Belt purposes as described above, the development proposals and embedded mitigation strategies, no harm is judged to purposes A, B and D, and modest harm is judged at the site level only.

Given the site’s small scale and discrete location, the development can be accommodated without compromising the overall purposes of the remaining Green Belt within Three Rivers District.

APPROACH TO GREY BELT

The NPPF defines ‘Grey Belt’ “as land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) in paragraph 143.”

The diagram below sets out the relevant criteria which need to be met in order for the site to qualify as Grey Belt.

As set out within the previous section, it is evident that the site does not strongly contribute to the relevant Green Belt purposes (a, b, and d).

Regarding the second criterion (footnote 7), no technical issues have been raised which would amount to a strong reason for refusing the application.

Therefore, as identified above, the site can be classified as Grey Belt.

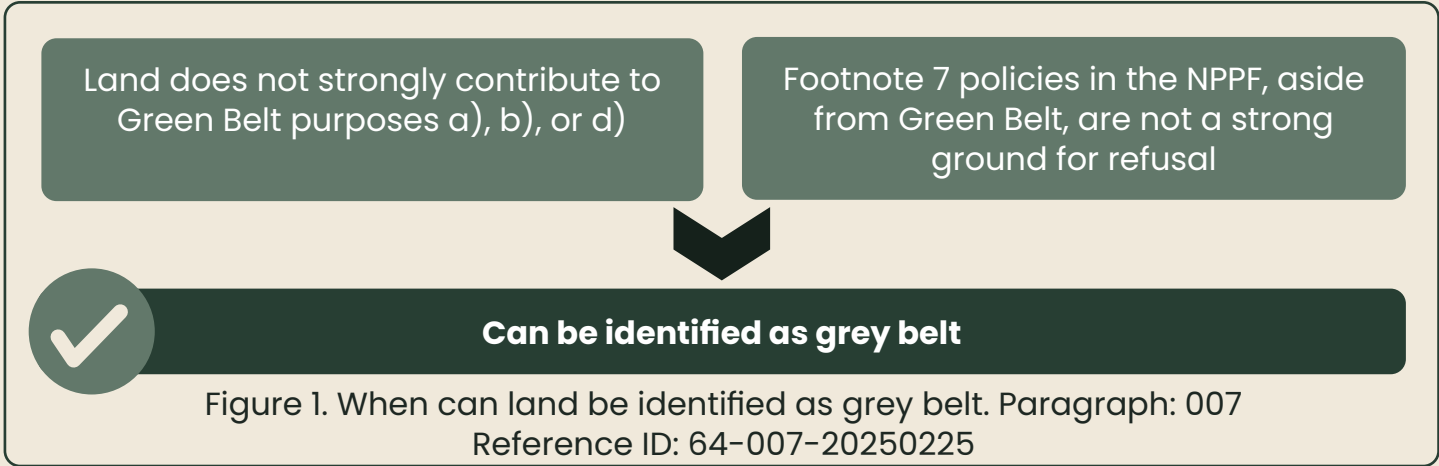


Figure 1. When can land be identified as grey belt. Paragraph: 007
Reference ID: 64-007-20250225

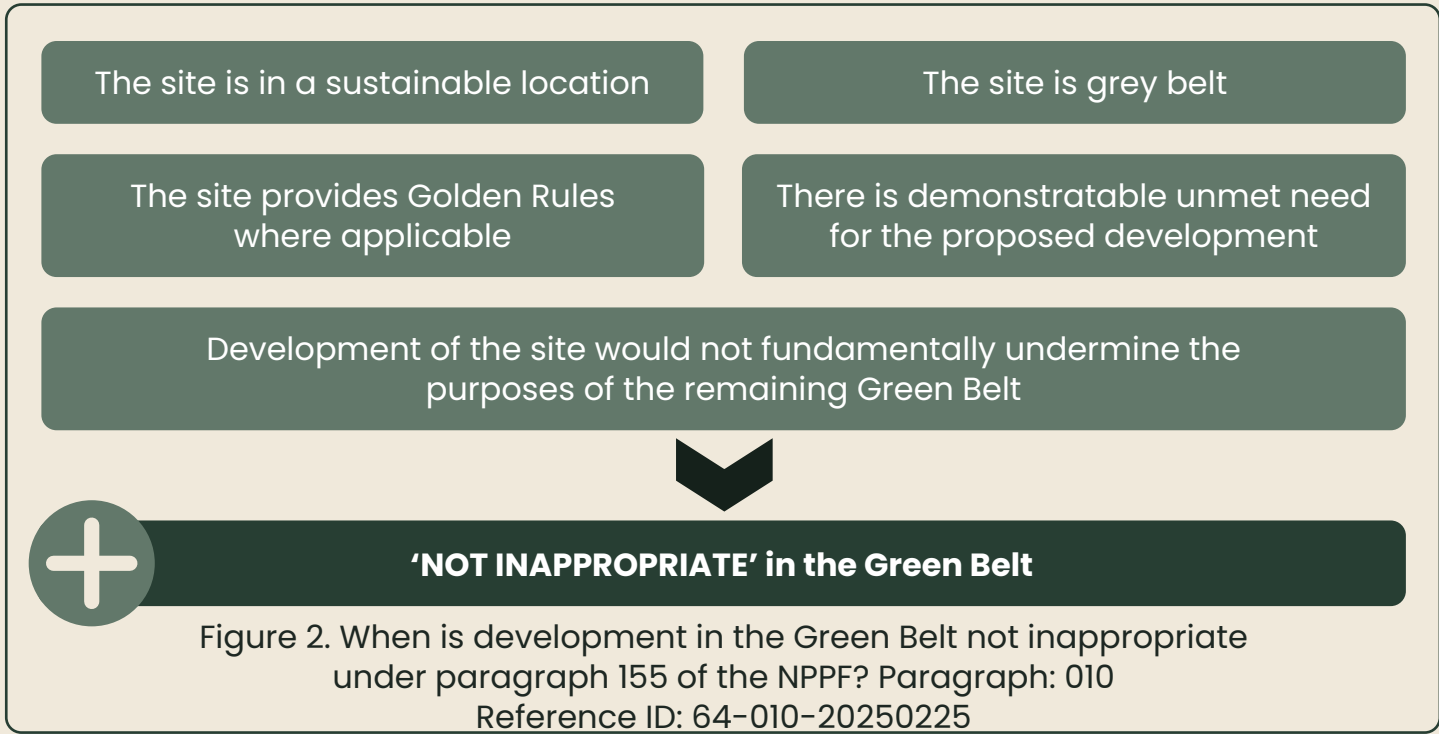


Figure 2. When is development in the Green Belt not inappropriate under paragraph 155 of the NPPF? Paragraph: 010
Reference ID: 64-010-20250225

However, several additional criteria need to be satisfied for the site to be designated as ‘Grey Belt’.

1. The development would utilise Grey Belt land and would not fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt across the area of the plan.

As outlined above, our assessment finds that the site does not perform strongly against any of the relevant Green Belt purposes, although it does have a moderate impact on purpose (c). However, when viewed in the context of the wider plan area—and taking into account that it causes no harm to purposes (a), (b) or (d)—the development is not considered to fundamentally undermine the overall strategic purposes of the remaining Green Belt within the plan area.

2. Sustainable Location.

This site adjoins the settlement boundary of Maple Cross, forming a logical extension. Maple Cross contains schools, shops, community facilities, and businesses, and is served by several bus routes. Safe access will be provided from Chalfont Road, with pedestrian connections and a Travel Plan to promote sustainable travel.

3. There is a demonstrable unmet need for the type of development proposed.

Grey Belt policy is designed to help address unmet housing need. Three Rivers DC has delivered only 30% of its housing target and has a housing land supply of just 1.7 years, far below the five-year requirement. Development of this Grey Belt site will directly respond to this shortfall.

4. Where applicable the development proposed meets the ‘Golden Rules’ requirements.

- **Affordable Housing:** Grey Belt requires higher affordable housing contributions. This scheme will deliver 50%, meeting the national requirement.
- **Infrastructure:** Contributions will be secured through CIL and Section 106 Agreement to support local services and facilities.
- **Green Space:** Grey Belt policy requires accessible, high-quality green space. The scheme provides 1.79 hectares of public open space, far exceeding policy requirements, with play areas, walking routes and landscaped spaces. New surfaced recreation routes will be provided on the site which will link to existing public rights of way (PROW), to the south-west (009) and to the east (towards Hornhill Play Area).

The proposed development therefore meets the required tests to qualify as Grey Belt – delivering housing in a sustainable location with 50% affordable homes, infrastructure contributions, and extensive green space, fully consistent with national policy.

Legal Opinion has been obtained from Zack Simons KC (Landmark Chambers), which will be available to view prior to planning committee.

CONCLUSION

We hope this update has been helpful in setting out our plans to deliver up to 75 much needed high-quality new homes in Maple Cross, half of which will be affordable.

The development will not only help address the pressing need for new homes — particularly affordable housing — but will also support the local economy through investment and job creation during construction.

We trust that having reviewed this briefing, you will share your officers’ confidence in the proposals and will feel able to support the recommendation for approval when the outline application is considered by the Planning Committee.

Obsidian and the wider project team are pleased to have worked in collaboration with the local authority and statutory consultees in preparing and submitting this outline planning application.





